



USE SECOND TERM TENURE TO CORRECT THE ANOMALIES OF THE PAST

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LAGOS, NIGERIA -

The President of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria (CBCN), Archbishop Augustine Obiora Akubeze has called on President Muhammadu Buhari to use his second term in office to correct the anomalies of the past four years which have negatively impacted on all aspects of life in the country.

According to the CBCN President who is also the Catholic Archbishop of Benin City Ecclesiastical Province "... a second term is not a free ticket to continue on the path that leads to destruction; it is not a permission to continue to breed hopelessness and make Nigerians feel helpless, it is not a license to continue the seclusion of some sectors of the country in governance, neither is it a license to allow some persons to fuel religious crisis."

Archbishop Akubeze made the remarks while speaking at the 60th Birthday anniversary celebration of Most Rev. Alfred Adewale Martins, the Catholic Archbishop of Lagos. The ceremony which was attended by John Cardinal Onaiyekan of Abuja, Anthony Cardinal Okogie, emeritus Archbishop of Lagos, about 27 members of the Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria; and dignitaries from all walks of life, took place recently, at the Holy Cross Cathedral, Lagos.

The Local Ordinary of Benin Archdiocese reiterating the challenges facing the country remarked: "As Governments at

both Federal and State levels begin a new term of office, we must let them know that Archbishop Alfred Martins and many Nigerians are not happy with the present situation. The income disparity between the poor and rich is increasing daily. The poverty rate is growing higher. Our youths graduating from Universities have no jobs. Many of them attempt to travel out of the country and many of them have died in the Mediterranean Sea. The level of insecurity in the country seems unprecedented.”

The CBCN President noted that the desire of all Nigerians is to have a government that serves the entire citizens, irrespective of their ethnic, religious or status differences. He added that the people want a government that creates an enabling environment for all citizens of the country to thrive and allow the country to develop without prejudice or preference for a particular group of the country at the expense of the others.

Archbishop Akubeze commended the celebrant for his doggedness, steadfastness and total commitment to his vocation, with particular attention to defending the poor and speaking against injustice and other vices without fear of favour. He described Archbishop Martins as an invaluable successor to Archbishop emeritus, Anthony Cardinal Okogie in spiritual, pastoral and social responsibilities of the Church in Lagos Archdiocese; achieving much in his own strides.

While congratulating the celebrant for his immeasurable contributions to the success of the CBCN and the growth of the Church in Nigeria; the CBCN President declared: “We need to thank God for giving the Church in Nigeria a man who is so humble and gentle; a deep thinker, considerate, compassionate, a great intellectual, a philosopher who enriches discourses with new insights to old problems. We need to thank God for a man whose simplicity did not change even when he was elevated to the Episcopal status.”

He added: “We need to thank God for a man who when transferred to the See of the Archdiocese of Lagos, one of the ecclesiastical circumscriptions with the most population of Catholics, remained humble and spiritual. We need to thank God for blessing Lagos, Nigeria, and the entire world with this quintessential servant of the Church.”

