



NIGERIANS URGED TO LOOK UP TO GOD FOR THE COUNTRY'S TRANSFORMATION

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ABUJA, NIGERIA -

The President of the Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria (CBCN) and Archbishop of Benin City, Most Rev. Augustine Obiora Akubeze has called on Nigerians to look up to God for the transformation of the Nigerian nation; as trusting in the ability of the country's political leaders instead of putting their trust in the country's political leaders.

Archbishop Akubeze made the call in the Christmas message issued to all Nigerians on behalf of the country's Catholic Bishops' Conference. The Archbishop asserted: "Yes, we must learn to trust in Christ to help us confront our challenges. This is why we call on all Nigerians to continue to say the prayer for Nigeria in distress. Let all Nigerians cry to God to transform Nigeria into a land where opportunities are actualized and where there is harmony and peace."

Recanting the challenges facing the country since the past years, the Local Ordinary of Benin City stated: "God has been kind to us. If not for God, our condition in Nigeria would have been worse." Along with the issue of political tension and other challenges, Archbishop Akubeze added: "We are witnessing significant challenges in our educational sector; the increase in poverty of our people; the insecurity of lives and property and the invasion of some of the farm lands of our people by some armed herdsmen who think it is their right to lead their cows to graze on the crops of others."

He continued: “Many Nigerians both Christians and Muslims have condemned the invasion of innocent people’s farmlands by herdsmen. Some of our people have questioned what is the need to celebrate when some of our priests, consecrated men and women are kidnapped while going about their pastoral work? A significant number of our lay faithful have also been victims of these crimes. Sadly, though, some have lost their lives during this terrible ordeal which is becoming too frequent in Nigeria.”

Justifying the need for the celebration of Christmas as a sign of gratitude for the goodness of God, the CBCN President expressed optimism for a better future for the country in 2019; premising his believe in the re-consecration of the Nigerian nation into the hands of “Our lady of Fatima who is the queen of Nigeria on 13 October, 2017 in Benin City, at the celebration of the third National Marian Congress, held in the Edo State capital.

Expressing hope for a peaceful general elections in the new year, Archbishop Akubeze declared: “We hope for a Nigeria where our leaders will bring the dividends of democracy to all Nigeria irrespective of whether they voted for them or not. This is so because every Nigerian tax payers’ money is used to fund Government irrespective of whether the Nigerian voted for the leader or not. We hope for a Nigeria where politicians will no longer seek prophetic prediction of their political futures from priests and other pastors. Our politicians should seek prayers from priests and pastors to get the grace to fulfil their electoral promises to the electorate. They should win the hearts of Nigerians through meaningful and substantial campaign rooted in realistic promises that will better the lives of Nigerians.”

The CBCN President also used the occasion to call on the country’s politicians to stop going to priests and pastors to seek their political feature and success in the elections, but rather go to the church “to seek prayers from priests and men of God to help them fulfill political manifestoes that will bring peace, justice and prosperity to all Nigerians”; adding: “The pulpit is not the place to insult or praise politicians”; while the Church must remain non-partisan,

