



INVALUABLE ROLES OF CHAPLAINS IN LAITY GROUPS OUTLINED

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ABUJA, NIGERIA -

Chaplains and Sister Advisors have invaluable roles in shaping the spiritual and pastoral lives of the members of the lay faithful groups they administer, Rev. Fr. Isaac Dugu, the Director of Pastoral Agents, Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria (CSN); has declared.

Fr. Dugu made this assertion in his presentation, outlining the ministry of Chaplain/Sister Advisor in the Mission of the Church, at the training workshop organized by the Pastoral Agents Department of the Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria, for newly appointed National Chaplains and Sister Advisors for all the sodalities and other lay faithful organizations of the Church in the country. The programme took place recently, at the CSN Resource Centre, Durumi, Abuja.

The CSN director spoke extensively on the vision of the Church in respect of this apostolate outlining the objective and the mission of the Church premised on evangelization; responsibility, missionary mandate and character which premised on witnessing. He used several references from the teachings of the Church, the Bible and other documents of the Church to buttress his points.

Other areas of focus in the director's paper included the roles of Chaplains and Sister Advisors, expectations of their

apostolate and what they are not expected to be or do in the discharge of their duties. According to Fr. Dugu, Chaplains and Sister Advisors are primarily Spiritual Directors of the lay faithful, caring for their spiritual and psychological needs, guiding, teaching, sanctifying, governing, admonishing, exhorting, mentoring, comforting and reprimanding them when they are about to falter.

They are also expected to guide the faithful in the realization of the vision and mission of each sodality group and organization, and how this fits into the vision of the Church; along with promoting the apostolate and charism of each group. They are expected to foster the spiritual growth of the lay faithful, encourage honesty, accountability, transparency, unity and peace, equality and civilization of love. They are also, among others to facilitate cordial relationship between the laity and the hierarchy of the Church.

Fr. Dugu also outlined the don'ts of the chaplains and Sister Advisors which include: non control of the day-to-day running of the association; not presiding over meeting, though ensuring celebration of the Mass, Recitation of the Rosary before the start of every meeting.

The chaplains are also not expected to take decisions unilaterally over issues of the associations nor have the sole authority to suspend or dismiss any member of the associations; avoid sectionalism, tribalism or partisanship; and avoid materialism, seek undue favours and benefits or compromise their position and responsibilities.