



## **NIGERIA'S TRANSFORMATION IS A COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY**

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### **BENIN CITY -**

The transformation of Nigeria into a great nation is the collective responsibility of all Nigerians, irrespective of status, religion or ethnic differences, the President of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria (CBCN); Most Rev. Augustine Obiora Akubeze has declared.

Archbishop Akubeze posited this in his goodwill message on the occasion of the 60<sup>th</sup> Independence Day anniversary of the country, addressed to all the faithful of the Church in the country; and other Nigerians, on behalf of the Bishops' Conference.

According to the CBCN President, after 60 years of Independence, Nigeria is still very much in great distress; and it is a Diamond Jubilee without cause for celebration, as it has been six decades of independence enmeshed in daily killings of innocent citizens by

criminals of different categories, including the Boko Haram insurgents; many Nigerians cannot afford to eat or live comfortably, amidst plenty of natural resources and human endowments; while the Covid-19 pandemic has further crippled the already poor Nigerian economy.

Outlining the conditions for the transformation of the country, Archbishop Akubeze, who is also the local ordinary of Benin City Archdiocese declared: “Let us continue to pray for a transformation of Nigeria. We must begin this transformation from within, from ourselves. Each one of us must learn to eschew every form of corruption, indiscipline, praising of corrupt leaders or giving of awards to those who have bankrupt Nigeria. We must stop the praise-singing of politicians who have failed us. We must stop patronising mediocrity.”

He continued: “We must begin to reward hard work. To survive as a nation, we must have a collective desire to build the country. Selective appointments that do not reflect the ethnic and religious diversity of Nigeria is a recipe for disaster. The minimalistic approach to the quota system is a disservice to the nation. Any serious Government

would want every part of the nation to know that they are stakeholders in decision making in the country. Nigerians are not asking for too much; they are just asking for justice, fairness in appointments of people to Federal offices.” He called on all Nigerians not to despair in the face of the daunting challenges facing the country but put their trust in God, who will never disappoint His children.

Archbishop Akubeze regretted that in her 60 years of existence as an independent nation, Nigeria has nothing to show for it, especially in the area of making life worth living for majority of Nigerians. The CBCN President listed the catalogue of woes that have afflicted the country and made the celebration of the Diamond Jubilee unnecessary. His words: “It is just unimaginable and inconceivable to celebrate Nigeria at 60 when our roads are not safe; our people are kidnapped, and they sell their properties to pay ransom to criminals. Nigerians are experiencing an invasion of their farmlands by armed Fulani-herdsmen; a group well organised and already designated as the fourth deadliest terrorists’ group in the world by the Global Terrorism Index.

He continued: “Nigerians from almost all geographical regions seem to agree that we

need to start working on restructuring. The present political party leading Nigeria (APC) campaigned to attend to the issue of restructuring, sharing of resources, and a constitutional amendment if Nigerians voted them into power. It is somewhat regrettable that the Federal Government of Nigeria has not kept to its electoral promises. State Governors, Senators, Federal House of Representatives Members must all work towards ensuring restructuring of Nigeria. Nigeria is almost at the verge of total collapse.”

Archbishop Akubeze added: “Many Nigerians have observed the rate of Federal and State borrowing with colossal interest to be paid back, and that presently we are servicing our debt with a significant revenue of the country. The rate of unemployment is growing, and there seems to be no clear plan to fix the economy as well as help the private sector to grow so that many of our youths can be employed. The inadequate facilities in many of our public tertiary institutions are further hampering the intellectual and human skill acquisition of the graduates from these institutions.”

The CBCN President noted that the present state of the country clearly shows “we are legally independent but factually dependent upon our financial lenders”. He added: “We

are yet to reform our electoral act to the state of ensuring that Nigerians are genuinely interested in voting and that the votes will count in determining those who lead us.” He also expressed concern about the expectation of government for many Nigerians with a minimum wage of N30, 000 to provide for their families and also bear the brunt of increase of electricity tariff in spite of the epileptic situation of supply; and at the same time removing the fuel subsidy.