



ARCHBISHOP KAIGAMA DECLARES YOUTHS, CLERICS, HEROES OF PASTORAL EFFORTS IN ABUJA

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By Josef Ishu

The Catholic Archbishop of Abuja, Most Rev. Ignatius Ayau Kaigama, on Friday, September 24, 2021 declared members of the Catholic Youths of the Archdiocese and all those Priests in charge of pastoral areas as super heroes of the Archdiocese for the year 2021.

Archbishop Kaigama made the declaration during his homily at the opening Mass of a two-day Second Abuja Archdiocesan General Assembly held at Our Lady Queen of Nigeria Pro-Cathedral, Garki, Abuja.

The Archbishop stated: "I believe that we are all heroes in the work of God, but if you ask me to choose two super heroes from our Archdiocese for this year, I will first choose the

Catholic Youth Organization, and my reason is that when I met with them on August 7, 2021, at the new cathedral building, I was impressed by their determination to go on exhibiting good conduct despite the challenges and deprivations they face daily. I was inspired when some shared their experiences of trying to be self-reliant and focused even in the midst of unemployment.”

“The second heroes are the priests who have gone to new pastoral areas without accommodation or comfortable facilities but are genuinely exhibiting pastoral zeal and commitment, sleeping in refurbished stores, sacristy or office,” Archbishop Kaigama disclosed.

This year’s Abuja Archdiocesan General Assembly is with the theme: ‘Ministerial and Pastoral Collaboration’, and the Archbishop said the meeting will help to find ways of enhancing the work of evangelization, and thereby, contributing to the welfare, progress and development of the Church and Nigeria as a nation.

Meanwhile, Archbishop Kaigama has called on all Nigerians to put aside their ethnic, religious and political differences and speak the language of love, which he said is the major solution to the country’s problems.

The Metropolitan of Abuja further stressed that when all Nigerians begin to speak the

language of love, there will be peace, mutual forgiveness and reconciliation. “As a Church and as a nation, let us always speak the language of love, peace, forgiveness and reconciliation and overcome the barriers of hostility, corruption and indifference with sincere love.”

According to the Prelate, our unity of purpose should serve as a model to public life where political, ethnic, social and economic diversities have become the sources of conflict. “It is our task to teach the society to eschew the language of conflict, war, discrimination, superiority, pride and hatred and to move from conflict to communion, devoid of the quest for selfish personal advantages or interest.”

In his goodwill message, the Apostolic Nuncio to Nigeria, Archbishop Antonio Guido Filipazzi, noted that priests, as the first witnesses of Christ should be proud of their identity just like the religious women, who are always on their habits and catechists on their cassocks. “It is not good that some of the priests don’t wear their cassocks or their clerical dress.”

The Papal Nuncio noted that from the theme of the General Assembly noting that ‘ministerial’ means service (servant) but it is unfortunate that people take service to be a honour and power. “To serve means humility, patience and self-denial. I wish to say that at the end of this General Assembly, we should all try to apply this idea of service. I don’t

know if my message is provocative but I feel if I must speak, I should speak the truth,” Archbishop Filipazzi affirmed.

The General assembly consists delegates from parishes, pastoral areas, chaplaincies, church societies, together with all the priests of the Archdiocese and representatives of each female and male religious congregations working in the Archdiocese.

Also in attendance were top government functionaries who are Catholics as well as the representative of the Primate of the Anglican Communion in Nigeria, Archbishop Henry Ndukaba, Venerable Andrus Ukaejiofor.