

A COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AT THE END OF THE 24TH NATIONAL
CONVENTION OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CATHOLIC
THEOLOGY STUDENTS (NACATHS) AT THE SEMINARY OF ALL
SAINTS, UHIELE, EKPOMA, EDO STATE, NIGERIA
FROM 10TH TO 15TH MARCH, 2008

**THEME: AUTHENTIC HUMAN DEVELOPMENT IN THE AFRICAN
CHURCH**

TOPICS-

1. Ecology- A Leeway to Authentic Human Development
2. Corruption in Africa: Its Challenges for Christian Theology
3. The Scourge of Ethnicity in the Church: The African Experience
4. An Evaluation of the Effects of Materialism in the African Church.

INTRODUCTION

Human person '*ab initio*' has always longed to progress in life in order to make himself relevant to the existence which he finds himself. This longing for his perfection and relevance has been in man from creation when, though created '*Imago Dei*', he was given dominion over all other creatures and the mandate to subdue the earth (Cf. Genesis 1:26-28).

In meeting up with this quest, man undergoes development now and then. This development is in different facets: economic, political, scientific, spiritual, intellectual etc. All these however cannot lead man to his goal without an authentic human development which encapsulates and transcends all these. This no doubt, is the '*punctum punti*' (high point) of all development. The noble task of Authentic Human Development in the words of John Paul II, is not just an individual only and still less an individualistic one. It concerns all and sundry and "It particularly obliges the Catholic Church and the other Churches and Ecclesial communities (...) It is in fact a duty of all towards all and must be shared by all" (*Solicitudo Rei Socialis*, n.32).

At this threshold of the consolidation of the Church in Africa, it is imperative for the Church in Africa to step into the life of humanity and play the role of the catalyst of human development. How the Church in Africa does this and/or can do this better is what the 20th National Convention of The National Association of Catholic Theology Students (NACATHS) seeks to discuss. The members of the association from the following Major Seminaries in Nigeria engaged in this discussion:

- Bigard Memorial Seminary, Enugu
- Saint Joseph's Major Seminary, Ikot-Ekpene
- Spiritan International School of Theology, Attakwu
- Seat of Wisdom Seminary, Owerri

- Missionary Seminary of Saint Paul, Abuja
- Dominican Institute of Philosophy and Theology, Samonda, Ibadan
- Seminary of All Saints, Uhiele, Ekpoma
- Blessed Iwene Tansi Major Seminary, Onistha
- Saint Thomas Aquinas' Major Seminary, Makurdi
- Ss. Peter and Paul Major Seminary, Ibadan
- Good Shepherd Major Seminary, Kaduna
- Saint Augustine's Major Seminary, Jos.

At the end of the convention, we made the following observations and propositions:

1. The only remedy to the scourge of ethnicism in the church is a continuous conscientization of her members on the need to see our humanity in Christ. This can be done through seminars, workshops and every conducive opportunity at public gatherings.
2. There is a need for a re-orientation in what inculturation implies.
3. An objective implementation of sanctions whenever one commits a crime derived from ethnicism.
4. Freedom of information should be emphasised so as to have access to more objective information.
5. Adequate and proper conscience and character formation of the entire populace should be worked towards since from them will arise future leaders.
6. Since corruption and greed still stare us on the face, there is need to continue the 'Prayer Against Bribery and Corruption' and other prayers of that intention. Concrete actions should however complement the prayers.
7. To curb the encroachment of materialism in our culture, each society should be encouraged to stop the quest for 'payback syndrome' from their members holding any public position, since he is there not only for them, but for the entire citizenry.
8. It is the responsibility of every culture to deviate from the conception that 'man should be defined based on what he possesses. Rather, who they are should matter most.
9. All forms of 'priest craft' should be curtailed, especially the attitude of hiding under the guise of preaching 'act of thanksgiving' only to extort money from people so as to enrich their purses.
10. In addressing the effects of materialism, pastors are to be adequately and constantly reminded and challenged about the need to joyfully live out the evangelical counsel of poverty.
11. More expositions on 'Eco-theology' is quite needed for it gives a deeper meaning to the concept of nature, and lay bear how man is to relate

with nature. It indeed brings out the relationship that should exist between man and nature as it was in the beginning (Genesis 1-2).

12. The proper integration of eco-theology is a vocation to all and sundry. This is because man realises his dignity and integrity when he relates appropriately to nature through this.

CONCLUSION

We are grateful to God for his divine mercy during the activities of this year's convention. We are also indebted to the Rectors of the Seminaries represented at the convention. We hope that the rightful acceptance and implementation of our propositions will go a long way to aid authentic human development in the Church in Africa.

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2007/2008

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2007/2008