



COMMUNICATION DESCRIBED AS A VITAL VEIN FOR HUMAN LIVING

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ABUJA, NIGERIA -

Communications has been described as the vein for human living and a very vital necessity for the sustenance of an invaluable society for the common good of humanity. This assertion was made by the Secretary General of the Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria (CSN); Rev. Fr. Zacharia Samjumi, in his homily at the celebration of the 54th World Communications Day Mass held at the St Gabriel Chaplaincy, Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria (CSN); Durumi, Abuja, on Sunday, May 24, 2020.

The CSN Secretary General therefore called on Catholic media practitioners and communicators to be the beacon of their profession in this perspective by discharging their duties in truth as admonished by the Holy Father, Pope Francis in his message for this year's celebration.

Premising his homily on the Holy Father's message which has: "That you may tell your children and grandchildren" (Ex.10:2) Life becomes history, as its theme, and the summary of the message by Rev. Fr. Michael Umoh, CSN Director of Social Communications; Fr. Samjumi noted that communication is the vein of human living by virtue of its involvement in all facets of life in the society. According to him, it is very vital with regards to the way we live and relate with each other. He added that without communication, people in the world would not understand each other and there might be fighting and confusion on a daily basis, making it difficult "for us to live together as a people".

The CSN Secretary General noted that the Holy Father, in his message advocated a revival of the old concept of story-telling as a means of communication, adding that good stories are constructive and will help to build a society of peace and love. He added that bad stories are destructive and are capable of destroying the society. He also used the occasion to admonish priests to respond positively to the call of the Holy Father to use stories in their homilies and in reaching out with the Good News of Christ. He however urged that these stories should not be limited to the lives of the saints but also focus on lives of people in the society who are of exceptional virtues, worthy of emulation.

In his summary of the Holy Father's message, Rev. Fr. Michael Umoh, described the Pope's message as "an invaluable contribution to the theology of communication; and a

clarion call to the need “to revive that age long form of communication – Story telling”.

He noted that: “Stories are very important to human life, because in the words of the Holy Father ‘human beings are storytellers’ by nature. Stories foster growth and self-discovery in the human persons, thereby enriching them for the struggles of daily living. No one really outgrows the love for stories because these are naturally refreshing, captivating to the human heart, inspiring and influencing human choices in daily life struggles. It means that stories are not just the texts of words or prints, as if they were abstract and distinct from humanity, rather, they are real extensions of human persons in the various circumstances they find themselves.”

Noting that the Holy Father acknowledges that there are good stories and bad stories, Fr. Umoh stated that modern media should not replace storytelling and it should be about both the dead and the living.

Pointing out that the Holy Fathers message is a special task for all media personnel and organs of the Church. The CSN Director of Social Communications declared: “in order to counter the numerous negative stories, the document challenges us to employ all means and opportunities available to write our own stories while ensuring that we make our own the truth contained in good stories”

In his message with the theme: *That you may tell your children and grandchildren* (Ex.10:2) *Life becomes history*; the Holy Pope Francis noted, among other things that: “so as not to lose our bearings, we need to make our own the truth contained in good stories. Stories that build up, not tear down; stories that help us rediscover our roots and the strength needed to move forward together.”

He added: “amid the cacophony of voices and messages that surround us, we need a human story that can speak of ourselves and of the beauty all around us. A narrative that can regard our world and its happenings with a gaze. A narrative that can tell us that we are part of a living and interconnected tapestry. A narrative that can reveal the interweaving of the threads which connect us to one another.”

The Pope further stated that: “Every human story has an irrepressible dignity. Consequently, humanity deserves stories that are worthy of that dizzying and fascinating height to which Jesus elevated it.” He added: “So, it is not a matter of simply telling stories as such, or advertising ourselves, but rather of remembering who and what we are in God’s eyes, bearing witness to what the Spirit writes in our hearts and reveling to everyone that his or her story contains marvelous things.”