

An Agenda For Stronger, Protected And Refined Catholicism And Global Defense Of Christian Faith

“Gratulatio Pope Robert Francis Prevost (Pope Leo XIV)!”- Intersociety

...Nigeria long overdue for a second serving Cardinal in the person of Bishop Wilfred Chikpa Anagbe of Diocese of Makurdi

...beware of Papal Knighthood seekers from Nigeria’s South-East who are more loyal to jihadist caliphate than the Mother Church and defense of Faith

...time for detachment of Nigerian priests and bishops from materialistic evangelism and dirty waters of Nigerian politics

...jihadists cut down growth of Catholics and defense of Faith in Nigeria by 30% in sixteen years (since 2009) and uprooted or threatened sixteen Catholic dioceses with religocide

...another golden opportunity for convocation of Third Vatican Council to frontally address a myriad of challenges facing global Catholics and defense of Christian Faith

Onitsha, Eastern Nigeria **Sunday May 11, 2025**

The Leadership of the International Society for Civil Liberties and Rule of Law (Intersociety), Nigeria’s leading research and investigative advocacy group, thematically working on democracy and accountable governance, civil liberties and rule of law, citizens’ security and safety and freedom of religion or worship since 2010; is heartily congratulating Augustinian Priest, Father Robert Francis Prevost of Chicago, Illinois in the United States of America on his emergence on Thursday, May 8, 2025 as “267th Pope” of the global Catholics, numbering 1.4billion. The new Pope Leo XIV has by the above become the newest Successor to the Throne of Saint Peter De Apostle who was the first Pope that reigned about AD35 to AD70. The consensus choice of new Pope Leo XIV which was devoid of rancor and unhealthy rivalries is also worthy of commendation. The new Pope is also commendably relatively younger, having been made Pope at the age of 69. Father Robert Francis Prevost as the new Pope is also congratulated as the new leader of world’s estimated 2.4billion Christians (1.4billion Catholics and 1billion other Christians) spreading across more than 157 countries and territories of the world.

Moving forward, now that “the Seat of Pope is no longer vacant (Ex Post Pontiff Sede Vacante)”, time has come for an Agenda for Stronger, Protected and Refined Catholicism and Global Defense of Christian Faith. **The Intersociety** is therefore calling on new Pope Leo XIV to perform like, if not more than Father Carol Wojtyla (Pope John Paul 11), who admirably reigned as 264th Pope from October 16, 1978, to March 2, 2005; a reformist Catholic Pontiff of unparalleled reference who on May 7, 2001 became the first pope to visit a mosque when he entered the Great Omayyad Mosque in Damascus, Syria, during which both the Pope and the Syrian Islamic leaders offered a minute’s silent at the tomb of Saint John the Baptist located inside the Mosque. The site was overrun and conquered by the Jihadists and the Mosque built on it; and its church demolished.

Time To Reward Persecuted Bishop Wilfred Anagbe With The Post Of Cardinal:

One of the major tasks facing new Pope Leo XIV is entrustment of the leadership of the Catholic Church in Nigeria in the hands of brave, courageous and unpurchasable Catholic Bishops and Priests; especially against the backdrop of widespread attacks on defenseless members of the Church and their church buildings and schools by the country's congregated, aggregated and clandestinely coordinated and well-funded Islamic Jihadists and their patrons. It has also been observed that leadership of the Catholic Church in Nigeria has been enveloped by "builders of heavenly paradises on earth" and disciples of "materialistic evangelism"; which explains why the retardation of the growth of the Church across the country has risen to an apogee. The above is to the extent that in the outgoing first five months of 2025 in Nigeria, not less than 14 Catholic Priests have been abducted, and one killed by Jihadists and other merchants of death.

It is our observation that Nigeria is long overdue for a second serving Cardinal as the country is presently with four Cardinals, out of which three have retired and reached over 80 years of age, including Francis Cardinal Arinze (92), Anthony Cardinal Okogie (88) and John Cardinal Onaiyekan (81). In other words, Nigeria with second largest Catholics in Africa after Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is too big to be left with one serving Cardinal in the person of Peter Cardinal Okpaleke who is 62 years of age and was elevated to cardinal on August 27, 2022, by Late Pope Francis.

Therefore, since bestowment of a Cardinal involves several considerations including bravery, fearlessness, selflessness and full dedication to the work of God including untiring defense of Christian Faith, **Intersociety** is calling on new Pope Robert Francis Prevost (Pope Leo XIV) and his Distinguished College of Cardinals to evaluate the person and character of His Lordship, Bishop Wilfred Chikpa Anagbe of the Catholic Diocese of Makurdi, Benue State. As a matter of fact, His Lordship, Bishop Wilfred Anagbe should be elevated as "Nigeria's second serving Cardinal". Father Wilfred Chikpa Anagbe is also found to be "within the energetic age" of 60, having been born in 1965. The fiery Prelate was in the international news in recent months gone by, during which he bravely spoke out about the massacre of Christians by Fulani Jihadists in Benue State. The fiery Catholic Bishop also informed that his life and dignity of human person are under threat; in addition to his rights to personal liberty and freedom of movement, assembly, thought, conscience, religion and expression facing serious infringement and attack.

It is not only that he is facing serious threat and persecution from the State and radical Islamists but, according to him, "his Diocese of Makurdi has lost more than 14 parishes to Fulani Jihadists in recent times. It is also our demand that Rev Father Remigius Ihyula of the Catholic Diocese of Makurdi and Parish Priest of St Mary's Genade in Benue State; another courageous Catholic cleric should be made a Monsignor or possibly consecrated a Bishop. The Papacy of Pope Leo XIV will remarkably be remembered in Nigeria if many Catholic Bishops and Priests are detached from dirty waters of the country's politics and materialistic evangelism through transactional pulpit sermons and materialistic evangelical ministrations. The above is so bad that a greater number of Bishops and Priests in the country are so attached to legislative and executive political office holders particularly Govs and Federal Lawmakers that they hardly bare their independent minds or rise in strong condemnation of attacks against the Church of Jesus Christ and its followers.

New Pope Leo XIV and his Distinguished College of Cardinals are also called upon to be wary of “Papal Knighthood seekers” from Nigeria’s South-East where four out of the Region’s five serving Govs belong to Catholic Faith, but have been found in **Intersociety’s recent reports** to be more loyal to enemies of the Church and Christian Faith than their professed denomination; to the extent that ministries of lands under their gubernatorial midwifery are found to be granting reckless approvals for procurement of lands for the colony and settlement of Islamic Jihadists from where widespread attacks and other forms of religious violence are unleashed on native Christians and their properties including dwelling houses, farmlands and sacred places of worship and learning. For purpose of seeking to govern their States for four or eight years, they go to the extent of mortgaging the faith, territory, personal and property security and safety of their citizens; yet they turn around and wangle their way to the Vatican with stashed away public funds, with which they use and procure “Papal Knighthood” from the same Church they conspiratorially work tirelessly to destroy.

Further, in addition to the fact that new Pope Leo XIV is very conversant with the goings on in Nigeria in the hands of the country’s Islamic Jihadists and their patrons; having been to Nigeria as recently as in 2016, it is our further information that Islamic jihadists in Nigeria have cut down growth of Catholics and defense of Christian Faith by 30% in sixteen years (since 2009), during which not less than sixteen Catholic dioceses were uprooted or threatened with religocide. The above is also to the extent that the Archdiocese of Kaduna, covering Diocese of Sokoto-with Parishes of Zamafara, Kebbi and Katsina have been uprooted and presently exist with skeletal parishes and outstations. Benue State’s three Dioceses of Makurdi, Gboko and Okukpo have also been uprooted and at least 14 parishes closed or shut down. In Plateau State, the Archdiocese of Jos, comprising Dioceses of Bauchi, Jalingo (Taraba State), Pankshin (Plateau State), Shendam (Plateau State), Wukari (Taraba State) and Yola (Adamawa State) are in nadir of being uprooted; likewise, Dioceses of Minna and Kontagora in Niger State where dominant Christian communities in Shiroro, Munya, Rafi, Paikoro, etc., have been uprooted and taken over by the combined forces of the Islamic Jihadists led by Jihadist Boko Haram and Jihadist Fulani Herdsmen/Bandits.

The Catholic Diocese of Lokoja under the Archdiocese of Abuja is also under serious threat of extermination in the hands of the Jihadist forces, recently joined by “Mahmuda Islamic Jihadists and their patrons”. In the past sixteen years of Boko Haram Islamic Uprising in July 2009, the growth of the Catholic Church and defense of Christian Faith in Nigeria have been cut down by at least 30%; during which estimated 19,000 churches and about 4000 Christian schools were attacked or razed or burned down or closed down; during which estimated 40million Northern Christians were uprooted, threatened or forced to flee their ancestral homes or communities to avoid being hacked to death for being Christians; during which tens of thousands of defenseless Christians were hacked to death or abducted and permanently disappeared or brutally tortured to death in captivity; during which estimated 20,000 square miles and hundreds of thousands of hectares of lands belonging to indigenous Christians and estimated 1000 Christian communities were uprooted, seized from their ancestral owners, occupied and Islamically renamed till date. That is to say that had the above troubling situations avoided or not risen in the past sixteen years, Catholicism and defense of Christian Faith in Nigeria would have grown by not less than 30%.

A Golden Opportunity For Third Vatican Council Beckons:

A golden opportunity has beckoned and provided itself following the emergence of Pope Leo XIV for convocation of "A Third Vatican Council". The last Vatican Council, known as "the Second Vatican Council or Vatican II" was convened in 1962 to address relations between the Catholic Church and then modern world and was opened by Pope John XXIII on 11 October 1962 and ended after three years by Pope Paul VI on 8 December 1965. Sixty (60) years after, another Vatican Council (111) is urgently needed to decisively deal with teething challenges facing the Catholic Church and defense of Christian Faith. Such myriads of challenges include materialism in the Church of Jesus Christ or transactional Christianity, priesthood and materialism, priesthood and homosexuality and other LGBTQ related issues-particularly those considered to be highly offensive against "the Order of Nature". The rest are priesthood and marriage, priesthood and politics, priesthood and materialism, priesthood and moral ethics, priesthood and dogma of faith, brotherhood and marriage, sisterhood and marriage, sisterhood and lesbianism, ecumenism, church and jihadism, church and fanaticism, church and politics, church and economy, church and ICT, church and intrastate and interstate insecurity and other unsafe conditions, church and growth, development and defense of faith, transactional evangelism in Christendom, church and customs and church and traditional religions, etc.

End.

Signed:

For: International Society for Civil Liberties and Rule of Law

/s E. Umeagbalasi

- **Emeka Umeagbalasi**
Criminologist And Conflict and Peace Studies' Scholar
Lead-Researcher/Head
International Society for Civil Liberties and Rule of Law

/s. C. Umeche

- **Chinwe Umeche, Esquire**
Human Rights Lawyer/Head, Democracy and Good Governance
International Society for Civil Liberties and Rule of Law

/s. E. B. Umeagu

- **Engineer Ekene Bede Umeagu**
Head, Religious Freedom and Human Rights
International Society for Civil Liberties and Rule of Law
- **Digital Contacts:**
Mobile/WhatsApp Lines: +2348174090052, +23481000980
Email: info@intersociety-ng.org
Website: <https://intersociety-ng.org>