



# CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE OF LAGOS

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SPECIAL CIRCULAR

**SEPTEMBER, 2016/No. 048.01**

## **GUIDELINES FOR LITURGICAL CELEBRATIONS ESPECIALLY DURING PARISH RETREATS, OUTREACHES OR CRUSADES ORGANIZED BY PIOUS ASSOCIATIONS IN THE ARCHDIOCESE OF LAGOS**

**TO ALL PRIESTS AND RELIGIOUS WORKING IN THE ARCHDIOCESE OF LAGOS, AND THE LAY FAITHFUL**

**Dear Brothers and Sisters in the Lord:**

Recall our Archdiocesan Circular, no. 039 of the month of December, 2015, where we put a temporary ban on the invitation of Priests from outside the Archdiocese for retreats or programmes without expressed permission and clearance from the Archbishop. We took that step to stem the tide of liturgical aberrations and rein in the increasing trend of abuses within the liturgy that mock our faith and reduce our worship to entertainment or opportunities to exploit the Religious credulity of the faithful.

Since Vatican II, the Mass has fallen victim of various irregularities, abuses, fabrications and private innovations. In the name of inculturation and adaptation, extraneous elements and practices have been introduced into the liturgy in total disregard of the rubrics. In doing this, people lose a sense of the sacred and attempt to model the Mass on show-business.

We wish to state unequivocally that the liturgy is an act of public worship celebrated in praise of God and not for enhancing the image or popularity of any minister. It is not the individual - priest or layman - or any particular group that celebrates the liturgy. The liturgy, has its own history, rich tradition, unique rubrics and norms, which we cannot add to or subtract from without a due process.

After prayerful and due consideration, we have decided to expand the authorization process for inviting priests from outside the Archdiocese to include the Deans. Deans may grant permission to invite priests from outside the Archdiocese for retreats and such other spiritual exercises. However, each priest to be invited **MUST** be given the following particular regulations to guide him in his activities during the retreats and other spiritual exercises. To this end, the following are not allowed in the Archdiocese:

- ❖ Issuing of account numbers apart from the hosting parish account to which moneys shall be paid for any purpose
- ❖ Selling of items such as candles, oil, salt, mustard seed, handkerchief, etc.
- ❖ Indiscriminate use of sacramentals/oils during programmes
- ❖ Distribution of personal envelopes/forms for prayer requests with any amount of cash to be enclosed
- ❖ Using of books that are not approved by the Church for blessing of various sacramentals
- ❖ Asking people to perform or carry out any profane exercise and/or rituals that appear fetish
- ❖ Blessing of items that are not religious articles such as crude oil, "back to sender oil", "coconut oil", etc.
- ❖ Disrespect for the Blessed Sacrament in the form of dancing to traditional drum beats in full vestments, walking along the aisles with the monstrance or carrying it with one hand with the other holding a microphone, etc.
- ❖ Requesting the people of God to throw money onto the sanctuary
- ❖ Inviting people unto the sanctuary during fund-raising and launching
- ❖ Unnecessarily keeping people very late in the Church.
- ❖ Soliciting for money for oneself, for private project or requesting for gifts, cars and other accessories. People should give voluntarily
- ❖ Celebrating Mass or exposing the Blessed Sacrament in private homes
- ❖ Celebrating Baptism and other sacraments in private homes
- ❖ Organizing so-called harvest and bazaar in private homes, Event Centres or Hotels, etc.

- ❖ Invited priests bringing along the so-called 'intercessors or ministers' i.e. Lay persons meant to perform functions and brought along on the entourage of such priests. If there is any need, members of Prayer Groups in such parishes should be engaged.

The above regulations are made in order to preserve the integrity of the most precious gift of God to His Church and the distinctive patrimony of the Catholic Church. No one has a right to give an arbitrary interpretation to these guidelines different from what is expressed therein. We shall take serious exception to any such attempt and it shall not be taken lightly.

+ Alfred Adewale Martins

Archbishop of Lagos

14<sup>th</sup> September 2016

The Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross