

Editorial Preface

Man by nature, is a religious being (*Homo religiousus*). This is evident in the multiplicity of religions in the world, namely, Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, African Traditional Religion(s), and so on. Sadly, it is no longer news that religious unrest in Nigeria constitutes a threat to peaceful co-existence, human development, justice and social growth. It is also no news that at different points in the history of Nigeria different negative implications and crises have been recurrent and have claimed the lives of many, either due to clashes mostly between Christians and Muslims on community or political grounds, or due to the activities of some Islamic extremist groups like the Boko Haram, Ansaru, Islamic Movement of Nigeria (IMN) and others. These groups have caused a lot of havoc across the country but especially in the North. However, does this suggest that we should go our separate ways, living in isolation, denying our common identity as human beings created by one true God who endowed all with dignity evidenced by our being made "in His image and after His likeness"? (Gen. 1:26-27). Indubitably this will be counter productive to our realisation of what true religiosity entails. It is this consciousness that brings to bear the fact that peaceful co-existence among diverse religious adherents remains an essential factor for cohesion and amity in a religiously pluralistic society like Nigeria. But beyond any shadow of doubt, there are lucid evidences that show that more than a few upheavals globally and precisely in Nigeria, arise from warped religious interests and ideologies which have obvious effects on peace. The scapegoat in all this has come to be in recent time Islam that is on a global surge with accompanying implications for relations with people of other faiths.

It will be a grand dishonesty if we fail to acknowledge with all sense of respect the meaning of Islam which connotes "surrender, submission, commitment and peace". However, juxtaposing Islam's commitment to the attainment of complete peace through voluntary

submission to the divine will, with some of the attendant consequences of this same "complete submission to the divine will"; creates room for queries about Islam's tolerance level. This often beats the understanding of those who profess other creeds, and makes them question Islam's credentials in advancing the course of peaceful co-existence in Nigeria as enjoined by the Qur'an and Hadith. It is not regrettable to say that though the majority of Muslims are peaceful people, the radicals, according to All Intelligence Surveys around the world are estimated to be between 15-25%. Although the vast majority are peaceful Muslims, the high percentage of radical's calls for serious reflection. Such reflection needs to interrogate critically issues surrounding the current global resurgence in Islam as a faith.

Such resurgence has no doubt raised the tempo of religious intolerance, fanaticism, selfishness on the part of some religious personalities who now constitute a threat to peaceful co-existence not in Nigeria alone, but across the globe. It is against this backdrop that the theme: **THE GLOBAL ISLAMIC RESURGENCE AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR PEACEFUL CO-EXISTENCE IN NIGERIA**, was chosen for the 28th volume of National Association of Catholic Theology Students' (NACATHS') journal.

Hence, understanding the fact that each religion has its principles of engagement and interaction with other religions is important. However it is one thing to know that these exist, while their application in praxis is another case entirely. As a result, there is no veritable path to global and local interreligious peace and co-existence among adherents of the world's major religions: Christians and Muslims, other than putting into practice what they overtly preach to the world. This is a sure way for mitigating the current tension lining the brows of the world and preventing future occurrences. This is not to say we are to be oblivious of other obvious problems confronting humanity in our age which equally threaten our common existence and wellbeing. But the delicate nature of religious matters and how they could catalyse into insanity and strife make them require urgent handling. Religions of the world

must rise up to their duty of correcting misinformed consciences by truly imparting God-sanctioned values without admixtures that threaten peace.

This thought above anything else is the towering motif in this year's edition which falls under the broad umbrella of the global Christian search for common grounds among religions. This noble intention corresponds with NACATHS' avid resolution to contribute its quota to the development of African Christian Theology and the birth of the new era of peace.

I present to you articles contained in this journal, a fruit of contributions by different Catholic theological major seminaries and Institutes in Nigeria. We decided to give room for varied methodologies of research in this year's edition without any prejudice to the conscious efforts made over the years towards maintaining a unified research method. We adopted all the referencing styles to accommodate what other seminaries and institutes use as a mark of respect, unity in diversity. May we experience that peace that we long for in Nigeria and the world at large: *Lectio Beatus!*

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