



GOD'S MERCY, SOURCE OF THE SALVATION OF HUMANITY

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BENIN CITY, NIGERIA -

God's mercy has been described as the source of the salvation of humanity and the Sacrament of Reconciliation the ultimate revelation of Divine Mercy. This assertion was made by the President of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria (CBCN) and Metropolitan of Benin City Ecclesiastical Province, Most Rev. Augustine Obiora Akubeze in his homily at the celebration of the Mass for this year's Divine Mercy Sunday, held at St. Peter Catholic Church, Benin City. Edo State.

Using the readings of the day to buttress his point, the CBCN President noted that the mercy of God is boundless and the response to our sins. His words: "God is not just good, God is Goodness, God is Justice, God is Mercy, God is Love, God is Compassion etc. In God there is no distinction between attributes and essence, or nature. Consequently, these attributes of God reveal to us the nature or essence of God."

He continued: "One of the attributes of God is Mercy. God's Divine Mercy is what we are celebrating today the

Second Sunday of Easter. Today we celebrate God who is mercy personified. Today we celebrate God who does not deal with us according to our sins. We may be on lockdown or partial lockdown but the mercy of God is not on lockdown. His mercy endures forever. May the mercy of God come down upon all of you participating at this mass from home. May his mercy endure forever in your life and that of your loved ones.”

Archbishop Akubeze went on to state that the mercy of God made the apostles and their followers to be bold to proclaim the Good News of Christ, after encountering the risen Christ adding that: “The people faithful to the Apostles’ teaching lived together – worshipping and sharing meals and living in community. There appears to be a spiritual shield protecting them from the rest of the world. Under this shield, God adds to their numbers and strengthens their faith.”

Noting that this shield is God’s mercy, the CBCN President added: “We are all also encouraged to proclaim the Easter message that Christ is risen by living together in love. His death and resurrection mean that we are no-longer held captive by death. We are completely redeemed. Archbishop Akubeze stated further that in spite of the Apostles abandoning Christ at the time of his trial and persecution, he greeted them with peace and still made them agents of mercy by giving them the power forgive sins.

He declared: “This is the explicit institution of the Sacrament of Reconciliation (confession), the sacrament in which the limitless ocean of God's mercy overwhelms the weak ocean of our misery. It was the ultimate revelation of the Divine Mercy. Our greatest treasure as Catholics is the revelation of Christ, a revelation of God's boundless mercy,

the only force strong enough to penetrate the walls of pain, anger, fear, and resentment that we have built around our hearts. We are encouraged to receive the mercy of God by going to confession whenever we sin.”

Stressing that the Divine Mercy of God is response to our sins, Archbishop Akubeze assured the faithful: “in Christ, we do not worship a God who punishes us according to our sins. We do not worship a God who wants our downfall. We do not worship a God who beats and kills us when we sin. In all of scriptures, we come to the understanding that God responds to our disobedience, our stubbornness, our unfaithfulness with love. His response to the many sins that we commit is mercy. While he was dying on the cross, he did not curse us, he did not decree punishment on us; instead he gave us mercy.”