



ADVENT SEASON: DO MORE CHARITY; AVOID GOSSIPING, FALSE RUMOURS, CATHOLICS URGED

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ABUJA -

The Catholic Archbishop of Abuja, Most Rev Ignatius Kaigama has called on the faithful to do more charity in this season of Advent and avoid gossiping and spread of false rumours; even as he warned against spreading fake news in the social media and telling white lies.

Archbishop Kaigama, in a homily during the First Sunday of Advent at St. John the Baptist Church, Tyozua-Makurdi, Benue State, noted that Advent offers hope that is not empty or deceptive and that Advent invites us to an interior examination as we prepare for the coming of Christ at Christmas. "We are not just preparing for a social feast but the total acceptance of Christ and his message of peace, love and reconciliation", he said.

The Metropolitan of Abuja, who was in Makurdi on the invitation of the Parish Priest of St. John the Baptist, Rev Fr. James Bature, whom the Archbishop calls 'Aboki', noted that even though he is Jukum and cannot speak Tiv, "I have decided to say parts of the Mass in Tiv language to convey the message that if we struggle hard enough, we can

understand one another's culture, appreciate what each has, be happy when they are happy, sad when they are sad, and be ready to humbly learn from them what they have that we don't have".

The Archbishop admitted that the country is facing negative and social impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, inhuman activities of kidnappers, bandits, herdsmen and that there is hunger and poverty in the land while frustration is brewing in many quarters.

He however said: "Even in the midst of all these, may we live by faith, walk in hope and be renewed in love as we prepare to meet the Lord. Some Christians, who seem to have become tired of waiting, have become spiritually stagnant. St. Paul assures us that those who persevere in the faith shall be blameless before God the Father on the last Day of Judgment. Hence, we must never grow weary of doing good. What we must do in this season of Advent are more acts of charity. What we must avoid are unhealthy social habits such as gossiping, peddling of false rumour".

The Archbishop added: "Let us remember dear brothers and sisters that the evil we do remains with us but the good we do come back to us. Let us do good during this holy period of Advent, and may we experience both spiritual and physical health and safety in order to celebrate Christmas with joy, peace and happiness".

In his homily at the celebration of the Mass for this year's Feast of Christ the King, on the last Sunday of the Church's 2020 Liturgical Year held at Our Lady of Fatima Parish, Sheda, Abuja; Archbishop Kaigama stated that Christ should be the model for all political, traditional and religious leaders. Noting that "leaders serve and don't rule", he added: "As the Good Shepherd, He led, fed, healed and protected His sheep, He rescued and brought back the lost sheep to the fold."

The Archbishop continued: "While earthly kings sought honour and demanded service from their subjects, Jesus washed the feet of His disciples. While earthly kings wore crowns of glory, Jesus wore the crown of thorns; earthly kings seat on the throne while Jesus hung on the cross." He therefore urged the people not to wait for the final return of Christ before doing the needful, to make the world a better place for the common good.

Expatiating on the genesis of the feast of Christ the King, Archbishop Kaigama stated that the feast "served as a reminder to Christians and to the totalitarian governments of the day that Jesus Christ is the only sovereign and eternal king and we should enthrone Him in our hearts and surrender our lives to Him."