



CALL FOR A MORE VIBRANT LAITY FOR CHURCH'S EVANGELIZATION MISSION

Nov 08, 2019

BENIN CITY, NIGERIA -

A more proactive laity is of paramount importance to the evangelization mission of the Church in the present day world; and for the realization of the objectives of the theme of the Fourth National Mission Congress (NAMICON IV), held, recently, at the Bishop Kelly Pastoral Centre, Benin City, Edo State.

This position was advocated by participants at the Congress who advocated for a more vibrant laity in the Church, noting that this can only be done through proper formation and grounding in the teachings, traditions and values of the Church. They also called for a more vibrant communication apostolate for the Church, through modern means of communication technology and active presence in the digital world.

These were some of the resolutions and recommendations contained in the communique issued at the end of the Congress. It was signed by Most Rev. Matthew Hassan Kukah, CBCN Episcopal Chairman of Mission and Dialogue and Chairman, National Missionary Council of Nigeria (NMCN); organizers of the Congress; Rev. Fr. Joseph Nomwhange; CSN Director of Mission and Dialogue and Rev. Fr. George Ajana, National Director of Pontifical Mission Societies of Nigeria (PMS) and National Secretary of NMCN. The theme of the Congress was *Baptized and Sent, the Church of Christ in Nigeria on Mission*.

According to the over 350 participants at the Congress: “The laity, without prejudice is co-responsible with the clergy in the missionary mandate of the Church; though in its own way and specificity”.

And for the realization of the said goals in the context of the new evangelization era, they also stressed the relevance of Catechists and the hierarchy of the Church to ensure their proper formation for the mission of their special vocation. Thus, it was recommended that they should be given priority attention and be properly trained to make them more vibrant in their apostolate and relevant in the present day world.

In the realm of politics, the lay faithful were admonished to be more actively involved in all facets of democratic process and politics; to enable them impact positively and inculcate gospel values into the country’s polity. Political and public office holders were also advised to be mindful of the plight of the masses and provide basic amenities of life for them, while in office.

The participants also stressed the invaluable role of the media in the evangelization and missionary activities of the Church, pointing out that communication is the bastion of the evangelization apostolate of the Church. They therefore urged that the Church should mobilize and utilize all means of communications, including the social media and other information technologies of the modern day world to reach-out with the Good News of Christ to all corners and crannies of the country.

According to them, the Church must also invest in the training of the professionals working for the Church and in modern and sophisticated communication equipment to boost her activities in this perspective. Catholic Media professionals and practitioners, working for the Church, must also be properly grounded in the faith to enable them carry out their duties and defend the Church in the public domain; they advocated.

Concerning the effects of ecumenical movement and religious diversity on the exercise of the missionary mandate of the Church in Nigeria; the participants recognized the beauty of religious diversity in the context of living together in peace with non-Catholics and adherents of other Religions.

They therefore urged the faithful to engage in fostering Christian unity in response to Christ's injunction that "all may be one"; adding that the Nigeria Interreligious Council (NIREC) should be a better medium of reconciliation, peace and justice.