



## **COMMUNICATION APOSTOLATE, RESPONSIBILITY OF CATHOLIC MEDIA PROFESSIONALS**

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### **BENIN CITY, NIGERIA -**

The Catholic Bishop of Oyo Diocese, Most Rev. Emmanuel Adetoyese Badejo has reiterated the need to entrust the evangelization mission of the Church in the hands of media professionals and practitioners with the attendant responsibilities, noting that the Vatican has blazed the trail in this perspective.

The Bishop made the call in his presentation at the recently concluded Fourth National Mission Congress, held recently at the Bishop Kelly Pastoral Centre, Benin City, Edo State. He therefore admonished Catholic media practitioners and professionals to brace up for this role to make the Church's communications apostolate more vibrant, effective and relevant in this era of modern day communication technology.

The Bishop also noted that the primary role of priests in this perspective is the formation of this lay communicators and professionals as, the Priests have more spiritual and pastoral responsibilities by their vocation calling. His words: "The challenge is for the clergy to sufficiently form the lay faithful on the teachings of the Church on media and for the lay faithful to show themselves worthy and capable of that trust."

Speaking on the topic: *The Role of the Media in Evangelization: Opportunities and Challenges*; the Bishop declared: "I have believe that the area of Social Communications is more the preserve of the lay people than anyone else's. If the

lay faithful would just play their co-responsibility for the Church's mission then the role of media evangelization can best be treated by them who engage every day with the media."

The President of the Pan African Episcopal Committee for Social Communications (CEPACS), emphasized that the lay faithful must be properly formed and grounded in the teachings of the Church and the Catholic faith to enable them perform this role creditably. He noted that there are many documents of the Church and papal annual world communications day celebration messages that succinctly provide the guidelines for the faithful in this perspective, noting that these messages give directives on the conventional means of communication and the modern day digital world means of communication, including the social media.

Outlining some thematic modification in the present day communication world, Bishop Badejo declared: "Most people today, understand media to refer to the press, radio, newspapers, television, social media and other technical means of communication. However, the means of human communication that can enhance evangelization actually go well beyond these technical means.

Outlining the challenges facing the communication apostolate of the Church, the Bishop declared: "We must find a way to conquer the laziness of Catholics as regards evangelization." The challenges outlined by the Bishop include: "The lukewarm attitude to and lack of interest of many in their responsibility as evangelizers; the unwillingness to invest financial resources in engaging various media; uncertainty about formally entrusting the evangelization mission to media professionals and practitioners with attendant responsibilities and the feeling of inadequate knowledge of the faith and the Bible which makes many feel unqualified to represent the Church.

Other challenges identified were" The reluctance of Church leaders to move with the tide in the area of communication; insufficient planning and investing in formation, facilities and programmes which will enhance the use of media for evangelization; insufficient formation of the faithful for their task as co-responsible Christians for the Church's mission and lack of sufficient trained church agents of communication evangelization.

While warning against over-concentration of focus on new media and digital technology, for communication evangelization, Bishop Badejo noted that media communications are generational and therefore advocated “a cumulative holistic and all-embracing approach for the communication evangelization apostolate of the Church to make it vibrant and effective.