
Two years later he went to Rome to complete his formation at the Pontifical Urban College of Propaganda Fide and that same year, 1969, he was ordained a priest on August 3. He taught at St. Kizito's College, Isanlu, and was Rector of St. Clement Junior Seminary, Lokoja.

He earned a license in Sacred Scripture at the Pontifical Biblical Institute and a doctorate in biblical theology at the Pontifical Urban University. In 1977 he became Vice-Rector and, in 1979, Rector of Sts. Peter and Paul Major Seminary.

In 1980 he was appointed a member for five years of the International Theological Commission and also of the International Commission for Catholic-Methodist Dialogue. On September 10, 1982, John Paul II appointed him titular Bishop of Thunusuda and Auxiliary of the diocese of Llorina. He received episcopal ordination on January 6, 1983. He thus became the youngest bishop in Nigeria. On October 20, 1984, he was named Bishop of Ilorin, and, six years later on July 7, 1990, Coadjutor Bishop of Abuja, to which he succeeded as Bishop on September 28, 1992.

From 1992 to 2006 he served as a member of the inter-denominational Faith and Order Commission. On March 26, 1994, when the Pope established Abuja as a Metropolitan See, he became its first Archbishop. That same year he was elected Vice-President of the Bishops Conference of Nigeria, of which he was President from 1999 to 2006.

He welcomed John Paul II on his Apostolic Visit to Nigeria in 1998 and played a major role among the African bishops and in organizations for interreligious and ecumenical dialogue. He was President of the Association of the Episcopal Conferences of Anglophone West Africa and from 2004 to 2007, served as President of the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar. A member of the Nigeria Interreligious Council, he served as Co-President of the African Council of Religious Leaders and President of the Christian Association of Nigeria of which he had been Vice-President from 1996 to 2003.
He participated in the Synod on the New Evangelization (October 2012). He is well-known for his tireless work for peace in Nigeria. He has received decorations at home and abroad including the Pax Christi International Prize on October 31, 2012, in Brussels. He was also a candidate for the Nobel Prize, together with a Muslim exponent of Nigeria, with whom he promoted a series of initiatives against fundamentalism.

He was created and proclaimed cardinal by Benedict XVI in the consistory of November 24, 2012, of the Title of San Saturnino (St. Saturnus).

Member of:

- Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith;

- Pontifical Council for the Family.

(Biography courtesy of the Holy See Press Office)