



AFRICA/NIGERIA - The appointment to Cardinal of Mgr. Onaiyekan: a sign of recognition of the growth of the Nigerian Church

Rome (Agenzia Fides) - "The appointment of the Archbishop of Abuja, Mgr. John Olorunfemi Onaiyekan, to Cardinal, has aroused the pride of the whole of Nigeria," says to Fides Agency Fr. Patrick Tor Alumuku, Director of Social Communications of the Archdiocese of Abuja. Cardinal-elect Onaiyekan will receive the biretta at the Consistory on 24 November. "The participation of at least 200 people from the Archdiocese of Abuja is expected, in addition to other people from the rest of Nigeria," said Fr. Alumuku. "When the Holy Father announced that our Archbishop would become Cardinal, all Nigerians expressed joy" continues Fr. Alumuku. "The Head of State immediately sent the Cardinal elected a congratulatory message, and all the religious leaders of the Country, Christians and Muslims have expressed their appreciation. A cheering crowd welcomed the Cardinal-elect on his arrival at the airport in Abuja, on his return from Rome, where he participated in the Synod. At an ecclesial level, the Catholic community is happy, and thanked His Holiness for his confidence in the Church of Nigeria, as demonstrated as well by the appointment of the Nigerian Mgr. Fortunatus Nwachukwu, Nunzio in Nicaragua," adds the Director of Social Communications of the Archdiocese of Abuja.

Fr. Alumuku points out that "the Church in Nigeria is growing: just look at the hundreds of faithful who participate in every Sunday Mass and the large number of vocations.

Some diocesan seminaries can accommodate up to 300 seminarians." "The Church is also very active in the social field and gives concrete hope of life to the population, thanks to hundreds of schools, hospitals and other social institutions throughout Nigeria. The Church is a catalyst for the social development of the Country," said Fr. Alumuku.

Fr. Alumuku is also Director of the Nigerian Catholic television, the Catholic Television of Nigeria, which began broadcasting on 1 January 2010. "At the moment we have some programs which are transmitted through a private network, the African Independent Television. Among these is the Sunday Mass which is broadcast throughout the country," says Fr. Alumuku. "Our goal is to gradually increase the hours of programming, bringing them first to eight, then twelve, and finally to twenty-four hours a day in order to have our own network of transmissions" he concludes. (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 16/11/2012)