



CBCN WARNS CATHOLIC PRIESTS AGAINST ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN POLITICS

Dec 09, 2018

ABUJA, NIGERIA -

Priests and people of Consecrated life of the Catholic Church have been warned and ordered not to be involved in active partisan politics in support of any politician or political party, as this is against the Canon Law and teachings and policy of the Church.

The warning and order was handed down on behalf of the Catholic Bishops of Nigeria by Very Rev. Fr. Madu, Secretary General of the Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria (CSN), while addressing the media on behalf of the Bishop's Conference at the office complex of the Catholic Secretariat, Durumi, Abuja; on Thursday.

In a statement titled 2019 General Elections: Catholic Church Remains apolitical, the CSN Secretary General, categorically stated that the Catholic Church in consonance with the directives of the Church, remains neutral and has no support or relationship with any politician or political party in the country; as the nation prepares for the 2019 General Elections.

He reiterated the position of the Church on the need for fair play and justice in the conduct of political activities and elections in the country, with ultimate goal of having credible people elected into office in a free and fair election, free of rancour and violence.

The statement read and signed by the CSN Secretary General reads:

“The attention of the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Nigeria (CBCN), has been drawn to the recent altercation between Rev. Fr. Ejike Mbaka, a priest of the Catholic diocese of Enugu Enugu and Mr. Peter Obi, the Vice Presidential candidate of the Peoples’ Democratic Party (PDP), at the former’s Adoration Centre, in Enugu; on the issue of patronage in respect of the forth-coming 2019 General Elections.

The Bishops condemn in totality, the shameful scenario on an Adoration Ground, as contained in the video recording that has gone virile on the social media; and say without reservation that the reported incident does not the support of the Bishops’ Conference of Nigeria. As has always been our stand, the Catholic Church in Nigeria, as clearly stated in the August 7, 2018 directives, remains apolitical and does not support or subscribe to any political party. Our concern is for a peaceful election process seen to be free, fair, credible and just; and a democratic governance that guarantees peace, justice, equity, development and religious freedom for the common good of all.

On behalf of the Conference, we wish to reiterate their obligation as teachers of faith and morals, to educate the faithful on their role in the political life of the country. Mindful of the present charged political atmosphere of the country, with the on-going campaigns of political parties gathering momentum we deem it necessary to again remind all priests and religious to keep to the position of the Church on the issue of non-partisan politics.

While we are sure that Enugu Diocese, where Fr. Mbaka is incardinated is taking the appropriate measures on this reported incident, we wish to categorically reiterate that no Catholic priest or people of consecrated life should be actively involved in partisan politics in obedience to the Canon Law of the Catholic Church. Also, liturgical ceremonies must never be used as an occasion for political campaigns.

The country is presently going through difficult times and we therefore call on all the faithful, to continue to pray for spiritual intervention in the life of our country; by the regular saying of the Prayer for Nigeria in Distress, composed

by the Catholic Bishops' Conference; on daily basis. We also enjoin the lay faithful to play their roles in the forthcoming elections premised on good conscience, play their roles at the elections without prejudice or inducement and ensure that their votes count; and the right people voted into power for the common good.

May Mary our Mother, Queen of Nigeria continue to intercede for us and save our country from imminent political and socio-economic disaster.”