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# AFRICA/NIGERIA - The "catalyzing" Council for the growth of the Church in Africa, according to the Bishop of Sokoto

Abuja (Agenzia Fides) - The Second Vatican Council, which opened exactly 50 years ago, on 11 October 1962, was a "catalyst" for the growth of the Church in Africa. This was stated by His Exc. Mgr. Matthew Hassan Kukah, Bishop of Sokoto (Nigeria) in an article taken from Catholic News Service of Nigeria. 10% of the 2000 Council Fathers came from Africa, recalls Mgr. Kukah. The Bishop also outlined some of the fruits of the Council (universal call to holiness by all faithful; the change in the liturgical reform) that were, in turn, positive developments for the Church in Africa. These include the emergence of the local clergy; the translation of the Bible into local languages; ecumenical and interreligious dialogue; the involvement of the lay faithful in the Church and society.
"Opening up to the laity has enabled them to bring their academic and professional gifts to the Church, enriching the Church in every aspect and enabling many lay faithful to make major contributions in almost every area of the Catholic Church's life," said Mgr. Kukah, who added "More astonishing for the Church has been the vitality of women groups. In most parts of Africa, women remain the most powerful and most forceful expression of the life and energy that holds the Church. Ceremonies such as ordinations and other public functions would not be the same without women. Uneducated women have now found their voices as composers. The youth have also found their voices heard and their vitality has been a source of enrichment. "(L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 11/10/2012)

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