



BISHOPS ADVOCATE FORMATION FOR ATTITUDINAL CHANGE ON THE PART OF ALL NIGERIANS TO END CORRUPTION

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ANAMBRA STATE -

The Bishops of Onitsha Ecclesiastical Province have advocated the education and orientation for attitudinal change on the part of all Nigerians, to combat corruption which has become an endemic culture in the country. This was contained in the Pastoral Message issued at the end of the second Ecclesiastical Province Plenary Meeting held, recently at the Bishop's House, Adazi-Nnukwu, in Awka; Anambra State.

In the Pastoral Message titled: *Be Courageous, I have Conquered the World (Jn 16:33)*; the bishops expressed joy at the installation of Most Rev. Peter Okpaleke as the first local ordinary of the newly erected Ekwulobia Diocese, noting that: "This happy development is a further demonstration that God , who has pitched his tent among us (Emmanuel), accompanies every step of our pilgrimage on earth both as individuals and as a

Church.” The message was jointly signed by Archbishop Valerian Maduka Okeke of Onitsha and Bishop Hilary Odili Okeke of Nnewi, Chairman and Secretary of the Provincial Conference, respectively.

Speaking on the state of the nation, the Bishops expressed concern about the trying times of the Corona Virus pandemic, increasing insecurity and social restiveness in the country and the fight against corruption; they demeaned: “the prevalent socio-economic and cultural situation in our nation and in the world today. These include the numerous challenges and dehumanizing situation to which many people are subjected on daily basis which may drive some people to despair.”

The bishops regretted that corruption has become a cultural cankerworm and endemic in all strata of life in the country. They observed that: “The so-called anti-corruption fight by successive Nigerian governments seems to have been only cosmetic; and the solution to the endemic evil lies in the need to re-educate the entire citizenry urging the government to support the effort of the Church in offering integral education to young Nigerians; they added: “This education must include the proper use of and relationship

with the social media and other aspects of modern information and communication technology.”

Describing the Corona Virus pandemic lockdown period as trying times for all sectors of life in the country and the world at large, the bishops regretted that lockdown did not successfully address the situation in totality. They declared: “We note with sadness the failure of the lockdown strategy in containing the spread of the virus because of corruption. Some of those who were mandated to enforce the lockdown used it as an opportunity for exhorting money from those who continued to move across the states and caused hardship to those who had genuine need to be on the road.

The bishop stated that the exclusive focus of government on the economy, in the lockdown easing process of the containment regulations at the expense of education and religion; were not in the best interest of the country because, education and religion are the primary means of inculcating and transmitting values and added that human life is not all about economy.

They also pointed out how the Covid-19 pandemic period has further exposed the insecurity challenges and restiveness in the country and called on the different arms of government, in collaboration with other stakeholder groups leaders to do everything within their powers and ability to protect the lives and property of ordinary law-abiding citizens of the country.