

**A COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AT THE END OF THE SECOND
MEETING OF THE CATHOLIC BISHOPS OF IBADAN
PROVINCE FOR 2018 HELD AT SAINT PAUL PASTORAL
CENTRE, AAWO, OYO STATE, AUGUST 13 – 14, 2018.**

We, the Catholic Bishops of Ibadan Ecclesiastical Province, comprising Ibadan Archdiocese, Ilorin, Ondo, Ekiti, Oyo and Osogbo Dioceses, after our second meeting for the year 2018, give all gratitude to Almighty God for his goodness to our church and our country. All glory goes to him that in spite of the worsening economic and security situation in Nigeria, we remain one country. On this grateful note, we issue the following communique:

1. We rejoice and thank God for the appointment of Bishop Paul Adegboyega Olawoore as Coadjutor Bishop of Ilorin diocese and for his ordination on July 13 at St Joseph Catholic Cathedral, Ilorin. We congratulate the Bishop of Ilorin, Most Reverend Ayomaria Atoyebi, the Clergy, Religious and the people of Ilorin diocese on this important pastoral milestone. May the coming of the Coadjutor Bishop bring about an even more engaging era of evangelization in Ilorin diocese. Amen

2. Nigerians and the Electoral Process

As the State and National Elections draw near we join our voice to all who have spoken that all Nigerians who are eligible to vote take direct interest in the electoral process. The first most important step is to obtain the Permanent Voters Card, PVC without which no one can vote. We therefore urge those who have yet to collect their PVC to take this last-minute opportunity to do so. INEC authorities should ensure that all alleged constraints to the collection of PVC are removed. We urge politicians to stop the criminal, sinful and shameful practice of vote-buying, paying for positions, or other unlawful practices which ridicule our country in the eyes of the world. Let Nigerians all understand as well that when votes are sold and bought destroy their destiny and the future of generations to come and therefore reject such offers.

3. The Defection Epidemic

Nigerian politicians are currently crisscrossing the land defecting from party to party. It is doubtful that this infamous exercise is done in the interest of the common people. Personal, selfish interest instead of principles, continues to be the motivation for their actions. Only the people can change this sad situation by voting during elections only for people of integrity with the right values and by holding such people accountable. We admonish our current politicians to have a change of heart and make sacrifice in the interest of their people and the nation.

4. The intractable Security Situation

It is impossible not to address the continued killings and violence in Nigeria. In many parts of Nigeria the security situation has become much worse, especially considering the increased killing of soldiers and policemen by terrorists and hoodlums. It seems that the Federal Government has exhausted its options to end the killings. This would be a truly distressing situation. We ask the Federal and State Governments to find more effective ways of securing the nation as the security of life and property is the most important role of any government. All human life is sacred and everything must be done in truth and fair play to protect everybody from violence and unwarranted death.

5. Children, Youth and Sexuality Education

We note with dismay that many State Governments continue to allow the infiltration of our educational institutions and educational curricula with programmes and information that undermine morality through so-called Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE). CSE provides indiscriminate information and access to Artificial Family Planning methods and contraception for children and young people. The Church is fully in favour of Natural Family Planning, tested and proven to be more successful than Artificial Family Planning and with no side effects. She also affirms that parents and guardians must not be denied the God-given duty and right to play a role in imparting sexuality education to their wards at the appropriate age and level. No one, not even government, should usurp that responsibility. We therefore call on parents and guardians to be vigilant about this

worrying trend. We re-propose our new books “The Catechism on Human Life” and “A Catechism on Marriage and Family” for use in schools, public institutions, churches and families as a resource guide and a counterbalance to the excesses of CSE. We reiterate that children and youth should not be exposed to explicit, sexual images or practices in the name of sexuality education until they attain the adequate age for such information.

6. Youth, Entrepreneurship and Leadership

We echo the call of the Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria (CBCN during its last plenary at Abuja to the youths of Nigeria to pay more attention to entrepreneurship and its appeal to all those who are able, to empower the youth in that regard. “There is therefore the need to promote entrepreneurship as a means of engaging our many capable minds and hands in positive skills and so contribute collectively to nation building. In this regard, we continually encourage the faithful and indeed the entire citizenry to discover and exploit opportunities, and assemble resources in order to create value and wealth.”. In addition to this admonition we urge that mentorship be provided for our youth for value-based leadership in religious, political, economic, social and cultural spheres of life. This can be incorporated into the education curriculum. It is clear to all that Nigeria today suffers a dearth of good, value-driven leadership. This lacuna can be filled through such mentorship and discipleship over a sustained period, in order to salvage the future and save our own lives.

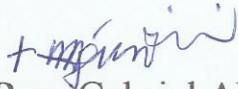
7. SECAM

We congratulate the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM) which launched on July 29, 2018 a year-long pastoral programme to commemorate 50th anniversary of the first ever visit of a Pope to Africa in 1969 in Kampala Uganda. SECAM has issued resources to aid prayerful thanksgiving and activities for the accomplishment of the Church’s work in evangelization, services and development so far. We call on all our faithful to pray for the advancement of the work of God in the Church in Africa and support SECAM’s activities and programmes. The grand finale of the celebration

comes up on July 29, 2019 in Kampala Uganda, where it all began.

Conclusion

We admonish the people of God to continue working as Church to be light in the darkness of the world and salt of the earth wherever they find themselves (Matt 5:13-16). Our call to holiness must bring us to witness to the love of Jesus Christ in every sphere of life where God has located us. The gospel only echoes his call to the prophet Isaiah, directed also to every believer today. "It is not enough that you be my servant to restore the tribes of Israel. I will make you the light of the nations that my salvation will reach to the ends of the earth (Isaiah 49:4-6). As we continue to ask our faithful to pray for Nigeria, we invoke God's choicest blessings on all.



Most Rev. Gabriel Abegunrin
President



Most Rev. John Oyejola
Secretary.