

THREATS TO HUMAN LIFE IN NIGERIA TODAY:

A TALK DELIVERED

BY

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CATECHETICAL WEEK PROGRAMME

AT THE

CHURCH OF THE ASSUMPTION ASOKORO

- **Life as we knew it ten years ago, is considerably different from what we have now in Nigeria. Although nothing was perfect then, but the value placed on human life is currently low or I dare say, non-existent, as so many events and circumstances have claimed and are still claiming Nigerian lives – men, women, and children. What then shall we say is the way forward from this unfortunate state?**



- First off, let us look a little closer at the situation through verifiable statistics;
- **Boko Haram Insurgencies –** According to the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), Boko Haram has been linked to the deaths of more than thirty-seven thousand people since 2011, according to CFR's Nigeria Security Tracker, which monitors political violence in the country. About half of those killed were suspected Boko Haram militants, while roughly 45 percent were civilians and 5 percent were security forces.



- **Boko Haram has also displaced millions and put them at risk of starvation, jeopardized education and health services, stalled humanitarian aid efforts, and undercut government authority in Nigeria and abroad. According to Doctors without Borders, as at July 2017, 240 children had died from malnutrition in IDP camps at Borno state.**



- **Farmers/Herdsman Clashes** – According to Amnesty International 2017/2018 Report on communal clashes, Inter-communal violence resulted in more than 549 deaths and the displacement of thousands in 12 states. In February, 21 villagers were killed in an attack by suspected herdsman in three communities in the Atakad district of Kaura, Kaduna state. Witnesses said the herdsman killed, looted, and burned the villagers' houses. In June, a communal clash in the Mambilla Plateau of Taraba state left scores of people dead, mostly herdsman and their families. In September, at least 20 people were killed when suspected herdsman invaded Ancha village in the Miango district of Jos, Plateau state, after a misunderstanding between villagers and herdsman residing in the community.

- **As at 2017, October, 27 people were killed by suspected herdsmen in a classroom where they were sheltering after three days of attacks in the Nkyie-Doghwro community of Bassa, Plateau state. In December, herdsmen attacked at least five villages in Demsa LGA in Adamawa state to avenge the massacre of up to 57 people, mostly children, in November in nearby Kikan community. Residents described being attacked by a fighter jet and a military helicopter as they attempted to flee. At least 86 people were killed by the herdsmen and air force bombing. Also to be remembered are the various attacks by herdsmen in Benue State.**

- **Abortion** – According to Guttmacher Institute, In spite of Nigeria’s highly restrictive abortion law, an estimated 1.25 million induced abortions occurred in 2012. The number doubled from an estimated 610,000 in 1996 because of both population growth and an increase in the rate of abortion. Within Nigeria, rates of abortion vary: In 2012, there were 27 abortions per 1,000 women aged 15–49 in the South West and North Central zones; 31 per 1,000 in the North West and South East zones; and 41 and 44 per 1,000 in the North East and South South zones, respectively.



- **Ritual Killings** – The Force Criminal Investigation Department of the Nigeria Police Force recently revealed that ritual killings were on the rise due to the proliferation of two kinds of people; the poor, who want to get rich with ease and are assured by native doctors that they could cross over to the other side of life if they can provide listed human parts.
- The stupendously rich and affluent in the society, who want to acquire more riches or political power and, are told that there can be no easier way than to sacrifice the lives of fellow human beings.



- **Extra-judicial Killings** – It is commonplace to find Nigerian citizens being killed by Armed Forces over random skirmishes. In 2018, it was recorded that a certain Linda Angela Igwetu was shot dead by a police officer, a day to her passing out parade from the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC). Also, one Anita Akapson, a staff of NEMA was killed by police close to her house, they cited a case of mistaken identity. The Apo 6 is still refresh in the FCT and recently the Nigerian Army tweeted that it does not have rubber bullets.



- **This tweet was in responds to cries by both local and international communities condemning the use of live bullets on the armless members of the Islamic Movement of Nigeria (IMN) popularly known as the Shiites. Just last weekend the IMN released the names of 34 of their members killed by the Nigeria Army in the clashes at Zuba and Nyanya. The IMN lawyer, Femi Falana, SAN this morning stated that its client has lost over 492 of its members to the bullets of the Nigerian Army and the Police.**

- **Road Accidents** – Everyone knows there are two major contributory factors to road accidents – bad roads and over-speeding, the former being a consistent culprit due to bad maintenance culture and outright neglect. According to the FRSC, in 2017, there were 4,410 deaths resulting from road accidents. Statistics from National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) reported by Channelstv.com on 28th August 2018 shows that 1,331 Nigerians died in road crashes in the second quarter of 2018.

- **Yinka Odumakin in an article titled ‘Nigeria as a killing field’ published on the 13th March, 2018 in Vanguard online, stated that within 10 weeks of 2018, Nigeria has lost 1,351 to violent deaths. The writer brought out statistics of deaths in troubled zones of the world and the number of deaths recorded.**

- **Deaths in troubled zones**

- **1,300+ – Allied Democratic Forces insurgency (1996–present)**
- **1,295+ – Siachen conflict (1984–present)**
- **1,229+ – Basque conflict (1959–2011)**
- **1,227–5,600 – Kargil War (1999)**
- **1,119+ – Post-coup unrest in Egypt (2013–2014) (2013–2014)[**
- **1,043+ – Burundian unrest (2015–present)**
- **1,000–1,500 – Cabinda conflict (1994–present)**
- **1,000+ – Djiboutian Civil War (1991–1994)**

- **1,000+ – 1991–92 South Ossetia War (1991–1992)[172]**
- **1,000+ – Xinjiang conflict (1960–present)**
- **1,000+ – Chincha Islands War (1864–1866)**
- **907 – Falklands War (1982)**
- **898 – Barbary Wars (1801–1815)**
- **846 – 2011 Egyptian revolution (2011)**
- **820 – Syrian Civil War spillover in Lebanon (2011–2017)**
- **808 – Sino-Russian border conflicts (1652-1689)**
- **803-1303 – Conflict in Najran, Jizan and Asir (2015-present)**

- **789–1,874 – 2001–02 India–Pakistan standoff (2001–2002)**
- **771 – Insurgency in Egypt (2013–present) (2013–present)**
- **740 – Indonesia–Malaysia confrontation (1963–1966)**
- **722 – Kamwina Nsapu rebellion (2016–present)**
- **700–800 – Anglo-Aro War (1901-1902)**
- **659–2,496 – Russia–Georgia war (2008)**
- **643–1,500 – Sudanese conflict in South Kordofan and Blue Nile (2011–present)**
- **[547 – Cyprus crisis (1955–64) (1955–1964)**
- **542 – East Prigorodny Conflict (1992)**

- **422 – Franco-Thai War (1940–1941)**
- **339 – Turkey–ISIL conflict (2015–present)**
- **327 – RENAMO insurgency (2013–present)**
- **275–569 – Second Afar insurgency (1995–present)**
Part of the Eritrean–Ethiopian border conflict
- **236 – Batwa-Luba clashes (2013–present)**
- **206–345 – Arab separatism in Khuzestan (1922–present)**
- **200 – 1935 Yazidi revolt (1935)**
- **174–194 – United States occupation of Veracruz (1914)**
- **159 – ISIL insurgency in Tunisia (2015–present)**
- **158 – Dissident Irish Republican campaign (1998–present)**

- **126 – 2016 Kasese clashes (2016)**
- **115 – The Pool War (2016–present)**
- **102-227 – India–Pakistan military confrontation (2016–present)**
- **95 – 2013 Guinea clashes (2013)**
- **84–134 – Lahad Datu standoff (2013)**
- **82 – Quasi-War (1798-1800)**
- **82 – North-West Rebellion (1885)**
- **71 – Paraguayan People’s Army insurgency (2005–present)**
- **63 – Ten-Day War (1991)**

- **46 – Annexation of Dadra and Nagar Haveli (1954)**
- **39-111 – India–Pakistan border skirmishes (2014–2015) (2014-2015)**
- **37 – 2013 India–Pakistan border skirmishes (2013)**
- **36 – DHKP/C insurgency in Turkey (1990–present)**
- **36 – 2016 Niger Delta conflict (2016–Present)**
- **[189] – Part of the Conflict in the Niger Delta**
- **12–61 – 2017 Afghanistan–Pakistan border skirmish (2017) – Part of the Afghanistan–Pakistan skirmishes**
- **11–30 – 2008 Kufra conflict (2008)**
- **8 – 2011 India–Pakistan border skirmish (2011).**

Read more at:

<https://www.vanguardngr.com/2018/03/nigeria-killing-field/>

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THE WAY FORWARD

Jesus' Teachings

- **Jesus Christ is a model of virtue for us as Christians and as the Scripture says, according to the fifth commandment, thou shall not kill. This is not negotiable, but in our society today, people give all kinds of rationalizations for murder, and some of us are beginning to accept it, take for instance, abortion, and to drive the issue closer home, the recent clash between the Shiite Muslims and the Nigerian Military. Some of us were in support of the shoot to kill tactic adopted by the Military, would Jesus do the same?**

Anger as murder – We must realize that anger as a vice can be equated to murder. How is this possible? When we find ourselves getting angry at someone for whatever reason, our hearts manifests evil thoughts and as such, we become liable to judgment. God is concerned with the state of our heart as well as our outer adherence to His commandments. He considers anger towards one another just as bad as murder.

Man's Response

- **Be Concerned – As in the case of Lazarus and the Rich man, we need to be conscientious towards others, not out of fear of being condemned to hell, but out of love for neighbor. When we are offended by anyone we need to forgive without bias. We must also show acceptance and concern towards all, just like Jesus did, we should avoid being sectional. I advocate the abolition of cultural, ethnic groups in the Church as they are timed bombs against the unity of the Body of Christ.**

- **Say Something – If we see anything condemnable, it is our duty to speak out against it without fear or favour. Sometimes our silence in the face of injustice, is automatically taking sides with the devil and we all know he has nothing to offer except evil and destruction. We need to maintain our Christian faith at all times in all situations.**

As difficult as it can be, we must avoid anger, hatred and vengeance. Leave everything to God, He alone knows how best to deal with all challenges as they occur.

- **Protect Life from Womb to Tomb** – We should never be in support of anything that cuts life short, especially in our professional and domestic lives. There is no excuse for any form of nonchalance towards practices and activities that threaten the thriving of human life, regardless of a difference in religious or ethnic affiliations. Sex education should be promoted among teenagers and natural family planning should be taught extensively to the married.

- **Promote Peace, Not War** – As we are all looking to change the ongoing security narrative in Nigeria, it is important that we all recognize that it is our responsibility to be mindful of what we push through our social media accounts, as well as associations with others. Peace is what should be foremost on all we do, not fanning the embers of discord and disunity. Our nation needs to be united along all spheres of human interaction.
- May God bless our country, Nigeria with His peace. Amen.
- Thank you.