



WITNESSING TO CHRIST MUST BE DEVOID OF PERSONAL EGO, LAY FAITHFUL TOLD

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ABUJA -

Lay faithful, especially leaders of the various organizations of the Church have been reminded that witnessing to Christ is a primary responsibility of all members without recourse to personal interests or promotion of personal ego.

This position was emphasized by the Director of Pastoral Agents department, Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria (CSN); Rev. Fr. Isaac Dugu in his address at the opening ceremony of the Reconciliation Retreat for the leaders of the Knights of St John International (KSJI); held recently at the CSN Resource Centre, Catholic Secretariat Nigeria (CSN), Durumi, Abuja.

According to the CSN director, the responsibility of every faithful is primarily to witness to Christ and not for the promotion of personal ego. He pointed out that “while we look forward to salvation, our willingness to witness as the uncompromising missionary character cannot be controverted.” He added: “We are called by name to witness to the Gospel values of charity, works of mercy with patience, prudence, compassion, empathy, sympathy, acceptance, forgiving, forbearing, tolerance, trust, love, truth, justice, peace, hope and faith.

Fr. Dugu reminded the participants at the retreat of the roles of members in any organization, especially Church societies. He declared: “As members of an association, we are supposed to care for spiritual need of one another. When we fail to do this, we sin against charity. We are to ensure that the overall vision and mission of the association is carried out, and where that fits into the vision of the Church. We are to encourage Christian virtues, promote the apostolate of our association with passion.”

He continued: “Our task is to represent the image of the good shepherd through acts of honesty, accountability, transparency, unity and peace, equality. Fetish acts,

segregation, class syndrome should not be concepts identical with us. We are to guarantee ecclesial fidelity, loyalty to Church authorities, promote an attitude of prayer, encourage moral integrity, and organize workshops to learn more about the emerging realities of our society and also on scriptures, defend the Church, knowledgeable in social teachings of the Church, Vatican II, with Canon Law and general doctrine. Our call to charity must not be forgotten as one of the essential part of our responsibilities”.

Fr. Dugu spoke extensively on the nature of the Church; Christ the basis for communion; our communion in retrospect, the burden of disobedience, craving for leadership; emotional and social disability; vengeance belonging to God; new evangelization; the *Mea Cupa* Strategy, the Holy Trinity Model and the life of St. John the Baptist.

He noted that “the Church does not subsist in physical structures, nor her spiritual leaders but in the communion of God’s children.” He continued: “this means, the Church is a communion with God and of unity among all men.” He noted that as a result of this, all pastoral agents must work hard to sustain this communion and unity of the Church.

