



## **CHALLENGES FACING NIGERIA YOUTHS, A GLOBAL PHENOMENON - Bishop Oyejola**

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### **AWKA, NIGERIA -**

Most Rev. John Oyejola, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria (CBCN), Youth Committee Chairman and local ordinary of Osogbo Diocese has described the challenges facing youths in Nigeria as a global phenomenon and not peculiar to the country. The Bishop made the observation in his keynote address at the seminar organized by the Youth Office of the Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria (CSN) for delegates of the different youth organizations of the Church in the country, under the umbrella of Catholic Youth Organization of Nigeria (CYON).

According to the Bishop the four-day programme which took place at the Archbishop Obiefuna Retreat Centre, Awka, Anambra State, with *Young People, The Faith and Vocational Discernment* as its theme; is part of the efforts of the Catholic Bishops' Conference at responding to the call of the Vatican for the integral involvement of youths in the activities of the Church as contained in the Holy Father's Apostolic Exhortation, *Christus Vivit*, on the recommendations of the Synod of Bishops on Youth held in Rome in 2018.

The CBCN Youth Committee Chairman declared: “The challenges confronting young people everywhere in the world are similar. Earlier this year, Education and Health Charity, Central YMCA, surveyed 1,600 young people aged between 16 and 25. The reason for the survey was to assess the nature of the challenges young people are facing in our time.

He continued: “The top 10 of the challenges identified by the 1,600 surveyed young people are: Lack of employment opportunities; Failure to succeed in education system; Issues related to body image; Family problems; Substance abuse; Pressures of materialism; Lack of affordable housing; Negative stereotyping; Pressures of 24-hour social networking and Crime.”

Bishop Oyejola added: “For those who are familiar with what young people are going through in our country, they will think that the survey was done in Nigeria. A look through the list shows that it represents the challenges of young Nigerians, as well as the challenges confronting young people all over the world. Having said this however, I want to add that these challenges come in various ways and degrees in different parts of the world.

The Bishop Chairman stated further: “For this reason, I think whatever is done at the global level should be brought down to the local level for implementation. Now that the programme has been brought to our country, it is very important that you must be interested and actively involved in it. “You cannot win in the game of life if you are not on the playing field.”

According to the Osogbo Diocese local ordinary, the seminar is aimed at bringing to Nigerian youths the message of the Synod and the challenges identified; with a view of finding solutions to them in the context of the Nigerian nation. His words: “The speakers at this seminar will not just be looking at the serious issues raised in the Synod on young people from a global perspective; they will speak to the Nigerian situation.”

He added: “That is why this seminar is very important. I do hope the resource persons at this seminar will bridge the gaps in the document vis-à-vis the existential challenges confronting the young people in Nigeria. Once again, I thank the organisers for their initiative in calling for this seminar and congratulate the delegates here present for being part of this.”