

A COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AFTER A MEETING OF THE CATHOLIC BISHOPS OF IBADAN ECCLESIASTICAL PROVINCE HELD FROM MONDAY JANUARY 19-20, 2026 AT JUBILEE CONFERENCE CENTRE, IBADAN, OYO STATE.

SUSTAINING HOPE AND STRENGTHENING OUR GOOD EFFORTS

We, Catholic Bishops of Ibadan Ecclesiastical Province, comprising Ibadan Archdiocese, Ilorin, Ondo, Oyo, Ekiti and Osogbo Dioceses, after our first meeting for 2026 at the Jubilee Conference Centre, (JCC) Ibadan, having prayerfully deliberated on pertinent issues of Church and national interest, hereby issue the following Communique:

1. The Saving Mission of Jesus Christ

The Church exists to advance the mission of Jesus Christ. That mission expressed by the Saviour in the gospel of St. Luke offers liberty to captives, good news to the poor and hope for the oppressed. We thank God for the activities and events of the Jubilee Year of Hope which were recently concluded and which reassured our faithful and people that with God, hope does not disappoint us. We invite the faithful to continue to expand the frontiers of hope in our society by promoting at every opportunity the Social Teachings of the Church also known as Catholic Social Teachings (CST). The four cardinal principles of CST, namely: the Sanctity and Dignity of Human Life, the principle of Solidarity, the principle of Subsidiarity and the Common Good have proven to be very effective and reliable principles for social engineering and the advancement of the society in many parts of the world. We call on our experts, Priests and Religious to study, dissect and disseminate this treasure of the Church's solicitude so that it becomes a veritable tool for the formation of our citizens and the development of our nation.

2. The Foundational Role of Catechesis

At the close of the Jubilee Year ceremonies Pope Leo XIV started his catechesis on the Second Vatican Council in an effort to re-present to the faithful the treasures of the historic event. Catechesis stands at the centre of the pastoral enlightenment of the faithful. It helps the faithful enrich and expand their understanding of the Scriptures and the Sacred Tradition and their application to life today. It nurtures them to live more faithfully as disciples of Jesus Christ in their daily lives, especially through a life of prayer, justice, and loving service. It is incumbent that pastors of the Church continually teach and instruct the faithful in the tenets of the faith so that they can apply the faith to the vicissitudes of their daily life experience and encounter. Given the complexities of contemporary life and modern ideologies, ongoing catechetical formation is obligatory for all segments of the faithful especially the young people who are the main target of the new ideologies. As Bishops of Ibadan Ecclesiastical Province, we therefore recommend as a basic catechetical text for all our faithful, adult men and women, the Youth Catechism of the Catholic Church (YOUCAT), a very well prepared, analytical and colourful catechism presented in very accessible language for this age and time. The text, charitably sourced for our Ecclesiastical Province has now been endorsed by all the Bishops for use in Ibadan Ecclesiastical Province. We desire that it be put to good, profitable use by youths and adults including teachers and families as a spiritual resource.

3. Nigeria's New Zeal in Tackling Insecurity

We support the recent zealous change in approach of the Federal Government to the issue of insecurity in Nigeria aiming to stem the continuous loss of lives to mindless aggressors and criminals all over the country. A few developments in recent times have shown that when governments demonstrate the political will to act, even insecurity can be curtailed. We urge the government at all levels to sustain the current zeal to tackle insecurity through courageous policies and action, collaboration with external and internal organizations and with countries that can help our cause, adequate funding and equipping of the security agencies and continuous education of the public towards enhanced security. Federal, State and Local Authorities must be in agreement in criminalizing and prosecuting banditry, kidnapping, insurgency and all sorts of criminality if the current effort is to succeed. We call on all Nigerians to unite in the effort to reestablish security, peace and safety of all, regardless of religion, tribe or status. All life is sacred and nobody has the right to take someone else's life or seize or destroy somebody else's property without serious consequences. In this regard, the equal application of the law to all without fear or favour is a necessary strategy.

4. Ongoing Tax Reforms

The ongoing tax reforms have generated controversies all over the country in spite of the spirited effort of the authorities to explain its merits and benefits for the poor and the less privileged among us. Unfortunately, agents of misinformation have also been hard at work to discredit the new scheme in spite of the consultations that preceded its legislation. We urge the government and concerned authorities to continue to do all they can to allay the anxieties of the people, give the reforms a human face and give the most vulnerable among us the latitude to get used to the new tax regimes before applying the full force of the law. Altogether, fairness, transparency and accountability must govern the conduct of government and the tax authorities in this entire process.

5. The Education Sector

The recent signing of the agreement between the Federal Government and the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) after sixteen years of failures and disappointments, deserves an unmitigated commendation. This noble gesture including the Tertiary Education Trust Fund should be extended to private and mission universities given that they all train future leaders of the Nigerian nation. We urge that this commendable way forward which is expected to put an end to strikes and stress in the Nigerian Universities be closely monitored and implemented. We are also pleased by the presidential grants and loans to Nigerian youths for university education, for entrepreneurial and skills development, investments, the new National Policy on Almajiri Education and other programmes aimed at empowering and securing the future of Nigerian youths. Convinced that education is the bedrock of the development of any nation, we enjoin State and Local Governments nationwide to apply themselves manifestly to the improvement of educational facilities and to staff welfare in their jurisdictions. All such programmes must be periodically evaluated in order to eliminate bottlenecks and entropy in the system so as to attain the desired result.

6. Tackling Nigeria's Sundry Challenges

Rebuilding a welfarist society in Nigeria will require the cooperation of all segments and sectors of the Nigerian society. The Government and sundry authorities must however play the roles for which they occupy their exalted offices. These include security of life and property, provision of basic healthcare, critical infrastructure like stable electricity, water supply, motorable roads, incentives for agriculture, employment facilities and so on. For example, government must quickly address the strike of the health workers in Nigeria which has lasted for almost 2 months, and which has subjected the common people to considerable suffering and to scant access to healthcare, causing needless deaths and suffering. Anything short of this is unacceptable and tragic. Nigerians surely deserve better than what obtains at present whereby major road arteries between major cities especially in the Southwest remain deplorable and often impassable. While many relevant Federal Ministries continue to underperform, many correlating Ministries at the State Levels remain comatose and even moribund. In spite of many commendable initiatives from the Federal Government to kickstart and energize many critical sectors in Nigeria much more needs to be done overall to truly bring Nigeria back onto the path of progress and peace, as a country where everyone can call home.

7. Prayer Works with Good Works

As we embark on a New Year 2026, we, pastors of souls, call on all Nigerians while working for better times, not to relent in praying for our leaders and for the good of Nigeria. As a prayerful nation, prayer must be accompanied by a commitment to good works wherever we find ourselves. Whether as civil servants, workers in the public or private sectors we all have an obligation to work assiduously for justice, equity and the rule of law in order to make Nigeria great and better again. For this, tempting as it may be, we all must resist negativity and cynicism because we have no other country but this. We must pray for a change of heart and work harder as we embrace a better future with hope. This is not only desirable but possible according to the promise of Almighty God through the Prophet Ezekiel: "I shall gather you back from the peoples, I shall collect you in from the countries where you have been scattered ... I shall give them a single heart and I shall put a new spirit in them; I shall remove the heart of stone from their bodies and give them a heart of flesh, so that they can keep my laws and respect my laws and respect my judgments and put them into practice. Then they will be my people and I shall be their God' (Ezek. 11: 19-20).

.....

Most Rev 'Leke Gabriel Abegunrin

Chairman

.....

Most Rev John Akin Oyejola

Secretary