

# **Resolution Condemning Violence Against Christians, Especially Catholics, in Nigeria**

## **South Carolina Council of Catholic Women – Diocese of Charleston**

### **Purpose**

To express deep concern regarding the ongoing violence, persecution, and attacks against Christians, especially Catholics, in Nigeria; to affirm solidarity with the Church and the persecuted faithful; and to encourage prayer, advocacy, and action in the pursuit of justice, religious freedom, and peace.

**Whereas**, the Catholic Church teaches that every human person is created in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:27), and that violence against the innocent violates this sacred dignity; and

**Whereas**, Jesus Christ declares, “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake” (Matthew 5:10), and identifies Himself with those who suffer (Matthew 25:40); and

**Whereas**, religious freedom is a fundamental human right, and governments have a moral duty to protect it (Second Vatican Council, *Dignitatis Humanae*, no. 2); and

**Whereas**, Christians in Nigeria, especially Catholics, continue to experience violence, kidnappings, and attacks against churches, clergy, and religious institutions because of their faith; and

**Whereas**, Pope Leo XIII taught, “Justice therefore forbids, and reason itself forbids, the State to be godless” (*Immortale Dei*, no. 6), affirming the duty of civil authorities to uphold justice and protect religious communities; and

**Whereas**, Pope Francis repeatedly expressed sorrow for the victims of violence in Nigeria and has called for peace, justice, and protection for Christian communities, praying:

“I pray that security, justice and peace prevail in Nigeria, a beloved country that has suffered various forms of violence. I pray in particular for the rural Christian communities... who have unceasingly been victims of violence”; and

**Whereas**, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and the Holy See have expressed grave concern about the ongoing persecution of Christians in Nigeria and have urged the international community to defend religious freedom and human dignity.

**Now, therefore, be it resolved that the South Carolina Council of Catholic Women:**

1. **Condemns** all acts of violence and persecution against Christians in Nigeria, especially Catholic clergy, religious, and lay faithful.
2. **Affirms its solidarity** with the Catholic Church in Nigeria and pledges prayerful support for those who suffer for their faith.

3. **Urges the government of Nigeria** to protect all citizens, uphold religious freedom, and hold perpetrators of violence accountable.
4. **Encourages the United States government and the international community** to advocate for religious freedom and the protection of Christians in Nigeria.
5. **Commits to ongoing prayer** for peace, justice, healing, and the safety of those persecuted for their faith.
6. **Directs that copies of this resolution** be sent to the Bishop of Charleston, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, the National Council of Catholic Women, the South Carolina Congressional Delegation and the South Carolina Catholic Conference.

## Sources

The Holy Bible, New Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition. Genesis 1:27.

The Holy Bible, New Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition. Matthew 5:10; Matthew 25:40.

Second Vatican Council. *Dignitatis Humanae (Declaration on Religious Freedom)*. 1965.

Associated Press. Reports on attacks, kidnappings, and violence against Christian communities in Nigeria.

Leo XIII. *Immortale Dei (On the Christian Constitution of States)*. 1885, no. 6.

Francis. Angelus Address and public prayers for victims of violence in Nigeria, in which he prayed for “security, justice and peace” and for Christian communities who have been “unceasingly... victims of violence.” Vatican News reporting.

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. Statements and letters expressing solidarity with persecuted Christians and urging the protection of religious freedom and human dignity, including communications regarding Nigeria.

Submitted by: Michele Bunker, SCCCW Resolutions Committee