



RESTORE HUMAN DIGNITY TO EARN INTEGRITY, CSN SECRETARY GENERAL TELLS STAFF

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ABUJA, NIGERIA -

Secretary-General of the Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria (CSN), Very Rev. Fr. Zacharia Samjumi has challenged the Staff of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria (CBCN) to key into the mission of the Conference, which is the restoration of human dignity.

Fr Samjumi, who handed the charge in his homily at the closing Mass of the 2021 Annual Retreat of the Staff of the CSN/CBCN Agencies held in Abuja, recently, noted that "it is only when you work to restore human dignity, that you earn integrity. This is the gospel, the good news that we preach. The restoration of human dignity. The CBCN has insisted again and again that all those who will work with the Conference and its agencies, must know the basics of the Catholic Social Teaching. So by accepting to work with the CBCN, you have accepted to key into these basic things. First, to accept that you are going to work to restore human dignity".

The Secretary-General, in differentiating between dignity and integrity stated: “Dignity is given to us as humans by God. You don’t work for it. The very fact that you have been born a human being, you have human dignity but you earn integrity, you work for it. When people say this person is so nice, very kind, very merciful, that is integrity, you have earned integrity”.

Fr Samjumi noted that there are things that impinge one’s human dignity. “Those things include disease: when you are diseased, you look miserable, you look helpless. So disease impinges on our human dignity. It makes you look not like a human person. Hunger is another thing. Hunger reduces us to nothing and you can name so many other things that sincerely speaking that take away or hide away our human dignity, making us vulnerable and in fact, humiliated”.

The CSN Secretary-General noted that: “When Jesus came, he says my coming is to restore that human dignity and that is the gospel, the good news that we proclaim. The proclamation of this good news is accompanied by action”.

Dwelling on the gospel of Mark’s story on the healing of the leper by Jesus, Fr. Samjumi explained that the man with leprosy approached Jesus knowing his condition. “You can easily cast your mind back when there were no such medicines and a leprous person will have to exclude self. You don’t sit with human beings again and that is the most

devastating part of it. Human communion, you are out of it. So this kind of person is already denied human dignity and the man begged from afar, please, I want to go back to the society. Can you make me clean? And Jesus said, yes. And Mark, in his story, tells us, not that Jesus just healed this man but literally, he went and touched him, which was a taboo. So by the healing of this leprous person sets the ball rolling on the mission of Jesus. He has come to restore human dignity and that is the gospel that we preach, to restore, to give back to human beings their God-given dignity and that is why today all of us as the agencies of the CBCN we are carrying out this”.

He continued: “If you look at the nature of the Church when the church is coming to a place, they will not go to the king’s palace, they will not go to the rich, they will not go to the well-placed but they go to the slums. Why do they do that? Why would the Church always, everywhere, will identify with the lonely? It’s as simple as this, to give back to these people the dignity of the human person. Our mission is to key into the mission of the Church, just like that of Jesus, to restore human dignity. Therefore, all that we do, in whatever way, be conscious that you are restoring human dignity and by restoring human dignity, you earn for yourself the integrity”, Fr Samjumi declared.