

Nigerian bishops caution government about religious prophecies

Peter Ajayi Dada | Catholic News Service | Jan. 17, 2013
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Five Catholic bishops cautioned Nigerian government leaders about a series of statements from Pentecostal and indigenous religious leaders portending tragedy.

The bishops of the Ibadan province said in a statement released Monday that the warnings, or visions as described by the religious leaders, may be a tactic to control the actions of political and government officials.

"We feel a sense of duty to call for caution in this regard and warn that, while prophetic gifts, private revelations and visions may have a religious basis, care must be taken not to see them as substitutes for personal and corporate responsibility," the bishops said.

The statement was signed by Archbishop Felix Alaba Job of Ibadan and Bishop Felix Ajakaye of Ekiti on behalf of the bishops of Ilorin, Ondo and Osogbo.

Saying they have experienced a series of visions or prophecies, the Pentecostal and indigenous religious leaders have published and distributed warnings that certain government leaders would die or be impeached in the new year. The warnings have sent jitters through government offices, especially because several provincial leaders were being treated for various ailments outside of Nigeria in mid-January.

A country that fails to adhere to its constitution and the rule of law in its decision-making risks being overrun by false prophecies and visions based on self-interest and greed, the bishops said.

They called on Nigerians and government leaders to develop new attitudes and revitalized hope to overcome the numerous challenges facing the country in the new year.

"The seemingly intractable challenges of insecurity and violence through bombings and mindless killings, kidnapping, armed robbery and ethnic clashes still persist amid repeated assurance by government and security agencies to be on top of the situation and have largely remained unrealized," the statement said.

The bishops also warned about pervasive corruption in the government that limits efforts to address the challenges.

At the same time, the bishops commended those in government and in other settings who have attempted to improve conditions in the country. They called for continued prayer for guidance to improve the overall lives of Nigerians.

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