



## **CATHOLICS URGED TO DISCHARGE THEIR CIVIC RESPONSIBILITIES TO MAKE NIGERIA BETTER**

Mar 20, 2018

### **MAKURDI, NIGERIA -**

Catholics have been called upon to discharge their civic responsibilities in the building of a new Nigerian nation where justice, equity and peace are held sacrosanct. This can be done by their being actively involved in the political activities of the country by obtaining their voters cards and using same at the next General Elections to elect leaders who are ready to serve the country and put an end to the present socio-economic, religious and political challenges facing the country.

The call was contained in the communiqué issued by the Catholic Laity Council of Nigeria (CLCN), at the end of the 137th National Executive Council (NEC) meeting of the Council, held, recently in Makurdi, Benue State. It was signed by Sir Thomas Folu Adekoya and Honourable Sir Henry H, Yunkwap, the newly elected President and National Secretary of the Council.

The communiqué which dwelt on several aspects of the activities of the Church appreciated the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria (CBCN), for remaining constant as the voice of the country's voiceless and alerting government of the sufferings of the people, during a recent meeting of the delegation of the conference with President Muhammadu Buhari.

On the Ahiara Diocese issue, the communiqué commended the humility of Bishop Peter Okpaleke for his voluntary resignation, with a view of providing a leeway for solving the crisis in the diocese. While expressing gratitude to the Holy Father for appointing Bishop Lucius Ugorji of Umuahia Diocese as the Apostolic Administrator for Ahiara, the communiqué expressed the hope that this decision of the Pope will bring a lasting solution to the Ahiara crisis that has lingered-on for over five years.

The communiqué also spoke on the Laity Week celebration for the year 2018 urging all lay faithful in the country to participate actively and make it a very successful celebration.

Speaking on the state of the nation, the communiqué called on the Federal Government to be more proactive in its response to the challenges facing the country, particularly the issues of killings of innocent citizens by Fulani Cattle herdsman, the Boko Haram insurgents, state of security generally in the country, food security and youth unemployment.

Earlier in his welcome address, the new President of the Council, Sir Thomas Folu Adekoya called on aggrieved members to sheathe the sword over issues related to the association's elections held in Awka, last year and join hands with the new executive to take the Laity Council to greater heights in the service of the Church and humanity.

His words: "After the incident that happened during the last conference in Awka, we want to appeal to our brother and sisters from Old Onitsha Province to bury the hatchet and return back to the fold because we all believe in the body of Christ where we are all fed at the same table. We should consider the Lenten season as a time of reconciliation and a strong spiritual season."