



APOSTOLIC NUNCIO OUTLINES SPIRITUAL AND PASTORAL DUTIES FOR CATHOLIC FAITHFUL

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BOMADI, NIGERIA -

The Apostolic Nuncio to Nigeria, Archbishop Antonio Guido Filipazzi has outlined the spiritual and pastoral challenges the faithful of the newly erected diocese of Bomadi have to contend with stressing: “we must remember that the erection of the diocese of Bomadi is not the final goal, something one can sit down and rest after reaching it: this will happen only in the heavenly Jerusalem.”

Archbishop Filipazzi made the remarks while performing the Canonical erection of Bomadi Diocese (formerly Bomadi Vicariate); at the celebration of the Mass, held recently at the Our Lady of the Waters Cathedral, Bomadi, Delta State. The ceremony was attended by members of the Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria, government functionaries and dignitaries from all walks of life from within and outside the country.

According to the Papal Nuncio, a lot of work needs to be done in the diocese spiritually and pastorally. He declared: “There are many obstacles to be removed and new frontiers to be reached so that the coming of the Kingdom of God may be fully realized.”

His words: “let us look around us and we will see how abundant is the harvest that awaits our efforts as workers in the field of the Lord. Let us think of the many people who do not yet know the Lord Jesus, his Gospel and his Church. Let us think of those who have voluntarily distanced themselves from the Catholic Church. Let us think of the Catholics that know little of their faith and do not live it out in their private, family and public life.”

Among other responsibilities, Archbishop Flippazi stressed the need for Catholics to work for freedom, justice, honesty and solidarity towards everyone.

The CBCN members present at the ceremony included: Archbishop Ignatius Kaigama, President of the Catholic Bishops Conference and Archbishop of Jos; Archbishop Augustine Akubeze, Vice President of the Conference and Metropolitan of Benin City Ecclesiastical Province; Archbishops Anthony Obinna of Owerri and Matthew Ndagoso of Kaduna; and emeriti Archbishops Patrick Eboseli Ekpu of Benin City and Felix Alaba Job of Ibadan. Others were: Bishops Martin Uzuokwu of Minna; John Ayah of Uyo; Charles Hammawa of Jalingo; John Afareha of Warri; Michael Elue of Iselle-Uku; Gabriel Dunia of Auchi and Camillus Umoh of Ikot-Ekpene.

Also present were: Bishops Emmanuel Badejo of Oyo; Anthony Adaji *MSP* of Idah; Paulinus Ezeokafor of Awka; Augustine Ukwuoma of Orlu; Matthew Hassan Kukah of Sokoto; Peter Okpaleke of Ahiara; Godfrey Onah of Nsukka; Donatus Ogun of Uromi; Donatus Akpan of Ogoja; Anselm Umoren, Auxiliary of Abuja; Jonas Benson Okoye, Auxiliary of Awka and Denis Isizoh, Auxiliary of Onitsha. Bishops George Dodo of Zaria and Camillus Etokudoh of Port Harcourt were represented by Very Rev. Fr. Henry Atuma and Rev. Fr. Justin Njoku respectively.

The Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria (CSN) delegation, led by the Secretary General, Rev. Fr. Ralph Madu included: Rev. Fr. Ojaje Idoko, Director of Pastoral Affairs and Rev. Fr. Chris Anyanwu, Director of Social Communications. Also in attendance were: Msgr. Javier Fernandez, Counselor at the Apostolic Nunciature; Msgr. Thomas Greenan *SPS*, First Apostolic Administrator of Bomadi Vicariate; Fr. Kevin O'hara and Fr. Paul Hardy of St. Patrick's Missionary Society.