



POPE'S CALL, A CHALLENGE FOR NEW DISPOSITION IN INFORMATION DISSEMINATION; SAYS ARCHBISHOP MARTINS

Jun 05, 2020

LAGOS, NIGERIA -

Media practitioners in the country have been called upon to see the call of Pope Francis for the revival of story-telling as a means of information dissemination for the common good of humanity. The call was made by Archbishop Alfred Adewale Martins in his homily at the celebration of the Mass for the 54th World Communications Day ceremony and the seventh Sunday of Easter; at the Holy Cross Cathedral, Lagos.

Premising his homily on the Pope's message for the celebration, titled: *"That you may tell your children and grandchildren (Exodus 10:2): Life becomes History*; Archbishop Martins stated that in the discharge of their duties, journalists and other media practitioners must say the truth in the stories they tell through all means of communication, including the social media.

Pointing out that the Holy Father's message stresses the importance of storytelling and its impact in shaping the lives of the people. The Archbishop further noted that stories have influence on peoples' behaviour and attitude. He added that there are stories that build people and unite the society as well as stories that create division, enmity and crisis or war.

Stating that stories that cause division are news items that are untruthful and do not care about facts, Archbishop Martins remarked: "It is in this face that the Holy Father calls us to isolate the truth we hear and be guided by them"; adding that "this truth challenges media practitioners to speak the truth, in the course of the discharge of their duties."

The Archbishop declared: "According to Pope Francis, stories that do not promote virtues and values are called deep fake news, while popular stories create celebrities and heroes; but the question is, what type of celebrities and heroes are we projecting? He stated further that Pope Francis cautioned against promoting social vices through the social media, thereby giving the world bad heroes.

In the words of the Holy Father: as presented by the Archbishop, "The media should rather promote different kinds of scriptural stories of God's love that made Him to create man in His image, of Jesus Christ, His Son, whom He gave to the world and the miracles

of Jesus, among others.”

Archbishop Martins also aligned with the call of the Holy Father that story telling should not be limited to the lives of saints or those who have died but also, people in the society and the community, who are role models by their exemplary ways of life.

The Archbishop particularly called on Catholic media practitioners to use stories to reach out with the Good News of the Gospel, just as the miracles of Jesus were designed to teach his followers to take care of the needs of the people. He also urged them to see themselves as anointed by God to be agents of evangelization, bringing the people closer to God.

Earlier in a media chat with media professionals as part of the activities for this year’s World Communications Day, organized by the Lagos Archdiocese chapter of Catholic Media Practitioners of Nigeria (CAMPAN); Archbishop Martins spoke extensively on the Holy Father’s message, the state of the nation, the Covid-19 pandemic, political, and socio-economic challenges that are facing the country and the world at large.

He described the Pope’s message as: “very relevant to the things that are happening in our own time. These are times when there are stories been told, when there are different kinds of news been carried through the various media that are very much available with

us. And so, it is important that we get a few tips from what the Holy Father has to say on this issue of life that becomes history”.