

CHURCH CONTROVERSY

Snub rebel priests, Catholics told

Faithful who associate with defectors risk suspension

By BOB ODALO

The Catholic Church has asked its clergy and faithful not to attend services called by suspended priests who have formed a new religious order.

Bishop Martin Kivuva of Machakos diocese, from where the majority of the rebel priests come, yesterday warned that anyone associating with the defectors risked suspension.

He said the priests, including Fr Daniel Kasomo, who has openly admitted to having a family for 20 years, were not allowed to lead Mass or offer sacraments to Catholics.

"By continuing to sin, with their suspension in place, the

'Celibacy meant to ensure the clergy dedicate time to leading flock'

said priests have officially excommunicated themselves from the mainstream church," Bishop Kivuva said.

He, however, said the defiant priests were welcome if they repent for breaking the church's rules.

"Sinning faithful are always welcomed back to the fold, if they repent their sins and accept to abide by the church's laid-down rules and regulations," he said.

Defending the law of celibacy, Bishop Kivuva said it was not God's command, but a church's rule that was arrived at after a lot of consideration.

Systematic

"The Catholic Church has a systematic way of training its priests; the journey to priesthood takes a minimum of seven years. Before one is ordained, one is made a deacon. It is here that one takes the first vow of celibacy. One is never forced to do so," he said.

He said the church wants its priests to remain celibate and not marry so as to dedicate their time and energy to serving the Lord.

"Celibacy is modelled in the image of Christ, it is true that early Popes and priests of the church were married, but this



Newly-ordained Catholic priests (from left) Lawrence Ongoma, Vallyves Makhola, Godfrey Bahati and Martin Shiundu take the sacred orders of priesthood at St Peter's Seminary, Mukumu. Bishop Philip Sulumeti of the Diocese of Kakamega, who presided over the occasion, urged them to observe the celibacy vow. Photo/ISAAC WALE

changed with time. The idea to bring in celibacy was to ensure that priests dedicate their time and energy to leading the flock," he said.

Bishop Kivuva said it was unfortunate that the breakaway priests were abandoning the church that had made them what they

were today.

"Some of the shocking things they are saying, I am hearing them for the first time through the press. When a priest chooses to live a lie, whom do you blame? The rule of celibacy?"

He said many priests were living true to their vows of

celibacy. He likened priests who criticise the church to a passenger on a journey who is a nuisance.

"When he or she is thrown out, he or she boards the next bus and then starts criticising those on the bus that threw him out, calling them names," he said.

Fresh doubts over push for reforms

By NATION Reporter

Kenyans doubt the government's commitment to wide ranging reforms outlined in the National Accord.

The public rated coalition divisions and politics as major threats to stability, according to a report by South Consulting, a firm hired to monitor the Grand Coalition Government's progress.

The report says the slow pace in land reforms, corruption, writing a new constitution and youth unemployment were uppermost on Kenyans' minds.

Free and fair

"The momentum for radical reforms has been reduced. The speed towards another General Election is increasing, yet attempts to address some of the factors that led to unprecedented political violence are not evident," the report, the second since the establishment of the grand coalition, says.

The report, to be discussed by the Serena Team on June 30, further faults the process used to set up various reform bodies.

"The process of recruiting members of the IIEC was highly politicised, with members selected on ethno-

have forgotten the principles that shaped these recommendations — the desire to fight impunity and de-ethnicise the political landscape."

In particular, the report cites debate over Mr Cecil Miller's bid to chair the IIEC, saying it had "ethnic overtones".

However, the report says 42 per cent of Kenyans are confident that the IIEC can hold free and fair elections.

And 60 per cent of Kenyans do not think they will have a new constitution next year.

A vast majority, 77 per cent, say the coalition government is not working well together. Interestingly, 70 per cent are satisfied with the working relationship between President Kibaki and Prime Minister Raila Odinga.

The chances of violence if the coalition collapses are also very high. While more than a third of the respondents say they will support a collapse, close to half will either hold demonstrations or attack other communities.

'Leaders have forgotten the principles that shaped these

BRIEFLY

NAIROBI

Shitanda protests at drugs shortage

A Cabinet minister yesterday expressed concern over lack of medical supplies in Western Province hospitals. "Patients are required to purchase almost everything from private clinics because government facilities do not have them," Housing minister Soita Shitanda said from his hospital bed at Aga Khan Hospital in Nairobi. On Saturday, the minister was rushed to Webuye District Hospital after his blood sugar level dropped, but had to procure some of the medical supplies, he disclosed.

LAIKIPIA WEST

Contract hiring of teachers opposed

The 10,000 teachers the government intends to hire on a contract basis should be given permanent jobs, a union official has demanded. The Kenya National Union of Teachers Laikipia West secretary, Mr Mureithi Kamanja, said those hired on temporary terms would retire without benefits. He was addressing teachers, parents and students of Thiru Secondary School. Elsewhere, Nyandarua North Knut secretary John Nding'u said the district needed 2,114 teachers

ELDORET

Residents reject police merger

Most North Rift residents are opposed to the merger of the regular police and Administration Police. The residents instead want the security agents to be autonomous and well-equipped. Giving their views to the taskforce on police reforms at Eldoret Town hall, the venue of the region's hearing, the residents said APs should be in charge of security in rural areas, while the regular police should take charge of urban areas. They also said that the APs should not work under chiefs.

KISUMU

Mob scrambles for diesel at crash site

People scrambled to siphon fuel from a diesel tanker that overturned on the Kisumu-Kericho road. Police from Kisumu and Nyando districts made frantic efforts to keep away the crowds of people from Rabuor in Kisumu East District, who surged toward the trailer that was spilling diesel on the road, pelting it with stones. Rabuor residents played down warnings that the fuel was dangerous, saying that diesel was less flammable and not as

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