

**A COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AT THE END OF THE 28TH NATIONAL CONVENTION OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CATHOLIC THEOLOGY STUDENTS (NACATHS) NIGERIA, AT THE SPIRITAN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY, ATTAKWU-ENUGU, NIGERIA FROM 20TH TO 24TH MARCH, 2017.**

Drawing inspiration from the assertion of the Council Fathers on the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World that “the joy and hope, the grief and anguish of the men of our time, especially of the poor or afflicted in any way, are the joy and hope, the grief and anguish of the followers of Christ as well” (G. S. 1) and reflecting deeply on this, we the members of the The National Association of Catholic Theology Students (NACATHS), held our 28th National Convention at The Spiritan International School of Theology, Attakwu-Enugu, from 20th to 24th March , 2017 on the theme – **THE CHURCH TODAY: SOME ISSUES AT STAKE**. From our deliberations we now present our communiqué:

1. The Church is both a spiritual and visible reality existing within society and interacting with it. As such, it is called to share in the thrills, burdens and challenges of the world in which it exists.
2. The Holy Spirit is the principal agent of the Church’s mission. To be able to courageously confront the challenges posed by modern day civilizations and technology and thus be effective, the members of the Church should be constantly aglow with the Spirit.
3. There are manifold problems confronting humanity in our age and these pose varied challenge to evangelization today.
4. Different forms of violence have undoubtedly come to characterize the present times. In the face of this, the Church must not cease to speak for and seek ways to defend, irrespective of all odds, the dignity of the human person.

5. The pursuit of justice and peace are key values that have always been advanced by the Church right from inception and these must be pursued even more aggressively considering the fast-rising instances that point to negations of justice and promotion of oppression.
6. The Church has done a lot in times past to promote workers' welfare in her Social Teachings. However, there is still much to be desired as she must also look inward into herself to correct unfair treatments of people within her structures. This unfair treatment is an obvious contradiction to the values which she promotes.
7. The Church must speak out constantly against bad governance and encourage her members in the corridors of power to make sure they promote Christian values so that people reap the benefits of good governance.
8. Materialism is an obvious reality that affects pastoral efficiency and to this we cannot turn deaf ears. This is partly sustained by defective and inauthentic theologies. Part of the resultant effects of this is that it creates an existential gulf between the pastor and his flock. Pragmatic ways of combating this menace should be thought out and enforced by the competent authorities of the Church while considering peculiarities.
9. Relatedly, Pastors should daily struggle to conform themselves to the image of Christ in all ramifications.
10. Some events both in the Church and in the civil society show that there is a very poor understanding of what leadership actually entails. Thus, there is need for the Church to help everyone through religious education to rethink the quest for exalted positions.
11. *Amoris Laetitia* in terms of the ideas it espoused are not entirely novel though it is highly controversial. This is so because, the insistence on pastoral mercy could be stretched to a dangerous

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extreme and this makes it prone to misinterpretation. Nonetheless, to be properly understood, it must be interpreted within the context of the Church's dogma and discipline.

12. The earth is our common home and we ought to care for it. The moral basis of environmental crises arises from the fact that the sufferers are most of the time not the cause of their suffering.
13. The environmental crisis persists because of differing world views: how individuals think the world works, what they think their role in the world should be, and what they believe is right or wrong behavior with respect to the environment.
14. The Church challenges us to act in solidarity with creation and with the poor and by advocating for political and economic reform that will lead to long-term social and ecological sustainability.
15. To achieve this, we need a good dose of earth education and a cultivation of environmental awareness.
16. Syncretism is observable in the present practice of our religion, though in different forms such that blurs the distinction between Catholic and Pentecostal churches. However, a proper catechesis is a panacea to this scaling phenomenon.
17. The media revolution offers the Church a wide range of opportunities to explore for evangelism.

As we continue to journey in the Marian Year, we implore the powerful intercession of our Mother, the Blessed Virgin Mary and Mother of the Church to continue to protect us under her virginal mantle. Amen!

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