



BISHOP AVENYA EXPRESSES CONCERN OVER DISTORTION OF LITURGICAL MUSIC

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GBOKO, NIGERIA -

The Catholic Bishop of Gboko Diocese, Most Rev. William Avenya has expressed concern on the lackadaisical attitude of some choir groups to the relevance of liturgical music in the life of the Church. The Bishop made the observation in his keynote address to the 10th Annual National Conference of the National Catholic Liturgical Music Council of Nigeria (NACALIMCO); held this year in Gboko, Benue State.

The Four-day conference, which took place at the Queen of the Holy Rosary School, Gboko, was attended by over 500 delegates from all the nine Ecclesiastical Provinces of the Church in the country. The theme of the conference was: *Mediocrity and Superficiality: Addressing Issues of Inconsistencies with Contemporary Liturgical Music in Nigeria*. NACALIMCO is the umbrella body for Catholic choristers in the country.

The communiqué issued at the end of the conference noted that the participants appraised the performance of Liturgical Music across the country, identified areas of strength and weaknesses and gave directives on how to improve on the identified lapses in accordance with the guidelines of the Church's official documents on liturgical music. The communiqué was jointly signed by: Rev. Fr. Moses Ewro Iyara OSA; National Chaplain; Mr. Aniemeke Hyacinth Peter, National Coordinator; Sir. Jude Nnam, National Music Director and Mr. Ike Emmanuel Nwachukwu, National Secretary.

Speaking on the theme of the conference and the importance of Liturgical music in the life of the Church, Bishop Avenya noted that: “The musical tradition of the Church in which prayer is offered in a unique way is being met with a lot of abuses and deviations in contemporary times.

While noting that music in the church is fast losing its meaning as they lacked liturgical and theological depth, caused by the escapades of most composers who have not been properly trained in musical, liturgical or theological composition, the Bishop declared: “Adoption of musical styles that are contrary to the norms of divine worship is gradually becoming the order of the day in contemporary worship.”

The participants also noted with deep concern the poor zeal at which choir leaders strive to implement the recommendations made at previous conferences to enrich liturgical music in the country. They discussed extensively the abuse of some basic norms of liturgical music in conjunction with presentations delivered by experts and proffered solutions at addressing the identified challenges.

The conference also featured the election of new national officers for the body, with Mr. Anieke Hyacinth Peter emerging as the new National Coordinator; Mr. Leo Ogu, National Vice Coordinator 1; Mr. Raymond Udoh, National Vice Coordinator 2; Sir Dr. Jude Nnam, National Music Director; Mr. Joseph Usukumah, National Deputy Music Director and Mr. Ike Nwachukwu, National Secretary.

Other officers elected were: Mr. Hilary Osifo, National Assistant Secretary; Mrs. Maryann Didugwu, National Financial Secretary; Mr. Daniel Akpan, National Treasurer; Mrs. Victoria Aikokpodion, National Welfare Officer 1; Mr. Julius Pwajok, National Welfare Officer 2; Mr. Johnbosco Udeogwu, National Provost 1, Mr. Festus Oriafu, National Provost 2 and Mr. Linus Akpan, National Public Relations Officer (PRO).

