



NIGERIA'S HYDRA-HEADED CHALLENGES* *BISHOPS CALL FOR MORE PROACTIVE ACTIONS ON THE PART OF GOVERNMENT

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Catholic Bishops of the Ecclesiastical Province of Ibadan, have called for

more proactive actions on the part of government to address the challenges

of persistent insecurity and corruption in the country. In addition, they

advocated collaboration between the government, the Church and leaderships

of other stakeholder groups in the country, to safe the country from the

vices that are rampaging the land.

The Bishops made the call in a Communiqué entitled: *Coping in these Difficult Times*, issued at the end of their Provincial Meeting held recently at the M and M Pastoral Centre, Ilorin, Kwara State. While expressing solidarity with the government and the people on the challenges facing the country, especially the Corona Virus disease pandemic, the Bishops expressed dismay that: “things have remained the same and the changes in political, social economic and religious life have brought unprecedented hardship to many.”

According to the Bishops; “Nigeria is still plagued by a series of security challenges: corruption, terrorism, kidnapping, banditry, ethnic clashes, extra-judicial killings and more recently, rape”; adding that: “Even as

government and the security agencies at different levels claim to grapple with these challenges, the problems all seem to be hydra-headed monsters, reappearing as often as they seem subdued.”

They continued: “There is anxiety in the land. Nigeria cannot continue to operate a system that seems to be faulty and leaky and clearly needs to restructure its security apparatus and methods. There is definitely, anger, disillusionment and despondency in the land. A major cause of these is the seeming unconquerable report of corruption in practically every facet of life especially at the highest levels of governance.”

The Bishops therefore appealed to the government, institutions and

individuals who mean well for Nigeria to cooperate and collaborate to reduce the despair and tension that have led many Nigerians into criminality. Other areas which the Bishops said could help improve the security situation of the country and should be given prominent attention by government include: job creation, federalism, prompt prosecution of those who run afoul of the law, and the application of the rule of law without discrimination etc. They called on all Christians to be exemplary in all facets of life and do the right thing at all times; including fighting corruption within their own spheres of influence, curbing the unnecessary loss of lives which has become a daily occurrence in Nigeria.

On the Corona Virus pandemic situation, the Bishops commended all health

workers and others at the frontline of combating the diseases; appreciated government efforts at providing facilities to fight the disease, and the people for persevering amidst the challenges and pains brought by the advent of the disease. They called on the people to continue to observe the laid-down regulations to prevent the spread of the disease noting that “Good health is wealth and protecting human life is a sacred duty.”

Other areas addressed by the Bishops in the communiqué include: the reopening of places of worship and schools, the dignity of women and the crime of rape and the scope of collaborative ministry in the Church. The communiqué was signed by Most Rev. Gabriel ‘Leke Abegunrin, Archbishop of Ibadan and Most Rev. John Oyejola, Bishop of Osogbo Diocese, President and

Secretary of the Provincial Conference respectively. The Ecclesiastical

Province comprises of: Ibadan Archdiocese, Ilorin, Ondo, Ekiti, Oyo and

Osogbo Dioceses.