



CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHINGS PARAMOUNT TO SUCCESSFUL PARTICIPATION IN POLITICS -Bishop Kukah

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AWKA, NIGERIA -

The Knowledge of the teachings of the Catholic Church are essential for successful participation in politics, the Catholic Bishop of Sokoto Diocese, Most Rev. Matthew Hassan Kukah has declared. The Bishop's position was contained in his paper titled: ***Some Thoughts on Catholic Youth Participation in Nigerian Politics*** , delivered recently at a seminar organized by the Youth office of the Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria (CSN), for youths from various Archdioceses and dioceses in the country. It was held at the Archbishop Obiefuna Retreat Centre, Awka, Anambra State. The theme for the seminar was: *Young People, The Faith and Vocational Discernment*.

The four-day programme was part of the response of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria (CBCN) to the effective implementation of the working document of the Vatican on the Apostolic Exhortation - ***Christus Vivit***, of Pope Francis on the integral involvement of the youths into the activities of the Church, as recommended by the synod of Bishops on Youth and Discernment on Vocation, held at the Vatican in October 2018.

In his lecture, Bishop Kukah, who described politics as a vocation, justified the participation of Catholics, including youths in politics and gave the guidelines for successful participation of youths in Nigerian politics. According to him, paramount among the necessary guiding factors are: listening to the voice of the God and his Church, trusting God's will and accepting his grace; familiarity with the doctrine and teachings of the Church and of course complying religiously with the See, Judge and Act motto of the youth body in the country.

Other essential factor outlined by Bishop Kukah , who according to him are not exhaustive are: need for careful examination of oneself in the inner heart before venturing into politics; keeping a close family; learning to serve or volunteer; knowing their immediate community, speaking their language and eating their food; reading, studying and learning and most importantly having a profession or being gainfully engaged, in case the venture into politics fail.

On the need to listen to the voice of God and his Church, Bishop Kukah declared: "In the affairs of politics, it is best to listen and understand the purity of the voice that is calling you or purported to be calling you. Perhaps the voice you claim to be hearing is the voice of the devil feeding on your personal greed for power. So, here, should you feel a call to politics, pray over and over for God to help you know if this is really what He wants you to do. Often, He will lead you to an Eli, with a small e. Your Eli could be a priest, a friend, your parents, or a key politician or public office holder whom you respect. These should be your first steps."

Equally stressing the need for youths to have a profession before going into politics, the Local Ordinary of Sokoto

Diocese while advocating patience and service as vital tools for active participation averred: “Please, remember that politics is not a form of employment. It is a gamble, sometimes you win, and sometimes you lose. What do you fall back on? You will fall back on what you were doing before politics. Do not be like those who have no Party, no ideology, believe in nothing, except the easy way to money. The corridors of power are their offices and places of worship. If you bring your career and areas of specialisation to politics, governing will be a workshop for you to design and implement the dreams you already have.”

Other speakers at the programme were: CBCN Youth Committee Bishop Chairman, Most Rev. Dr. John Oyejola, Bishop of Osogbo Diocese, who delivered the keynote address; Most Rev. Dr. Earnest Obodo, Auxiliary Bishop of Enugu Diocese, whose presentation was premised on: The Youth, The Faith and The Call for Evangelization; Rt. Rev. Msgr. John Aniagwu, Vicar-General, Archdiocese of Lagos who spoke on: Safe Environment in the Wake of Clerical Abuse: The Role of the Catholic youth; and Rev. Fr. Isaac Dugu, CSN Director of Pastoral Agents who gave a welcome address on behalf of the secretariat.

Also, Rev. Fr. Samuel Akagwu, Dean of Philosophy, St Thomas Aquinas Seminary, Makurdi, Benue State, spoke on Called to Holiness; while Professor Charles Esimone, the Vice Chancellor of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Akwa; Sir Sunday Nwosu, Investment Expert; Dr. Emmanuel Okechukwu, CBCN Health Committee Secretary; and Mr. Muyiwa Matuluko, Co-founder & Editor-in-Chief Techpoint Africa; spoke respectively on Youth and the Future of Nigeria, Surviving Harsh Economic Reality in Nigeria, Defending the Culture of Life and Exploring Opportunities in Digital Media.

