



## **LAY LAEDERS NEED EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION SKILLS FOR EVANGELIZATION APOSTOLATE**

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### **ABUJA, NIGERIA -**

Effective communication has been described as a vital tool for the evangelization apostolate of the laity in the Church. This was the position of Rev. Fr. Isaac Dugu, the Director of Pastoral Agents Department of the Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria (CSN), while addressing lay leaders of the Church from all over the country at a training programme, held at the CSN Resource Centre, Durumi, Abuja.

In his paper titled: Effective Apostolate of the Laity for the Promotion of Christian Values and Evangelization, Fr. Dugu emphasized effective communication skills as an essential tool for enhancing leadership qualities and effectiveness as leaders of the lay faithful.

Outlining the various ways and methods this can be achieved, the speaker noted that the training programme is to enable the participants to understand the meaning of communication, appreciate its importance and identify common barriers in order to be able to communicate more effectively in their roles as leaders of the lay faithful in the Church.

The CSN director identified reasons why and how communications fail to include assumption and improper delivery and networking. Speaking on the importance of both written and verbal communication, the speaker advised that

messages must be short and meaningful in content and frequency, while feedback ensures complete and correct delivery, using the right channel.

Various means of communications identified by Fr. Dugu include: signs, writing, music, gong and the present day means of information technology like the social media and internet, among others. He noted the gradual development in the means of communications from the olden days to the present-day era, stressing the need for Church leaders to be vast in these means of communication to be able to communicate effectively with their followers and discharge their evangelization apostolate effectively in the community.

The CSN director advised leaders of the various laity groups of the Church in the country to communicate effectively with their members as this will go a long way in enhancing the evangelization apostolate of the Church and the collaborative efforts of all the faithful, irrespective of their personal passion and charism.

A national policy on Catechesis is an imperative need for the evangelization apostolate of the Church in Nigeria, the Secretary in charge of Religious Education, Biblical Apostolate and Catechesis; Mr. Femi Adejo has declared.

Mr. Adejo made the declaration in his paper titled: Catechesis in the Church in Nigeria: From policy to Implementation – A Biblical Path; delivered recently at the 2019 Annual Conference of the South Western Nigeria Catholic Theologians Association (SWANCTH), held at the Saints Peter and Paul Major Seminary, Bodija, Ibadan, Oyo State.

He stressed that Catechesis is an integral formation – open to all other factors of Christian life, cultivates celebration, living and translating them into dynamic virtues; promoting knowledge of the faith, the liturgy and moral formation. He added that: “Catechetical instruction illumines and strengthens the faith, develops a life in harmony with the spirit of Christ; stimulates a conscious and fervent participation in the liturgical mystery.”

According to the CBCN unit Secretary; a national policy on Catechesis will facilitate its teaching and understanding by the faithful as well as enhance the evangelization apostolate of the Church in the country. The speaker declared: "It is good to say right here that we do not have a uniform policy yet in Nigeria. Up till now, we hook on to those universal norms and policies. This was one of the reasons for the 1st National Catechetical Summit of 2018; to have a working catechetical policy for the Church in Nigeria."

Mr. Adejo in his presentation highlighted some of the areas the national policy will focus on and called on the Theologians of the Church in the country to give the issue the priority attention it deserves, to help the Church in Nigeria, in this perspective. His submission focused on the general appraisal of Catechesis in the life of the Church; object and definitive aim of catechesis; the task of catechesis and fundamental tasks of catechesis which include: promoting knowledge, liturgical education; moral formation and teaching to pray.

Other areas addressed by the speaker included: the Church and Catechesis, stressing that catechesis is an ecclesial action; "as such the Church has always looked on catechesis as a sacred duty and an inalienable right;" Catechesis and the Church in Nigeria and the Biblical X-ray to keep Catechesis in shape.

The CSN Catechesis Unit Secretary concluded: "Catechesis must therefore be a tool at the service of the Christian community in our encounter with both believers and all those who are searching for the meaning of life. Catechesis must be developed and expressed in missionary context so as to impress on our active participants of the Christian community the urgent need to recover the power of the Gospel message."