

# **CHRISTMAS IS PURE LIGHT AND HOLY JOY, NEVER DIRTY**

## **A Statement Issued by the National Directorate of Social Communications, Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria, Abuja, in Conjunction with the Catholic Artistes and Entertainers Association of Nigeria (CAEAN)**

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1. In every age, the media occupies a powerful and decisive place in the formation of thought, the shaping of values, and the transmission of culture. What societies come to accept as normal: what they see, hear, imitate, wear, speak, and ultimately believe, is increasingly mediated through creative and entertainment platforms. In a pluralistic and multi-religious society such as Nigeria, where the Constitution guarantees freedom of religion and conscience, this power must be exercised with heightened responsibility, sensitivity, and respect for the sacred convictions of all faith communities.

2. It is within this context that we unequivocally condemn the choice of the title of the movie, *“A Very Dirty Christmas.”* This title is not only inappropriate and deeply offensive, but also gravely misleading. Regardless of the internal narrative of the film, the title itself stands as a public statement, one capable of undermining Christian faith, distorting the theological and cultural meaning of Christmas, and generating avoidable religious tension within society.

3. As Catholics, and indeed as Christians across denominations, we affirm without equivocation that Christmas celebrates the birth of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ; God made man for the salvation of the world. Sacred Scripture declares unambiguously: *“God is light; in him there is no darkness at all”* (1 John 1:5). Where God is present, impurity cannot prevail. To associate Christmas, the mystery of divine incarnation, with “dirt” or moral degradation is therefore theologically incoherent and spiritually misleading. Evil cannot define the moment when God enters human history. As Christ Himself teaches, *“If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself; how then will his kingdom stand?”* (Matthew 12:26). Darkness cannot generate light, nor corruption holiness.

4. Christmas, by its very nature, is pure, holy, and radiant with joy. It is a season marked by generosity, reconciliation, charity, and renewed commitment to human dignity. Across Nigeria, individuals, families, parishes, and organisations reach out to the poor, the vulnerable, and the forgotten with food, clothing, and financial support, ensuring that the joy of the season is shared by all. Christian preachers and pastors consistently call the faithful to celebrate Christmas without sin and excess, emphasising its moral and spiritual depth. In the Catholic tradition particularly, this great feast is preceded by four weeks of Advent, a sacred time of preparation marked by hope, love, joy, and peace, culminating in the triumph of divine light over darkness.

5. From a creative and professional standpoint, it must be stated clearly that the use of the descriptor “dirty” in reference to Christmas constitutes a profound semantic and symbolic misjudgment. The term “dirty” universally connotes impurity, moral decay, and corruption. Juxtaposing it with “Christmas,” which signifies holiness, divine light, joy, and redemption, creates an irreconcilable contradiction. This is not artistic daring; it is semantic violence against meaning itself. Just as a “dark sun” is inconceivable, so too is a “dirty” Christmas. Light cannot be darkness; purity cannot be corruption; God cannot coexist with evil. The Prophet Isaiah captures the heart of this mystery when he proclaims: *“The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness—on them light has shined”* (Isaiah 9:2).

6. The title *“A Very Dirty Christmas”* thus reads less as creative expression and more as ideological provocation, an attempt to shock that risks alienating millions of believers by trivialising, caricaturing, or desacralising a holy season. At its core, it represents a failure to align signifier with significance, symbol with substance. Such distortions do not advance artistic freedom; they erode cultural trust and undermine interreligious harmony.

7. In order to forestall similar occurrences in the future, we strongly urge relevant regulatory and censorship bodies to deepen collaboration with recognised faith-based organisations during the screening, approval, and classification of film titles and productions. Such engagement will promote mutual understanding, protect religious sensibilities, and ensure that creative freedom is exercised within the bounds of social responsibility and cultural respect.

8. Once again, and without reservation, we reiterate: Christmas is pure light and holy joy. The reason for the season is Emmanuel—*God with us*—who brings hope to the hopeless, peace to troubled hearts, and joy to a wounded world. We call upon all stakeholders in the media and entertainment industry to honour this truth and to safeguard the spiritual and cultural integrity of one of humanity’s most sacred celebrations.

**Signed:**

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