



PAPAL NUNCIO STRESSES IMPORTANCE OF RECONCILIATION WITH GOD FOR GOOD LEADERSHIP

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ABUJA, NIGERIA -

The Apostolic Nuncio to Nigeria, Archbishop Antonio Guido Filipazzi has emphasized reconciliation with God and abandoning sin as an indispensable premise for tackling Church and societal problems. The Nuncio's admonition was contained in his goodwill message delivered at the opening ceremony of the first 2018 Plenary Meeting of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria (CBCN), held at the premises of the Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria (CSN), Drummi, Abuja, recently.

Urging the members of the Conference to take advantage of the Lenten Season and be reconciled to God, the Apostolic Nuncio declared: "Faced with the problems of the Church and of the society, the successors of the Apostles must remember that reconciliation with God, abandoning sin, is indispensable premise for tackling such problems."

He continued: "In this way, when the bishops speak also of social, economic or political problems, they do so not as experts in such fields or as political leaders, but rather as those who carry out their duty of giving moral judgment and of inviting to a change that may not be merely and only external, but one that starts from the human heart."

Archbishop Filipazzi also used the occasion to speak on the forthcoming Ad Limina visit of the Bishops to the Holy Father, Pope Francis, noting that "the aim of this is to strengthen even more the deep bonds that bind the Church in

Nigeria to the Successor of Peter and to draw new impulses for the ecclesial mission in this great country”.

Archbishop Filipazzi described holding of the Bishops’ Conference during the Lenten Season as “a moment for us to do an examination of conscience on pastoral action and to make resolutions to carry it out with more and more fidelity to our Lord and with more and more availability in the service of the salvation of mankind”.

In the message delivered on behalf of the President Muhammadu Buhari, the Secretary to the Government of the Federation; Boss Mustapha, stressed the vital role of the Church “in shaping the society through the inculcation of norms, values and moral principles which it impacts on its members and the society at large”.

He commended the Catholic Church for its cooperation and collaboration with the government in making life worth living for majority of Nigerians; and described the theme of the Conference, Entrepreneurship Awareness: What the Church can do, as not only ideal but timely. His words: “Our growing population, particularly the youths require entrepreneurial skills that would redirect their focus from over dependence on government and so called white-collar jobs in the public sector, to being self-employed and employers of labour.”

In his own goodwill message, the Prelate of the Methodist Church in Nigeria, His Eminence, Dr. Samuel ‘Emeka Kanu Uche,JP, commended the partnership relationship between the two denominations and called for exchange programmes and dialogues between the faithful of the two Churches. He reiterated the position of the Methodist Church on the Fulani herdsmen stating that as a denomination, we want peace to reign in Nigeria.

He added: “The Methodist people are not advocating for grazing fields for any special group of people, neither are we advocating for cattle colonies for them. We prefer ranches built by individuals who have the ownership of the cattle as a business venture in their host communities.” The Methodist Prelate also used the occasion to call on “all Christians to come together to pray to Almighty God to save our country from any likelihood of religious war, social unrest and political turmoil”.

