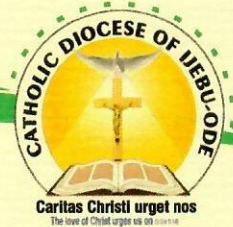


CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF IJEBU-ODE

Catholic Bishop's House, 83, Stadium Road, G.R.A.
P.O. Box 32, Ijebu-Ode, Ogun State.



THE MISSION OF CHRIST IN IJEBU-LAND: A CALL TO BE MISSIONARY DISCIPLES

On every mission Sunday, the Universal Church celebrates her nature, character and essence. The Church cannot exist without mission. This is celebrated in every Catholic Community in the world. Mission Sunday reminds us that the message of salvation which Christ brought is not meant for a particular group of people but for all. During Jesus' public ministry, He did not work alone but appointed apostles who were to be with him, learn from and be sent out to preach. (Mark 3:13-14) while Jesus was with them, he sent them to different places to preach the good news. He did not only send the 12 but also sent seventy-two others out. These he did to show us that we all have roles to play in the work of evangelization. After his resurrection, Jesus gave the 'great missionary mandate;' "go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you" (Matt 28:19-20). This is the origin of the missionary mandate of the Church.

Ever since, the Church has engaged in many missionary activities and programmes in order to take the Gospel of Jesus Christ to those who have not heard about it. She also sustains the faith of those who have been blessed with the privilege of hearing the good news. This is the goal and objective of the Church's activities. This is why we talk about the "missionary activities of the Church.'

As a response to the call of the Church on every of her member to be missionary inclined, Pope Pius XI instituted Mission Sunday as a Special day set aside to pray for mission and for giving material support to mission. This is why, any money collected in any Church on this day has been dedicated and consecrated for the course of mission.

This year's mission Sunday message of the Pope has the theme: "we cannot but speak about what we have seen and heard" (Act4:20). This is drawn from the response of the apostles, who were warned not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. And Peter and John answered courageously, "whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to (human beings) than to God...for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard."

Today the Church is being confronted with so many forces threatening to silence her voice in the propagation of the good news. The world no longer wants to listen to the gospel message of Christ. The Church must speak up in this situation what she has seen and heard from Jesus Christ relying on the providence of God.

MISSION AND MISSIONARY ACTIVITIES IN IJEBU-ODE DIOCESE

“The harvest is plentiful but the laborers are few,” this is the situation with our diocese. Recently, we welcomed Fidei Donum priests from different dioceses in the country and some religious priests, who have come to support the task of evangelization in the particular Church of Ijebu-ode. Collectively, as a diocese, we all are to be involved in the missionary life and activities of the diocese. Ijebu-ode diocese is a growing diocese blessed with great human and natural resources for any missionary enterprise to be effective and productive. The diocese is blessed with people of different tribes, cultures, ethnic groups and religions. This gives the diocese a strong ground for the work of evangelization. There are many Christian faithful of other denominations, Muslims, and followers of African Indigenous Religion. There are those who do not even care about God, they do not belong to any religious group.

This peculiar character of the diocese makes it a fertile ground for evangelization. The Church in Ijebu and Remo land must invest her resources for primary evangelization. Priests, Religious, evangelizers, Catechists, lay leaders, and the entire Christ faithful must contribute their own quota towards this course (the evangelization of the diocese). On this special day, I see the heavy hand of God in the missionary activities of our diocese, knowing that without God, all our efforts and struggles would be in vain. God is the cause of mission; he makes mission possible.

I want to sincerely recognize and appreciate all Pastoral Agents - Priests, Religious, Catechists, Evangelizers, and the entire Lay Faithful working in the diocese as missionary collaborators. Priests and religious working tirelessly night and day across the different parts of the diocese for the one mission of Christ. Those faced with difficulties and challenges in their mission yet have embraced it with joy, happiness and total trust in God. I also recognize the sacrifices of our priests who are on mission outside the diocese. I thank you all for the work you do and I pray that God whose mission we have committed ourselves will always be there to support us carry out his mission fruitfully. Amen

Happy mission Sunday to you all!

Given on this day, 23rd October, 2021 (World Mission Sunday)



Most Rev. Francis Obafemi ADESINA
Bishop of Ijebu-ode

