



IMPACT OF CORRUPTION MORE DEVASTATING THAN CORONA VIRUS PANDEMIC IN NIGERIA, SAYS ARCHBISHOP MARTINS

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LAGOS STATE -

The Catholic Archbishop of Lagos, Most Rev. Alfred Adewale Martins has described the devastating impact of corruption in all facets of life in the country as more hazardous and devastating for all Nigerians and the country, than the Corona Virus pandemic.

The Archbishop made the assertion in a press release issued, recently in Lagos on the present cancerous state of corruption in the country; noting that: fighting Corruption is a Collective Responsibility. He also used the occasion to condemn in strong terms the spurious killing of innocent people in Southern Kaduna on ethnic and religious basis.

According to the Archbishop, corruption has “continued to ravish all sectors of the nations’ fabric, stalling growth and development while also beclouding all the values we hitherto hold sacrosanct.”

In the statement signed on behalf of the Archbishop, by the Archdiocesan Director of Social Communications, Rev. Fr. Anthony Godonu; the Archbishop expressed grave concern on the spate of corruption in the various arms of government in the country, including the NDDC, EFCC and NEDC; describing the drama surrounding the on-going probes of government agencies by the National Assembly as a show of shame.

The Archbishop declared: ““Recently, we saw on national television how Ministers and members of the National Assembly were making insinuations about the level of corruption in their arms of government, even as the nation's resources continue to be looted by those who run the Commissions under scrutiny. It was very embarrassing to listen to the verbal exchanges between the Ministers and National assembly members descended into hurling insults and making allegations of corruption at one another. Then we had the fainting theatricals acted out by the Acting Managing Director

of NDDC, Prof. Pondei. These just confirmed to those who were doubtful, that corruption is still very much alive even in a government that was voted in on the promise of fighting corruption. We can see clearly that the welfare of people was not at the heart of the disagreements. It is even more shameful that all these allegations of billions of Naira under contention are coming at a time when governments in other countries are busy finding ways to cushion the effects of COVID-19 on their citizens and working hard to stabilize their economies in the face of the present uncertainties.”

Archbishop Martins also expressed no confidence in the spate of ongoing probes on alleged corruption by government officials and political office holders, noting that: “Over the years, we have watched governments institute panels to investigate and probe corruption allegations, only for the outcomes to fizzle out and the culprits allowed to **‘go and sin no more’**. We do hope that this time, the Federal Government will take more decisive steps to show that it truly intends to rid the country of corruption, particularly amongst the ruling class. We cannot continue like this. We must begin to work to rid our country of corruption not only in words but also in deed.”

The Archbishop therefore called on the political class, particularly those enmeshed in fraudulent activities against the people to have a change of heart or face the full wrath of

the Almighty God. He also admonished Nigerians to be bold in challenging unfavourable government policies and actions; adding that they should also demand from the leaders, accountability and good governance at all times.

Speaking on the killing in Southern Kaduna, Archbishop Martins stated: “We have seen too many occasions in which villages are attacked in the middle of the night and people including babies, children and women are killed with their properties destroyed while they are in bed at night. The pattern has been repeated in Benue, Taraba, and Adamawa States. We have situations in which people are too afraid to go to their farms because of the so-called bandits. Government cannot be exonerated from the accusation of collusion with the criminals when more lip service is paid to the problem than adequate practical efforts to contain the situation and punish the perpetrators.”

He called on the government of Kaduna State to genuinely engage Religious Leaders in Southern Kaduna to help build peace among the people. If people can see good faith on the part of government and see adequate effort to arrest the perpetrators and bring them to face the law, the effort at achieving peace would be achieved, he added.

