

July 3, 2018

**CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE OF NIGERIA (C.B.C.N)
EPISCOPAL COMMITTEE FOR THE LAITY**

**TO: DICASTERY FOR LAITY, FAMILY & LIFE
VATICAN CITY, ROME.**

**RE-``INTERNATIONAL MEETING FOR THE FORMATION OF THE LAITY''
``REPORT ON BEST PRACTICES''**

- 1) **INTRODUCTION:** The Church in Nigeria has an established committee on the laity, which is committed to the study, promotion and mission of the lay faithful under an Episcopal chairman.
- 2) **OBJECTIVES OF THE COMMITTEE :**
 - i) To provide Pastoral directives, encourage and promote the apostolate of the laity through the Catholic Laity Council of Nigeria (C.L.C.N), and all other lay apostolate groups; thus helping them to fulfill their vocation as part of the family of God.
 - ii) To strengthen, broaden and intensify group and/or individual lay apostolate undertaken
 - iii) To oversee and advise the laity on their vocation and mission in the Church and society by fulfilling her mission of the renewal of the temporal order for collective action, dialogue and reflection on Church's social principles to leave the society.
 - iv) To facilitate and enhance the collaborative partnership with the Church's hierarchy; priests and religious in the fulfillment of her co-responsibility for the mission of the Church.
- 3) **SOME INITIATIVES BEING PROMOTED BY THE CBCN FOR THE FORMATION AND ON-GOING FORMATION OF THE LAY FAITHFUL IN NIGERIA:**

Establishment of the Episcopal committee for the laity to regulate the activities of the various lay groups and ensuring the lay people take their rightful place in the Church

and society. Toward this end, the Laity Manual was produced to serve as guidelines for all the lay groups and the laity in general.

- A formidable structure was put in place for the lay groups to organize themselves and participate in the prophetic mission of the Church under close supervision of chaplains appointed for each lay group as pastor of souls.
- Manual for the Laity was produced by the Bishops' conference which contains pastoral exhortations and directives, thus serving as 'vade mecum' or companion for reflection both as lay individuals or as groups.
- Some ecclesiastical provinces, dioceses and parishes have established schools of Theology as well as schools of evangelization and leadership training for the lay faithful including Catechists.
- Annual seminars/ workshops at the national, provincial and diocesan levels on contemporary topics affecting the Church and society in line with the mind of the Church.
- Annual study weeks such as the Laity week, Catechetical week; Family week; Bible week; JDPC week among others, are held to educate the laity at the parish level.
- The Catholic Social Forum; the socio-political wing of the Catholic laity council of Nigeria was established to encourage and train lay faithful who wish to participate in the politics of our country and as public servants.
- The Catholic laity council of Nigeria in collaboration with the Mission and Dialogue Department of the Catholic secretariat of Nigeria has embarked on the process of sending volunteer lay people on mission ad gentes under the auspices of the Catholic lay missionaries for Africa. (CALAMA)

4) CHALLENGES POSED TO THE FORMATION OF THE LAITY IN NIGERIA.

- a) Lack of commitment by the lay people due to socio-economic factors giving more preference to pursuit of their temporal goals.
- b) Inadequate funding to finance formal training programs that would meet the yearnings and aspirations of the students.
- c) Lack of uniform curriculum by the various institutes and training schools.
- d) Inadequate personnel disposed to undertake voluntary service due to shortage of priests.

5) PROPOSALS FOR SUSTAINABLE TRAINING PROGRAMMES FOR LAY FAITHFUL IN NIGERIA.

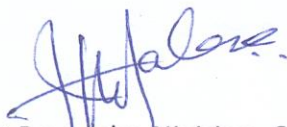
- ✓ A strategic plan to train the lay faithful starting from the parishes is at the front burner of proposed plan. Parish priests as pastor of souls have been directed create study

programs for their parishioners in order to educate them more on the Church's doctrine and the family.

- ✓ Diocesan certificate awarding training institutes are being established to empower the graduates from such institutions.
- ✓ Provincial institutions are being put in place to award Diploma certificates, while the existing Catholic universities award degrees to lay faithful.
- ✓ In addition, newsletters and magazines focusing on doctrinal and church's social teaching are produced and made available and for the entire lay faithful.
- ✓ Lay apostolate groups are being encouraged to spend part of their meetings to learn about their roles and obligations as well as the doctrines of the Church using the bible and other Church documents.

6) CONCLUSION:

The imperatives of the apostolic formation given to the lay people should distinctively have a secular character to suitably equip them for the hustle and bustle of everyday life; the formation is to be human, holistic adapted to the state, condition and needs of each lay person. The program should take cognizance of the four areas of formation; Human, Spiritual, Pastoral and Doctrinal.



Most Rev. John Niyiring, OSA
Catholic Bishop of Kano
CBCN Episcopal Chairman for Laity

Efficiency enhancement tools for executives and leaders

Group facilitation techniques

Conflict management and emotional intelligence

Benefits and pitfalls of ICT.

CONCLUSION: I do hope the above explanations would meet your demand. We also intend to avail you of some documents related to the information provided. Thank you very much and God bless

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Joseph Falase', is written over the printed name.

Joseph Falase
For C.B.C.N. Episcopal Chairman for the Laity