

The Making of a Bishop: An Excursus on Bishop Kundi's Episcopal Appointment, Synodal Approach and Policies

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Abstract

The process of making a Bishop is one that is “shrouded in secrecy” (as some would think), hence a canonical act that is rarely talked about even by experts in Canon Law. As Bishop Julius Kundi marks five years at the helm of Kafanchan Diocese, this article delves into his journey to becoming a Bishop, his innovative leadership style, and the impact of his policies on the diocese as a metaphor that graphically captures the experience of a typical Catholic Bishop world over. The article explores his humility and wisdom in handling challenges, his commitment to fostering spiritual and social growth, and the creative novelties that define his Episcopacy. From the rigorous process that led to his ordination to his inclusive and collaborative approaches to governance, Bishop Kundi's five years in office stand as a testimony to servant leadership and progressive transformation in the church. This research employs the descriptive method that outlines the process of making a Bishop viz- a - viz a review of the episcopal ministry of the dependent variable (Bishop Kundi), in the light of his stewardship as the chief shepherd of Kafanchan Diocese, without exerting any influence on it. The research explores the use of extant ecclesiastical administrative procedures to substantiate the Bishop's willingness to do things by the books and in a synodal way in managing the portion of the People of God entrusted to his care. The choice of the dependent variable of this topic is informed by the researcher's deep knowledge of the policies of the dependent variable and to an extent his person.

Key words: Bishop Kundi, Church Administration, Consultation, Episcopal Candidate, synodal.

Preamble

In every validly ordained Catholic priest is embedded an episcopal seed. This statement is made in relation to the metaphysical principles of “act” and “potency” which were first propounded by Aristotle (384 - 322 BC) and later developed by St Thomas Aquinas (ca. 1225-1274) to explain and defend the reality of motion. This is perhaps a very simplistic explanation of these principles but it is used to buttress the fact that everything that exist is at its nascent stage pregnant with so many potentials. This explains why people

would naturally tell a priest that exhibits refined and unique traits that “you would be a Bishop someday”. The priest who receives such positive “prophetic” commendations from people – who in most cases are the true mirrors that aid priests to evaluate themselves- would naturally cringe in protestation. But, alas, there is no need to protest because in reality, every priest is a Bishop in potency. According to the 1983 Code of Canon Law, a Bishop must be a catholic single male, at least thirty-five years of age and an ordained priest for at least five years (Cf. Can. 378 §1). In fact, the average Nigerian Bishop is fifty years at the time of his appointment. Bishop Julius Yakubu Kundi, the second Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Kafanchan had never envisaged that he would ever become a Bishop. He, like any other priest ordained for the Holy Roman Catholic Church, went about performing his priestly ministry with great enthusiasm and energy without the slightest hint that he would someday become a Bishop. No amount of “prophetic declarations and wishful utterances” from many admirers of Kundi the Priest would have given him, a relatively obscure presbyter, any idea that he carried within him the episcopal seed of the Catholic Diocese of Kafanchan. Little wonder that on that fateful day of December 12, 2019, the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, while singing and dancing with the Latino Parishioners in Lake Havasu, Arizona, USA, he was dumbstruck by the news that he had been appointed the Bishop of Kafanchan Diocese to succeed Bishop Joseph Danlami Bagobiri, the first Bishop of Kafanchan Diocese, who served for 23 years and was considered a firebrand leader and a vocal defender of the rights of the marginalized people of Southern Kaduna. “As many parishioners struggled on how to address him, he also struggled on how to man up and be himself” (Cf. Yakubu et al. 11-15).

The process leading up to the appointment of a Bishop involves a limited number of participants. It is a complex process that is both transparent yet shrouded in “administrative secrecy” with participants bound by pontifical secret about the names under consideration. “ANY VIOLATION OF THIS SECRET NOT ONLY CONSTITUTES A GRAVE FAULT, BUT ALSO A CRIME PUNISHABLE WITH A CORRESPONDING ECCLESIASTICAL PENALTY” warns the Papal Nuncio in large bold print when requesting information on a Candidate for the Office of a Bishop. The process of selecting a Bishop is fundamentally the same as that of selecting an Archbishop. It should be remembered however that the Pope can make any priest a Bishop or Archbishop if he wishes.

The Making of Bishops

The process of making a Bishop is shrouded in secrecy. However, an attempt will be made to explain the process of making of a Bishop as it is contained in ecclesiastical laws which will in the long run harp on how Bishop Kundi was made.

Provincial Scrutiny

The process begins when all the Bishops (including auxiliaries) of an ecclesiastical province meet under the chairmanship of their Archbishop to

consider the names of priests who are possible candidates for the episcopacy. An Archbishop who heads a province is called the Metropolitan. The other Bishops of the province are called Suffragans. The Bishops of a province must meet at least once every three years to consider episcopal candidates, although they often meet once in a year.

Every Bishop in the province has the right to put forward the names of priests he believes would make good Bishops. These names are collected by the Archbishop and distributed to all of the Bishops prior to their meeting. Included with the names is a brief description of each priest's education and his assignments since ordination.

At the meeting, the Bishops share information and observations on each Candidate. They are supposed to indicate whether their information is derived from first-hand knowledge or from what they have heard from others. This is the only stage in the selection process where a group of non-Vatican officials meet to discuss the names of episcopal Candidates. Anyone can individually send names to the Papal Nuncio in Abuja, but meeting in groups to discuss names is strictly forbidden.

The ecclesiastical norms for the Selection of Candidates for the Episcopacy in the Latin Church are very explicit about the qualities the provincial Bishops should look for in a Candidate. He must be "a good pastor of souls and teacher of the Faith." They must examine whether the Candidates:

Enjoy a good reputation; whether they are of irreproachable morality; whether they are endowed with right judgement and prudence; whether they are even tempered and of stable character; whether they firmly hold the orthodox Faith; whether they are devoted to the Apostolic See and faithful to the Magisterium of the Church; whether they have a thorough knowledge of dogmatic and moral theology and canon law; whether they are outstanding for their piety, their spirit of sacrifice and their pastoral zeal, whether they have an aptitude for governing (Council art. 6 §2).

Although the scrutiny is not a process of canonization, the Bishops are nonetheless encouraged to consult widely in order to obtain all the information needed for carrying out this all important and difficult duty. The Bishops are to consult, although not collectively, the College of Consultors, Presbyteral Council, other Members of the Clergy and the Laity. The Vatican recognizes that the College of Consultors and the Presbyteral Council may have a fair knowledge of the dynamics of the Diocese and the possible episcopal Candidates. However, the Vatican forbids that they are consulted as a body. "Individual members of these consultative organs can be approached for information by their Bishops but group consultations are forbidden" (Reese 4). The Holy See officials are very firm in their opposition to collective or group

consultations, because they fear that such meetings can be divisive and may lead to politicking and pressure group activity. Thomas Reese observed that;

if there is any indication of politicking or even the man himself engineering the campaign, it works to his detriment. But sometimes it is very spontaneous; the Priest is loved and respected. The Clergy, Laity and Religious would like him considered to be their next Bishop, and he is, in fact, chosen. *Vox populi* (Reese 5).

It must be stressed that the Bishops do not have a magic wand with which they conjure up the names of possible episcopal candidates. The Bishops build their lists (*terna*) from their personal knowledge or credible information about the possible Candidates. Thus, priests who hold diocesan or national responsibilities would naturally become known to the Bishops. This reinforces the natural tendency of a Bishop to nominate priests from the Chancery Staff or Seminary. It is not surprising that Vicars General, Chancellors, Secretaries to Bishops, and Seminary Rectors have a better chance of getting nominated at province meetings than the pastor of a rural parish. This group of priests are better known to the Bishops and sometimes the Archbishop.

After the Bishops have discussed the Candidates, they vote on them by secret ballot in order to preserve the complete freedom of each voting member. Often, a Bishop will abstain from voting (neutral) because he does not know the Candidate. A “neutral” Bishop is encouraged to learn about the Candidate, since all the Candidates will be voted on again at the next meeting when names can be added or deleted from the list. After voting and discussions on the Candidates, it is the responsibility of the Metropolitan Archbishop to forward the list to the Papal Nuncio in Abuja, together with the minutes of the meetings. It is also recommended that the list be forwarded to the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria (CBCN) for its appraisal of the Candidates being presented at the Province. The unit of the Bishops' Conference that is saddled with this responsibility hardly meets to carry out this function of Candidates appraisal because, most of the Candidates that would be presented may not be known by the Members of the unit.

The Role of the Papal Nuncio

Another key actor in the process of making a Bishop is the Papal Nuncio, who is the Pope's representative residing in the Nunciature or Vatican Embassy in Abuja. The Nuncio represents the Holy See to both the Nigerian Government and the Nigerian Catholic Hierarchy. He is the one who sends the names of the episcopal Candidates to Rome together with his evaluation and report. Before the *ternus* is sent to Rome, the Papal Nuncio does his own investigation of the Candidates and the needs of the Diocese. Archbishop Laghi, a onetime Pro - Nuncio to the United States of America, explains that the investigation is necessary in order to find the “saint who fits the niche (Reese 22).” If the appointment is as a diocesan Bishop the Nuncio will request from the retiring

diocesan Bishop, (or from the Administrator, if he is deceased or moved to another diocese) a report on the condition and needs of the Diocese and the qualities desired in the diocesan Bishop. Priests, religious and laity can be consulted both individually and collectively in drawing up this report, as long as individual names are not mentioned.

The Papal Nuncio also hears the view of people on whether the new Bishop should be from the Diocese or from outside. Someone from the local clergy is often desired in the hopes that he would be more sensitive to the local situation. On the other hand, sometimes there is the feeling that "new blood" is needed in the Diocese. Someone from outside might be freer to act without critics claiming that he is listening only to his old friends and appointing them to offices. A certain American Archbishop in the United States of America who governed two Dioceses as an outsider shared his experience thus:

I thought that having an outsider was healthy because when I went into both of them (Dioceses), there was some tension of clerical politics in a negative sense, factions and groups that were operating. It was healthy for them to have someone that didn't even know the people involved and then could make a much more objective judgement. So even though he would be slow in making judgements, he would be objective (Reese 29).

The feelers have revealed that at the time of the demise of the first Bishop of Kafanchan Diocese, there were people, clerics and non-clerics that preferred a "local boy" to be his successor; while others had a preference for an outsider whom they felt would douse the kind of tension that builds up within a Diocese when a beloved Bishop that had a near cultic followership passed. It is interesting to note that, the Church in her wisdom does not totally rely on the *ternus* that is being presented by a particular Bishop. The search goes beyond the *ternus* of a particular church, it goes up to the Province and very rarely beyond the Province to Religious Congregations which are also required by law to present possible Candidates for the episcopacy. Bishop Kundi might not have been on the list for Kafanchan Diocese but on the *ternus* for the Province, hence eligible for consideration to fill the *sede vacante* created by Bishop Bagobiri's death.

After the Papal Nuncio has examined the responses to the questionnaire and prepared a *ternus*, he writes a report in Italian, extracting and synthesizing the content of the consultation and giving his own judgement. The *ternus* and the Nuncio's report are sent to the Vatican Dicastery for the Evangelization of peoples for the Dioceses that are categorized under mission territories (most of Africa and Asia). No Bishop sees the report unless he is a member of the Dicastery. Normally, the report gives a description of the Diocese and then describes the process the Nuncio went through in selecting the Candidates. The Nuncio then lists the Candidates in order of his preference and describes each one.

The Dicastery and the Pope

The Dicastery for the Evangelization is considered one of the biggest because it covers very massive territories in Asia and Africa. The Reports that are collected from the Dioceses that require new Bishop are presented by a *Ponente* (Presenter) who reviews the report and dossiers presented by the Nuncio and prepares a brief to be presented to the Members of the Dicastery. The *Ponente* synthesizes, analyses and presents the entire picture to the Members of the Dicastery. The Members of the Dicastery are expected to be as objective as possible because they are deeply concerned that the world gets the best possible Bishop.

The final step in the appointment process is taken when the Prefect of the Dicastery presents the Nuncio's, the Dicastery's and his own recommendations to the Pope at an audience. The Prefect summarizes the discussions of the Dicastery, and reports any dissenting opinions and votes. "Ninety-five percent of the time, the Pope makes his decision on the spot after the Prefect explains the vacancy and informs the Pope of the various options and what the recommendation of the Nuncio is and what the Dicastery's is. Maybe 5 percent of the time he would say 'let me read all the documentation; let me consult some other advisers'" (Reese 42-43). After the Pope makes his decision, the Dicastery notifies the Nuncio, who then approaches the nominee and asks if he will accept the appointment. The entire process takes four to eight months and sometime more, from the time a vacancy occurs until the appointment is announced.

The selection process is not a democratic but an institutional process that attempts through wide consultation to find a Candidate who will be a pastoral Bishop, sincerely concerned about the good of the People in his Diocese, and who is also loyal to Rome. Vatican officials and most Bishops oppose making the process more democratic and public. The more democratic and open it becomes, the more "political" it will be. Pressure groups and factions will organize and thus divide the Diocese, because inherently democracy fosters campaign and party politics.

If Christ were to ask the faithful of the Catholic Diocese of Kafanchan during the period of interregnum to describe the type of person they would like to have as a Bishop, their wish list would have been endless and Christ would have had a hard time fulfilling the expectations that the Faithful may have for their Bishop. Bishop Julius Yakubu Kundi may not be the "ideal" Candidate for the office of the Bishop of Kafanchan; but from a close look at the process of making a Bishop, one would conclude that God, nature and Grace have conspired to gift the Diocese of Kafanchan a shepherd that is conscious of his limitations and who is striving daily to be a pastorally sensitive administrative genius. He is a Shepherd who can preach the gospel in a non-threatening way and provide extensive social services and educational programmes at low cost. He seems to have come ready for the job. Because he held top chancery positions (Vicar General and Procurator of Zaria Diocese) and was also an acting Rector (Good

Shepherd Major Seminary, Kaduna), it would be said that in these positions he would have learnt much about church administration. No one has all the qualities necessary for being a perfect Bishop. As a result, each Bishop, including Bishop Kundi, tends to emphasize certain aspects of the job. The personality and preferences of the Bishop play an important part in determining how he spends his time and organizes his Diocese.

Traces of Synodal Discernment in the Making of a Bishop

Synodal discernment is a classical administrative pastoral locus through which those that are saddled with administrative or pastoral responsibilities engage in wide or limited consultations with the instruments and personnel (clerics and non-clerics) at their disposal for the proper ordering of the Church and the spiritual edification of the faithful. The wide consultation that takes place in the process of making of a Bishop is a classic example of synodal discernment. It can be discerned that from the nomination of the Candidate to the presentation of the *ternus* and the eventual activities of the Dicastery responsible for scrutiny and the presentation of the same to the Pope are couched in a vortex of extensive consultation of clerics, religious and the laity who cross pollinate their objective and/or subjective opinions about emerging issues. The entire process of making a Bishop as it is captured here has clearly shown adherence to synodal discernment which is in agreement with what the Supreme Pontiff provides in the 1983 Code of Canon Law as an occasional (not permanent) consultative structure which ecclesiastics or those that occupy ecclesiastical offices can use to truthfully confront questions that require urgent attention and projects that have the potentials to change the trajectory of events in a local church's life or policy (Cf. Martin De Agar 124). The consultations carried out in the choice of a Bishop are expected to be done honestly and devoid of prejudices in order to arrive at a conclusion that reflects the prompting of the Holy Spirit. It is clear therefore, that although the concept of synodality was popularised by the late Pontiff, Pope Francis, when in October 2021 he convoked the Synod on Synodality, the concept has always been in the Church and has always been employed in taking life changing decisions in the Church, including the making of a Bishop and the exercise of his episcopal ministry.

Bishop Kundi and Creative Novelty in Leadership Style

A certain Bishop who struggled to manage the erratic behaviour of a recalcitrant Priest in his diocese, after he had tried several crises management styles without success, expressed his frustration to a friend in these words; "there is no Bishop that has been to a Bishops' School to learn the ropes of managing a Diocese. There are times you will be tempted to employ the fifty-fifty principle of handling actions that undermine your authority, that is, when one gives you a 50 kg of trouble you match it with 50kg of more trouble".

Bishop Kundi, from the inception of his episcopacy was aware of the daunting task of governing a Diocese; and since he has never been to a "Bishops' School", he was very intentional from the first day he assumed Office to put the

necessary structures in place that will help him to manage the internal church matters of his Diocese in a synodal way. In fact, it was right on the day of his installation that he made very key appointments. At the inaugural meeting he held with the Kafanchan Diocesan Presbyterium on Friday, the 21st day of February 2020, the Bishop explained why he made those key appointments:

On the day of my installation I issued my first episcopal decree, which was the appointments of my two Vicars General. The Vicar General (administration) was ordained in 1979 and the Vicar General (Pastoral) was born in 1979 and ordained a priest in 2009. Many saw the appointments not only as revolutionary but as a creative novelty. I intend to closely work with them and all my close collaborators to bring about administrative finesse and to bridge generational gaps in our administrative machinery and strategy (Bishop Kundi).

As a rule of thumb, the success of a Bishop does not depend only on his personality and environment but also on the technologies available to accomplish his goals. "Technologies" are the means, skills, techniques, and knowledge used by an organization to attain its goals. In the Church, these technologies are preaching, counselling, education, skilled personnel, etc. which are organized into ministries. The Bishop is aware of the technologies at his disposal and the presence of creative personalities and various professionals within the rank of his *presbyterium* and he did not hesitate in tapping into the wealth of their pastoral experiences and outstanding professional pedigree by appointing them into various offices. Besides the statutory consultations that are recommended by law before one is appointed into an office (Cf. Can. 127), Bishop Kundi pays attention to the intellectual preparation and the experience of the Candidates that are nominated for certain ecclesiastical responsibilities before their appointments. Once he assigns responsibilities, he allows the officeholder to carry out his mandate without interference. Of course, he may from time to time offer useful suggestions but he does not impose his ideas until it becomes absolutely necessary and it is always done for the overall success of the mission of the Diocese. He believes that administration is a continuum, hence to every appointment he makes, there is always an assistant or a secretary to assist the office holder. The assistants may not necessarily have the right of succession, but their appointments are meant to guarantee continuity in the commissions and/or offices.

Bishop Kundi believes staunchly that efficiency in quality service delivery in the Church will require selflessness, collegiality and the employment of the principle of subsidiarity. Strictly speaking, collegiality refers to Bishops working together with the Pope but in Bishop Kundi's novel leadership style, it stretches to include collegial cooperation with the Bishop, priests and the faithful working together. This is eloquently demonstrated in his continuous convocation of Diocesan General Assemblies, where everybody matters and everyone can have a say. The principle of subsidiarity on the other hand states

that activities should take place at the lowest level possible in society or the Church. Bishop Kundi has referred so many cases that have arrived in the Curia back to either a Dean of a Deanery or the Head of a Commission. His motive behind the referral of certain matters to the offices where he thinks they can be appropriately addressed is hinged on his belief that, in a territorially large Diocese like Kafanchan, it is imperative to delegate, else the diocesan apparatus will grind to a halt. He insists that people should exhaust all the consultative organs and crises remedial machineries that the Church places within their reach. Moreover, in order to give priests, who are his close collaborators, an avenue where they can freely express themselves and make meaningful contributions for the growth of the Diocese, he encouraged the Presbyteral Council and the Nigerian Catholic Diocesan Priests' Association (NCDPA) to freely elect their leadership; because he is aware that their talent and dedication is the life blood of the Diocese. The Bishop's reliance on the principles of collegiality, synodality and subsidiarity in governing his Diocese has greatly reduced a feeling, among the clerics and the faithful, of having an authoritarian Bishop and an overly centralized administrative model. This is the novelty and it elicits massive cooperation from the priests and the laity.

Bishop Kundi and the Enactment and Reviewing of Diocesan Policies

Managing large corporate organizations without roadmaps on how to deal with issues as they spring up within the system can be daunting. Similarly, any Diocese that relies solely on the intuition and the discretion of those saddled with the responsibility of governing can brew a recipe for confusion and disaster. It is for the purpose of guiding against confusion and disasters that Heads of corporate organizations and Bishops mandate organizational and diocesan policies and procedures that must be followed in the smaller organizational units and Parishes.

In the Catholic Church, policies are not made in a vacuum. They are normally developed through a consultative process involving the Bishop's cabinet, Presbyteral Council and other relevant curial organs. They are often modelled on policies developed in other Dioceses. It is not possible for Bishops to enact policies that will cover every contingency; no, they usually emanate in response to past problems, as well as novel and developing problems or conflicts. They are also drafted to answer questions most frequently asked of chancery officials. Bishop Kundi, like his other counterparts, has issued directives and routines that constrain the actions of subsidiary units in the Diocese as a method of control and coordination. In the course of his five years' stewardship, he has issued a number of policies from which a selected few have been used to analyse and discuss his leadership style.

Policy on Corona Virus

It was shortly after the installation of Bishop Kundi that the novel Corona Virus became a global health emergency. People felt truly naked and defenceless before the dreaded Virus. In order to keep citizens safe, the Federal

Government made policies that barred people from crowding in enclosed spaces. The Government's social distancing policy affected public worship in the Diocese of Kafanchan, as other places around the world; and it became necessary for the Bishop to give direction to the fearful and confused faithful and nay the people of goodwill within his Diocese. Introducing the first Policy he enacted as a Bishop, the Shepherd of the Catholic Diocese of Kafanchan wrote:

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, I am constrained to send this circular to you on a matter that is threatening to shut down the world. The Corona Virus (COVID-19) is becoming one of the worst pandemic of all times.... We thank the Federal Government which inaugurated the task force on COVID-19 and we hope that it will come up with credible proactive measures to nib the scourge in the bud before it ripples its way across the nation. We in our Diocese are taking a proactive measure to protect our Faithful from getting infected....it is in the light of this that we make the following pronouncements: Given the fact that the spread of the Virus seems to be under control, at least within our State at the moment, we may gather for Stations of the Cross on Wednesdays and Fridays of Lent.... We advise that Parishes take precautions by providing at least a tap and soap where people can properly wash their hands before and after Mass. The Faithful should be encouraged to buy (hand) sanitizers if they can afford.... We are asking Parish Priests, Parochial Vicars and Chaplains of Institutes to skip the shaking of hands during the kiss of peace. We may use other suitable means of salutation that does not require the shaking of hands.... (Bishop Kundi, "Directives on Corona Virus").

The Bishop would eventually publish another directive during the lockdown, namely; "Covid-19: Further Pastoral Measures to be taken for Safety and Prevention". There he explained that the Directives were not issued with a malignant intention but because as a local church, "we have the duty and the responsibility to cooperate with these measures (suggested by the Government) with regards to the welfare of citizens while also paying attention to the sacred" (Bishop Kundi, "Covid-19: Further Pastoral Measures to be taken for Safety and Prevention")." These Directives issued by the Bishop became a light in the darkness for most pastors and the faithful during one of the darkest moments of human history. They were signpost that aided and make light the spiritual journey of the people of God during the "global lockdown".

Policy on the Protection of Child and Vulnerable Adult

One of the responsibilities of a Bishop is to ensure a safe environment within which the People of God within his juridical circumscription will worship their heavenly Father with trust and serenity. In fact, Bishop Kundi who is aware of his duties of guaranteeing the safety of everyone in his Diocese wrote: "Bishops have a special responsibility to pay vigilant attention in order to ensure the

protection of the weak among the flock entrusted to them. I am aware of being a father to all the faithful within our territory, irrespective of the state of the life of the person (Bishop Kundi, "Child and Vulnerable Adult" 1).

In the early 1990s the Church was hit by a huge sex scandal, an event that caused the Church an internal haemorrhage that painfully accompanied her into the great Jubilee celebration of the Third Christian Millennium in 2000. Pope Saint John Paul II, the Pope under whose Pontificate the heart wrenching news of sexual abuses of minors and vulnerable persons came to the fore, ordered an investigation into the matter and a search for immediate and mediate solutions to the scourge. All the Pontiffs that have reigned after Pope John Paul II have all legislated against "the entrenchment of the culture of sexual abuses in every sphere of human life and most importantly in the Church" (Bishop Kundi 4). Pope Francis, in his apostolic letter, *Vos Estis Lux Mundi*, of 7 May 2019, gives norms to further guarantee the creation of an environment that is healthy for both the young and adults to feel safe in the spiritual, liturgical and social spaces that the Church provides. In order to reiterate his commitment to pay vigilant attention to the protection of the weakest of those entrusted to his care by the Holy Mother Church, Bishop Kundi, decreed the policy for the protection of children and the vulnerable in Kafanchan Diocese.

The policy which applies to all personnel, clerical and non, that work in the Diocese of Kafanchan, gives a detailed description of sexual abuse, how to report abuse, when to begin an investigation and the normative process of instructing a case of sexual abuse that occurred within the ecclesiastical cycle. The aim of the policy is not to victimize anyone but to repair scandal (*scandalum reparari*), to restore justice (*iustitiam restitui*) and to reform the offender (*reum emendari*) (Kazah, "Revitalizing the Ecclesiastical Penal System" 45).

It is important to note that there are many foreign donors that have a standing policy of offering assistance to a prospective beneficiary only when it is proven that the beneficiary has a 'children and vulnerable persons' protection policy in place.

Policy for an Orderly Exercise of Priestly Ministry

At ordination, every priest places his hand in the hands of his Bishop or the ordaining prelate, and promises obedience to him and his successors. This simple liturgical action has deep significance and far reaching effects in the grand scheme of things in the diocesan administrative dynamics and the Bishops pastoral initiative. It is this action that gives the Bishop the authority to assign priests to their jobs whether it be in a Parish or other church institutions. The priest's commitment to the Bishop and the Diocese is unqualified. It is also for this reason that the priest's personal problem to an extent becomes the concern of the Bishop because by his pledge of obedience to the Bishop he has acquired the status of a "son".

In dealing with issues relating to priests, Bishops are always trying to balance the good of the priest and the good of the Diocese. And in dealing with the issues of a priest, the Bishop has to apply the principle of *bonus pater familia* (the good father of the family) who treats the matter with firmness and compassion, because he cannot afford to throw away the bath water and the baby. Reflecting on the relationship that exists between Bishops and priests in building vibrant and thriving Dioceses and the tact that is required in managing problematic priests, Thomas Reese posits that:

In a sense, the personnel problems and opportunities faced by a Bishop are similar to those faced by any family business. A family business thrives on the dedication and enthusiasm of the family members who are willing to work long hours at low pay.... But in a family business you do not fire Uncle Charlie because he could be replaced by someone more efficient. The head of the family must simultaneously be concerned for the welfare of the business and the members of the family, even when these conflict.

Similarly, in the church, the Bishop must be concerned about the good of the Parishes and also the good of the priests. The dedication and commitment of the vast majority of the clergy gives life to the church. But the less successful priests are not simply replaceable parts of a machine. It is almost impossible for a Bishop to fire a Priest (Reese 193).

It is indeed the responsibility of the Bishop to ensure order in his family. There is no gainsaying the fact that the Priestly ministry is a very ordered ministry because it is structured and tiered with increasing levels of responsibility. Any organization, secular or ecclesiastical, that possesses the characteristics inherent in the priestly ministry and does not have a well-structured instruction or directives to regulate the lives of those who work within it, would only be fomenting a recipe for anarchy within the system. Hence, the decision by Bishop Julius Yakubu Kundi to issue the Guideline for Priests within his ecclesiastical circumscription was to reduce the constancy with which crisis would erupt. He hopes that Policy will help the priests of the Diocese to refrain from engaging in acts that would draw needless attention to them. It would also help them to be transparent. It would help them to be translucent such that when the people see them, they should be able to see through them to God (Cf. Bishop Kundi, "Pastoral Guidelines" 5).

Policy on the Sending Priests of the Diocese abroad and their Sojourn

In January 1998, barely a year after his ordination, Bishop Kundi was sent to Jalingo Diocese as a very young *fidei donum* priest, whose missionary zeal, which was probably influenced by his onetime Parish Priest, Fr C. Griffins, SMA (Cf. Yakubu *et al.*), had won him the accolades of his superiors and those he worked with. Moreover, in 2018, barely two years before his appointment as Bishop, he was on mission to the Diocese of Phoenix, in the State of Arizona,

USA. Because of his previous experiences both as a Missionary and a Student in CIWA, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria, Bishop Kundi is very familiar with the demands for young priests to work in Dioceses other than theirs and the challenges that *fidei donum* priests encounter in the course of the exercise of their priestly ministry or studies at home or abroad. In order to reduce the tension that may arise in the minds of those sent on mission or studies for lack of a document that regulates the Bishop's engagement with his brother Bishops and the priests that are being sent, he promulgated a policy that regulates the sending of priests on mission and studies. In the introduction to the Policy, the Bishop wrote:

The universal mission of Priests “to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8) has been enthusiastically renewed by the Second Vatican Council and the Church's Magisterium. In the Decree, the *Ad Gentes*, the Conciliar Fathers exhorted priests to be profoundly aware of the fact that their very life is consecrated to the service of the mission (Second Vatican Council, Decree: *Ad Gentes*, Missionary Activity of the Church, n. 39). Moreover, from the time of the publication of the ground-breaking missionary encyclical of Pope Pius XII, *Fidei donum* to the Apostolic exhortation of Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, the Church's Magisterium has underscored the importance of fruitful exchange of Pastoral Agents among the Churches, the fruit of universal communion. It was however observed by some Ecclesiastics that at some points, some diocesan priests who, incardinated in their particular Churches in mission territories, want to leave their own country and reside in Europe and America, often with the intention of further studies or for other reasons that are not actually missionary. Often, the motives of these priests are based on higher living conditions which these countries offer and the need for young priests in some of the “established Churches”. These priests are then convinced by such reasoning not to return to their own country, sometimes with the tacit permission of the Bishop, or at other times in opposition to the Bishop's request that they return home (Bishop Kundi, “Policy on Sending Abroad” §1).

The policy was enacted for the purpose of ensuring that due process is followed in the sending of priests on mission/studies and the necessity of their return as and when due to deploy their experiences which “are ample apostolic strength that is indispensable for the Christian and ongoing development of evangelization in the Diocese” (Cf. *Optatam Totius*, n. 18). The Policy provides that every priest must make solemn declaration before departure on mission or study that he will abide by the rules guiding the comportment of priests on the Colleges or Dioceses. They must declare that upon the completion of their tenure they will return to the Diocese to share the fruits of their experiences with their home Diocese. This means that the services that will be rendered by the priests of the Diocese of Kafanchan on mission to their Host Communities will

not entail the stability required by the law. However, if for a just reason a priest requests for an extension beyond the time stipulated by the Policy, he is free to discuss it with the Bishop (Cf. Bishop Kundi, "Policy on Sending Abroad" §§ 2-6).

The Diocese of Kafanchan has priests working in Europe, America and in Nigeria. It also has priests and religious studying in several Universities in Europe, America and Nigeria. These priests are bound by the provisions of this policy.

Financial Policy (Revised)

Without financial resources, the Church, like any other organization, cannot do very much. Money buys food, clothing shelter, and office supplies. It pays salaries, energy bills and other diocesan essential services. Money cannot buy everything, especially the supernatural goals the Church holds dear. But effective and efficient use of financial resources aid in the achievement of these goals. In order to effectively manage the finances of the Church there is the need to have a policy that guides the comportment of those that are saddled with managerial responsibilities, because "where there are no sets of rules to moderate the activities of the one who immediately governs (*regit*) the juridic person that possesses temporal goods, no one can be accused of breaching the law; because in the first place, it has never existed" (Kazah, "Administrative Acts in the Administration of Temporal Goods" 210).

Although there are courses in Parish Administration and Parish Finances in the Seminaries and Catechetical Training centres, these courses are not sufficient to offer pastoral agents who are saddled with the responsibility of managing ecclesiastical goods the rudimentary business technique to effectively manage them. It is for this reason that:

Most Pastors and Administrators today become very jittery the moment they are asked to prepare financial reports of Parishes or Juridic Persons they govern. Sometimes, these Pastors and Administrators invite persons with a background in the business world, but without any experience on how the Parish or the ecclesiastical Juridic Persons operate to prepare their balance sheet. To be fair to these Pastors and Administrators, one may not totally blame them. Some of them have argued that they cannot prepare a simple financial report because they do not have a background in accounting. It does not matter whether the excuses are founded or unfounded, considering the importance of learning administrative ropes, it is important to do something to help these administrators (Kazah, "Administrative Acts in the Administration of Temporal Goods" 282).

Bishop Kundi, who was once a Finance Officer in the Catholic Diocese Zaria, had in 2023, after extensive consultations, reviewed the Financial Policy that

was enacted by his Predecessor, the Most Rev. Joseph Danlami Bagobiri (of blessed memory); in order to reduce financial malfeasance, increase financial transparency and boost financial vibrancy of the Parishes within his Diocese. In the introduction to the Revised Policy, the Bishop writes:

Indeed, the importance of finance in the work of evangelization cannot be overemphasized, so also the need for a stable financial base in Kafanchan Diocese. As a Church we are responsible for safeguarding the Church assets, exercising prudence in financial matters, and being accountable to those who provide monetary support to us and her (sic) regulatory authorities. As such, the Church must be seen to be committed to the highest standards of fiscal integrity and accountability. The only way to achieve this is to establish strong systems of internal controls in Kafanchan Diocese to help safeguard all goods/assets entrusted to us by God which will help also reduce the risks of misuse, wastage or embezzlement.... With every sense of responsibility, I present this Revised version of our Diocesan Finance Policy...to serve as a guide in all our Diocesan Financial Transaction and which you MUST comply with at all times. Kafanchan Diocese will not condone the activities of anyone bound by this policy who achieve results through violation of this policy. (Bishop Kundi "Financial Policy" 4-5).

Bishop Kundi is very interested in building a healthy financial regime in his Diocese and at the slightest opportunity he exhorts his priests and other pastoral agents working in Kafanchan Diocese to be accountable in all ramification. It was observed that despite all the financial problems faced by the Bishop, it is clear that finances are not his biggest headache; instead it is his personnel (Priests, Religious and other Pastoral Agents). He believes that most financial problems are often symptomatic of personnel problems. It is for this reason that he encourages his priests to feel free to share with him whatever challenge they are battling with and he pledges to make efforts to find solutions to them.

Bishop Kundi and the Fraternal Correction of Erring Priests

The Church, as a visible society, needs to regulate the conduct of her members in a desirable manner. When the misdeeds of Church members are of a serious nature and they have become public and clearly contrary to faith, morals and discipline of the Church, the community must respond to them with sanctions. Bishop Kundi is very much aware of his power to punish or sanction erring priests. But as the Head of the Priestly Family in Kafanchan Diocese, he prefers to exhaust other means of pastoral solicitude, fraternal correction and reproof before making recourse to issuing sanctions and penalties which are basically aimed at repairing scandal, restoring justice and reforming the erring priest (Cf. Kazah 45). It is to be underscored that the Bishop would impose a remedial penalty on any of his close collaborator as an *extrema ratio* (last resort) and this is

done after extensive consultation and in line with the laid down process provided by the Supreme Legislator. In his speech at his inaugural meeting with his priests after his installation as the second Bishop of Kafanchan Diocese he said, "I will love all my priests equally (even the erring ones); it is when one throws the love back at me that I will treat one as a meek judge." In the course of putting this article together, the Curia had shared a letter that the Bishop sent to one of his priests who was accused of "pastoral recklessness". The letter is titled Fraternal Dialogue with a Closest Associate. In the letter, the Bishop reminded the recalcitrant priest of some basic truths he might have forgotten. He reminded the priest that the Rite of Ordination calls the priest a "prudent co-operator with the Episcopal Order" and that since it is the priest who makes the Bishop present in the Parish, he expects him to be transparent and accountable, in other words, to be responsible for his actions". He further exhorted the priest to be conscious of his vocation and identity as, "a witness to Christ Jesus by letting people see in you what you know of Christ; a kerygmatic proclaimer of the Word in season and out of season; a holy priest; a man constantly in communion with God in prayer; a true shepherd and pastor of souls, who is deeply committed to serving his flock even to the point of sacrificing one's life after the example of Jesus the Good Shepherd".

This is just one of the many cases that the Bishop had handled. The Bishop may be repulsed by the behaviour of a priest that smears smudges on the Kafanchan diocesan presbyterium and put the faith of many on trial, but he never ceases to love his erring confrere and he is convinced that since the unwholesome behaviour exhibited by a priest was learned, it could equally be unlearned.

Conclusion

The major thesis of this article is that there is procedural transparency and administrative secrecy in the making of a Bishop. It argues that the secrecy that comes with the deliberations which include the non-disclosure of the names of the Candidates on the *terna* and the questionnaires and responses regarding the lives of the Candidates are kept secret for the purpose of protecting the good reputation of the Candidate (cf. Can. 220), reduce undue influence and politicking and engender total reliance on the Holy Spirit. It is deducible from the research that the making of a Bishop involves several layers of consultations and synodal discernments which exculpate it from being secretive notwithstanding the requirement of administrative secrecy that is employed for the good of the Candidates and the wellbeing of the Church. The analysis of the canonical procedure that led to the emergence of Bishop Kundi as the Chief Shepherd of the portion of the People of God entrusted to his care (Cf. Can. 369), as it is with other Bishops, demonstrates the dynamic interplay between God's will in all its perfection and the fallible human capacities for discernment in the election of ecclesiastical leaders. It is the presence of this human element in the process that sometimes lead to the choice of Candidates who may be "cowardly, faltering or even notoriously immoral" (Cooper, "How do God's will and the Holy Spirit Play a Role").

Moreover, due to the paucity of knowledge about how a Bishop runs his Diocese, what power he has, how he takes a decision and how he spends his time; the article gives a brief description of how Bishop Kundi has exercised his authority in the last five years within the ecclesiastical circumscription he governs which is not different from the way most Bishops run their dioceses. The descriptive nature of the work is necessary because, the much some Catholics know about a Bishop is what he does during the administration of the sacrament of Confirmation or mass marriages during pastoral visits. This ignorance among the faithful about how a Bishop actually exercises his authority and how he concretely plays his many roles; makes this research to refrain from describing how the Holy Spirit works in the church in Kafanchan and it rather attempts to describe Bishop Kundi, the processes he employs and the structures through which the Spirit must work. The work has shown from the making of a Bishop to the way he treats erring priests that everything is done in a synodal and collaborative spirit.

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