

**CHURCH OF NIGERIA**  
(ANGLICAN COMMUNION)  
**DIOCESE OF**  
**EVO**



**PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS/  
BISHOP'S CHARGE**

**DELIVERED AT**

**THE 1<sup>ST</sup> SESSION OF  
THE 2<sup>ND</sup> SYNOD**

**HELD AT  
ST. SIMON'S ANGLICAN CHURCH,  
OKPORO DEANERY  
PORT HARCOURT**

**ON  
SATURDAY 3<sup>rd</sup> AUGUST, 2013.**

**HIS LORDSHIP, THE RT. REV. INNOCENT U. ORDU, JP  
BISHOP, DIOCESE OF EVO**

# WELCOME

Our dear people of God, we bid you welcome to the 1st Session of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Synod of our Diocese of Evo. We heartily welcome our special Guest of Honour, His Excellency, The Executive Governor of Rivers State, The Rt. Hon. Rotimi Chibuike Amaechi; our Guest of Honour, Hon. Justice Iche Ndu, the Chief Judge of Rivers State; National and Rivers State legislators, other Government functionaries or their representatives here present; My Lord Bishops or their representatives, Traditional Rulers, our dear Diocesan legal officers, eminent brothers of the House of Clergy, Diocesan officials, Our nominees, Synod delegates, all other invited guests, Anglican faithful from the Diocese of Evo, our friends and well-wishers, gentlemen/women of the press.

We thank you for finding the time to honour our invitation once again and to identify with us on this occasion. May the good Lord shower his abundant blessings upon you and all yours in Jesus name – Amen.

## APPRECIATION

This session of our Synod is quite special in the sense that it marks the beginning of the Second Synod of the Diocese of Evo. It is coming shortly after the celebration of our 4<sup>th</sup> anniversary. We count it therefore, a proper and appropriate time to express our hearty thanks to God Almighty who has graciously guided and helped us thus far.

From the end of the last Synod at Rumuomasi Deanery to date, this Diocese has been involved in a lot of spiritual and physical activities to the glory of God. We use this medium to thank all those who have tirelessly worked with us in a bid to continuously move this Diocese forward.

We sincerely thank all our Clergymen and their wives for holding forth at the Parish/Station levels; our Legal Officers and members of the Diocesan Board, Mrs. Chinyere Ordu, JP, my wife and President of the Diocesan Women's Ministries, Diocesan office and other Church workers, the various Church Councils, the Chaplains, leaders and members of all Diocesan activity groups/units, the President, Diocesan Council of Knights, the Synod Secretaries and members of the Diocesan and Local Synod Planning Committees.

We appreciate the prayers, support and solidarity extended to us by a vast majority of parishioners across the Diocese. We pray the Lord to reward all your toils and sacrifices aimed at making us succeed.

Thank you and God bless.

## OUR SYNOD VENUE

### ST. SIMON'S ANGLICAN CHURCH, OKPORO DEANERY

#### The Advent of Christianity In Okporo

The advent of Christianity in Okporo dates back to 1914 (99 years ago) when eight sons of Okporo withdrew from All Saints' Anglican Church, Rumuokwursi. Among these sons and daughters, all of the blessed memory include: Lazarus Ihunwo, Isaiah Amadi, Madam Emem, David Uwalaka, Wokocha Omachi, Worenwu Wokoa, Nwanwa Nwagwu and Daniel Okoko Wopara of Rumuodara village who willingly provided his small hut (Obiri) for a temporary place of worship.

#### Development of the Church

As the membership of the Church increased, an Agent, Mr. Achongari from Okirika was posted to lead the Church (then known as Station). The same late Daniel Wopara accommodated the Agent until the Church was able to build a Teacher's House (as it was then called).

When it became obvious that the numerical strength of the church was increasing tremendously such that the small hut could no longer accommodate them, late Chief Weli Uwamaka donated his small piece of land to the Church. The Church began to worship at this place until it was again overtaken by teeming population and the need for a bigger portion of land was conceived. At this point, late Chief Chinwo, Chief Weli and Chuku Owbor all of blessed memory of Rumuodara village jointly donated to the Church over two hectares of land. This gave rise to the location of the Church here in Rumuodara village because of its central position in Okporo Community.

In 1915, the Church building and Teacher's house (now parsonage) were built with mud and thatches. The Church building was used also as school and the Agent, late Mr. Achongari doubled as the School Teacher. This served as the first building of the Church.

In 1925, the Church was formally named "**St. Simon's Anglican Church, Rumuodara**". However, on the 25<sup>th</sup> day of April, 1942, the **Oha-Okporo**, meeting unanimously agreed to change the name to **ST. SIMON'S ANGLICAN CHURCH OKPORO**, a name that embraced the three villages that make up Okporo Community – Mgbuesilaru, Rumuodara and Eliowhani.

After several years, the desire to build a standard house of worship became necessary. By the grace of God, this vision was vigorously pursued by the entire Okporo Community. But mention must be made of the then Parochial Church Council [PCC] and some taxable adults of Okporo Community, among whom were Messrs. Jonah Onukem, Samuel, Moses Ihunwo, Israel Ordu, Amos Amadi, Fyeface Amadi, Peter Obidi, Godwin Onukem, Samuel Weli while Chief Obadiah Chinwo, Chief Festus Worlu Amadi and Harry Elewa who were all contributed their levies of £7 (seven pounds) each to the erection of the building. These all are now late. Again,

Mgbuesilaru Community was the 1<sup>st</sup> to pay their quota of £200 (two hundred pounds) for the take off of the Church building. On the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of October, 1960, the foundation stone of the new Church building (then) was laid by His Lordship, The Rt. Rev. E. T. Dimeari of blessed memory, Bishop of the then Niger Delta Diocese. The building was completed before the Nigerian Civil war but dedicated on 16<sup>th</sup> May, 1981 by His Lordship, The Rt. Rev. Samuel O. Elenwo (JP), now late, then Bishop of the Niger Delta Diocese. This became the second Church Building.

### **The Parish status of St. Simon's Church Okporo**

It is the desire of every organization to grow from one level to another. It is on this premise, therefore that St. Simon's Church after several years of existence as a local station, decided to upgrade itself, by applying to the then Evo District to be recognized and constituted into an autonomous Parish status on 20<sup>th</sup> January, 1992 during the tenure of the late Rev. M. O. Ejiowhor (then a Catechist).

On 28<sup>th</sup> October, 1995 during the tenure of Rev. M. E. Ogbonnah (now a retired Canon) the Church was formally inaugurated as an autonomous Parish by His Lordship, the late Bishop S. O. Elenwo (JP), then Bishop of Niger Delta Diocese.

### **The New Church Building**

The vision for the expansion of the Church building was conceived by Rev. (now Rev. Canon) Monday E. Ogbonnah in 1997. In 1999 the Architectural design was completed and presented to the Diocesan Office of Niger Delta North for approval. In the month of November, 1999, the design was approved by the Diocesan Central Office. Shortly after the approval the Rev. Canon M. E. Ogbonnah was transferred.

The Rev'd (now Venerable) Victor O. A. Elleh took over from Canon M. E. Ogbonnah in the same month of November, 1999. On assumption of office, he aligned himself with the vision of his predecessor and went further to convince the Parochial Church Council (PCC) to embark on a new Church building as against the side-way expansion originally initiated. Though the PCC was startled over the huge financial involvement but, he encouraged them very well and made them to believe that building the house of God is God's own business. On this moral and spiritual strength, the PCC began the new Church building. The building advanced to the lintel level before he was transferred in the month of September, 2000. Before his transfer, he had initiated plans for the formal foundation stone laying of the new church building.

On 15<sup>th</sup> September 2000, Rev. Jolly S. Ndubuisi (now a Venerable) assumed office as the Vicar of St. Simon's Church. He quickly caught up with the vision and continued there from. Ven. Jolly S. Ndubuisi, after critical study of the Architectural design observed that provisions were not made for the gallery, external veranda etc. Consequently, the design was altered in order to accommodate other vital sections befitting a cosmopolitan Church.

On 14<sup>th</sup> October, 2000, the foundation stone of the new church building was laid by His Lordship, the Rt. Rev. Ignatius C. O. Kattey (JP), the new Bishop of Niger Delta North Diocese. Ven. S. Ndubuisi took the building to the roofing level and began the structural works before he was transferred on 16<sup>th</sup> August, 2002.

Rev. Canon Chukwuemeka E. Ogu succeeded Ven. Ndubuisi and arrived the Church in the month of August, 2002. At this time, the building had advanced to the roofing level with the structural works completed pending lifting. In a bid to lift it, serious fabrication errors were detected which gave rise to dismantling and re-awarding of the structural works to another contractor who completed the work perfectly and installed accordingly.

It was the period of Rev. Canon Chukwuemeka E. Ogu (now late) and his able Curate, Rev. C. N. Odocha (now a Canon) that brought the building to its formal dedication on the 17<sup>th</sup> day of April, 2005. The ceremony was performed by the Rt. Rev. (now His Grace, The Most Rev.) I.C.O. Kattey, Jp, Bishop of the Diocese of Niger Delta North. This new Church building is 3<sup>rd</sup> in the series since the advent of Christianity in Okporo Community.

## **Achievements**

Some of the notable achievements recorded by St. Simon's Church include:

1. **The Elevation of the Church from Parish to Deanery Status:** the Church under the leadership of Ven. S. O. Agoha JP applied for autonomous Deanery status on 26<sup>th</sup> March, 2008. The Diocese graciously approved this application on the 4<sup>th</sup> of April, 2008.
2. **Building of lock-up shops:** To the glory of God, the Church has been able to build over twenty lock-up shops.
3. The Church council was able to survey the lands and deed of ownership signed accordingly.
4. St. Simon's Anglican Church in a bid to facilitate Evangelism planted the **New Wine Anglican Church**, East-West Road, Okporo on Sunday, 30<sup>th</sup> November, 2008 and in conjunction with the New Wine Church, **Faith Community Anglican Church, Eliowhani** was later planted on Sunday, 29<sup>th</sup> August, 2010.
5. The Church went further to embark on building a befitting parsonage for the ministers. The foundation-stone laying of the parsonage was performed on 5<sup>th</sup> April, 2008 by The Rt. Rev. I. C. O. Kattey, JP, Bishop of Niger Delta North Diocese (Now Archbishop, Niger Delta Province/Dean, Church of Nigeria).

## **Growth and Challenges of the Church**

Immediately after the war, about 1970, late Elder Samuel Weli assisted by Godwin Onukem acted as the Church Teacher. Due to lack of funds and thereafter for purposes of administrative convenience, Okporo belonged to the Eneka group of Churches, comprising of Eneka and Oroigwe. Separation took place after Oroigwe refused to accept the posting of Catechist Jaja to cover both Oriogwe and Okporo. This led to the emergence of the Okporo group.

As the Church progressed without Pews, late Elder Samuel Weli, late Godwin Onukem, Chuku Weli, Philip Onukem including Elder Emmanuel E. Amadi and Elder Chris Onukem in conjunction with a few women like Alice Ngwomati and

others went to Rumuobiokani to carry prepared pews in parts, which were coupled in St. Simon's Church, Okporo.

The church grew in bounds and during the stewardship of Rev. Stewart a clear demarcation was drawn between people who were members of the Church and the rest of the community.

Then in 2003, the idea and desire of planting another Church by St. Simon's Church was muted under the pastoral leadership of then Rev. Canon Jolly Ndubuisi. The Church Council then through the Evangelism Board carried out feasibility area survey and spiritual mapping of the land for Church Planting.

In the year 2004, the desire and vision became stronger when three of the church members – Emmanuel Nwaogwugwu, Thompson Elewa and Anderson Owzor (All now Reverends) indicated their desire to go for pastoral training at the Trinity College, Umuahia. The then Church Council under the leadership of the Rev. Canon C. E. Ogu set up Evangelism and Education Endowment Fund. But in 2005, the then Evangelism Committee took the bull by the horn by launching the 1<sup>st</sup> Outstation City Crusade at Eliowhani Town Playground which was welcomed by the Chiefs and Elders of Eliowhani Town.

After the Crusade, search for land for Church planting commenced leading to acquisition of 4 plots of land at Ohia Mini Area of Eliowhani.

## **CONCLUSION**

The historical analysis of this Church may appear incomplete if we fail to acknowledge the sacrificial support received from the entire Okporo people and more particularly from the following persons: Elder Philip Amaewhule, Elder Maxwell Onukem, Chief Obadiah O. Chinwo, Eze S. I. Amadi (JP), Samuel Weli (Lay Reader), Godwin Onukem (Lay Reader), Peter Obidi, Madam Alice Ngwomati, madam Gladys Obidi, Madam Sabinah Nwanwa, Madam Jenny Ordu, Madam Elizabeth W. Onukem, all of blessed memory. Others are: Elder Chuku Weli, Elder G. A. Iwezor (then Church Secretary), Elder Emmanuel E. Amadi, Elder C. A. Onukem, Rev. G. N. Ihunwo (Rtd.) – 1<sup>st</sup> indigenous Pastor, Elder Samuel Onukem, Madam Adeline Chuku, and Madam Salome Amadi. Their moral and financial support was a great booster to the Church.

### **List of those who have served in the Church**

1. Mr. Achongari – Agent
2. Mr. Ebenezer Kalio – Agent
3. Mr. H. E. Oriaku – √√
4. Mr. Okene – √√
5. Mr. A. Achebelema – √√
6. Mr. N. Koko – √√
7. Mr. A. Koko – √√
8. Mr. U. Koko – √√
9. Mr. J. Elewa – √√
10. Mr. T. Dede – √√
11. Mr. Alaribe – √√

12. Mr. Nnama – √√
13. Mr. Ekongo – √√
14. Mr. Ikejiani – √√
15. Mr. Orji – √√
16. Mr. E. Iwuoha – √√
17. Mr. P. Woko – √√
18. Mr. M. Amadi – √√
19. Mr. Ezeji – √√
20. Mr. Chuchu – √√
21. Catechist A. N. Oburu – √√
22. Catechist D. E. Jaja – √√
23. Catechist J. Ejekwu – √√
24. Catechist I. A. Chezue – √√ (Now Reverend)
25. Catechist G. O. Nwachukwu
26. Late Rev. A. O. Ajuru
27. Mr. S. O. Omereji (Now Reverend)
28. Mr. M. O. Ejiowhor (Now Reverend)
29. Rev. G. D. Stewart
30. Rev. M. E. Ogbonna
31. Ven. Victor Elleh
32. Ven. Jolly Ndubuisi
33. Rev. Canon C. E. Ogu/Rev. Canon Odocha
34. Ven. D. N. L. Achinike/Rev. Gagger
35. Ven. Chukwuigwe/Rev. Canon Nwaoha
36. Rev. Canon Ugwunwa
37. Ven. Samuel Agoha/Rev. Samuel Gabriel/Rev. Gospel Onuchukwu
38. Ven. Azubuike Ugoha/Rev. Chinweze
39. Rev. Canon G. B. Chinda (Now Venerable) – incumbent Rector/Rev. Canon Luke Odum as Curate with Rev. Bright Welekwere serving at New Wine Church, and Rev. Ozioma Iheanetu at Faith Community, Eliowhani.

### **Lay Readers**

1. Late Godwin Ogbonda Onukem
2. Late Samuel W. Weli (Pastor's Warden & Local Helper)
3. Mr. C. B. Obidi
4. Mrs. C. E. Amadi 1<sup>st</sup> Woman Lay Reader to mount the Pulpit on 26/11/84
5. Mrs. P. N. Obidi
6. Mr. G. N. Ihunwo (Now retired Reverend)
7. Mr. Jona Agaecheta
8. Lady Christy Onukem
9. Evang. Justin Nwogwugwu JP
10. Sir Friday Nwanwa
11. Mrs. Catherine Agugua
12. Mrs. Comfort Odum
13. Engr. B. C. Ekechukwu
14. Dr. Mrs Rose O. Ekechukwu
15. Mr. Christopher A. Onukem
16. Mr. Amos Okorie
17. Mr. Frank Eze-Okoli



18. Mrs. Carhline Chinda
19. Sister Stella Nyeche
20. Mrs. Ngozi Umeh
21. Mr. John Bolaji Popoola
22. Lady Chibuzor Anyabele
23. Mr. Keneth Anonye
24. Mr. Sabinus Nwarie
25. Mr. Fred Uwikor
26. Damiel Doublas
27. Barr. Erick Uzoegbu
28. Mr. Gilbert Chuje
29. Mrs. Helen Ugbunu
30. Mr. Ndubuisi Okafor.

*\*We acknowledge the part played by the Okporo Deanery Council in compiling this history for us.*

## **OUR GUEST SPEAKERS**

### **1. RT. REV KEN S. E.OKEKE (RETIRED BISHOP ON THE NIGER)**

The Right Rev. Ken Sandy Edozie Okeke, retired Bishop On The Niger comes from a pioneer missionary family, for his father was a Catechist for 47 years, much of which were spent planting Churches in areas which are now in Nsukka, Udi and Oji River Dioceses. A graduate of Accountancy from the University of Nigeria Nsukka, Bishop Ken went for theological training at SIM Seminary Igbaja in the then Kwara State, from 1970; and later at Ridley Hall Cambridge, UK. He started his ministry at Victory Commercial College Edidi Kwara State, where he went to assist the expatriate Principal, to provide a Christian presence in the school. He moved on to Anglican College of Commerce Offa, where he began as teacher of Christian Religious Knowledge and Principles of Accounts. He became Vice Principal of the College in January 1976, became ordained in June and was priested in December of the same year. He took over as Principal of the school in January 1977 and in 1979, Church of Nigeria appointed him to travel to England as the first Chaplain to Nigerians in the United Kingdom (in partnership with CMS UK). While awaiting the completion of plans for his move to England, he served in Crowther Memorial College, Lokoja from January to August 1980. He served as Chaplain to Nigerians in the U.K. from 1980-1987; spent some time at Our Saviour's Church Lagos from 1987-1989. He became the International Chaplain at Manchester University Chaplaincy, from 1989-1995; appointed to the post of CMS Regional Secretary in charge of missionary work in West Africa at Church Missionary Society Headquarters in London from 1995-1996. He became CMS Regional Director for all of Africa from 1997-2000. He was elected Bishop On the Niger on 6<sup>th</sup> June 2000, consecrated on 30<sup>th</sup> July 2000 and enthroned on 4<sup>th</sup> August 2000.

He intensified the mission work in the Diocese On The Niger and to the glory of God, three Missionary Dioceses – Ogbaru, Niger West and Mbamili – were carved out of the Diocese On the Niger during his episcopacy. He was the Chairman of the Church

of Nigeria Missionary Society (CNMS) till he retired in March, 2011. He is married to Dr (Mrs) Ngozi Okeke, a theologian, with a Ph.D from King's College, London who graciously accepted to prepare and lead the three Bible Study sessions of this Synod. Regrettably, for health reasons she has not been able to join Bishop Ken on this trip. Let us continually pray for her quick recovery. Since their retirement in 2011, they currently run the Church of Nigeria Bishops' Training School for new bishops. Plans are in progress for them to run Training/Workshops for the House of Bishops; and through the Frontline Mission Outreach, their NGO, they offer leadership training/workshops wherever they are invited to do so. They are blessed with four children, a son and three daughters.

We express our very hearty thanks to Bishop Ken Okeke for honouring us the second time this year with his esteemed presence and refreshing meditations on the theme of this Synod. May the Lord continue to be with you my Lord and with your dear wife, Ngozi and grant you sustained grace and abundant favours even in your retirement in Jesus name – Amen.

## **2. PROFILE OF VEN. NDUBUISI OBI**

Ven. Ndubuisi Obi is here with us in this Synod as our Bible Study Teacher, standing in for Dr. Mrs. Ngozi Okeke, wife of the retired Bishop On the Niger, The Rt. Rev. Ken Okeke, who is unable to make it for health reasons. We thank the incumbent Bishop On the Niger, The Rt. Rev. Owen Nwokolo for releasing the Ven. Ndubuisi Obi to us for this assignment.

Venerable Ndubuisi Obi was born to committed Christian parents, Revd. Canon Abel Okwuchukwu and Mrs. Jane Uzoma Obi, on December 17, 1965. He attended Urban Primary and Central School in Nsukka, and Ezechima Primary School, Onitsha from where he proceeded to DMGS, Onitsha. Ven. Ndubuisi ventured into business and spent seventeen years as a very successful businessman in Onitsha, during which time he gave his life to Christ. His love for God and his passion for the Gospel led him to focus on his spiritual growth and maturity. Soon he found himself in several leadership positions in the church. As a lay person, he became Chairman of the Choir in St. Mark's Anglican Church, Omagba-Onitsha. He was at other times in that church, EFAC leader, A.Y.F leader, and Peoples warden. While serving as Assistant Zonal Co-ordinator of EFAC, Onitsha Zone, The Rt. Revd. Ken S. E. Okeke, immediate retired Bishop On the Niger, sent him to St. Paul's University College, Awka, for Ordination Training, having discovered his usefulness to the ministry of the Gospel. He was the Students' Union Government [SUG] President for 2002/2003 session.

Ven. Ndubuisi Obi was made a Deacon in December 2003, and ordained a Priest in 2004. He was preferred a Canon in December 2010 by the Rt. Rev. Ken S. E. Okeke just before he retired, and in December, 2011 His Lordship, The Rt. Revd. Owen C.

Nwokolo the present Bishop On The Niger, preferred him an Archdeacon. He is the pioneer Archdeacon of Ascension Archdeaconry Isiafor. He is happily married to Mrs. Ukamaka Obi and they are blessed with four children. He is currently the Chairman of the Directorate for Missions and Evangelism of the Diocese On the Niger.

We thank the Venerable for faithfully and very ably representing Dr. Mrs. Okeke. May God bless you and continuously prosper your ministry in Jesus name – Amen.

### **3. VEN. ERNEST OKECHUKWU ONUOHA**

Our third speaker, The Venerable Ernest Onuoha is well known to a number of us in this Diocese, especially members of the house of clergy. He had ministered in our Diocese on two previous occasions and we are pleased to have him join us again in this Synod.

Ven. Ernest Onuoha is currently Rector of Ibru International Ecumenical Centre, Agbarha-Otor, Delta State.

He is a teacher and preacher of the word of God. Through his ministry as a born again child of God, many souls have been blessed.

Ven. Onuoha has been a lecturer at Trinity Theological College, Umuahia, Abia State and rose to the post of the Registrar of the institution.

He was ordained deacon in 1988 at All Saints' Cathedral, Egbu and Priested in 1989 at Christ Anglican Church, Owerri by the then Bishop of the Diocese of Owerri, Rt. Rev. Benjamin Chukwuemeka Nwankiti. He was preferred a Canon in 2008 at Cathedral of Transfiguration (CATOL), Owerri by Rt. Rev. Cyril Okorocha while in 2010 was collated Archdeacon at St. Matthew's Cathedral Atta, Diocese of Ikeduru by Rt. Rev. Emmanuel Maduwike.

He is member of the Committee of Reference of Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion), one time National Secretary of Anglican Children's Ministry (ACM) of Nigeria for over eight years, a regular contributor to Sunday Guardian Newspapers and is into Alternative Dispute Resolution Processes.

He is happily married to Mrs. Chioma Progress and they are blessed with three lovely children.

Ven. Onuoha took us on Synod Talk 1 on Church Government with focus on Synod. We trust that we have all been greatly enlightened and enriched through his well researched presentation. We sincerely thank the Venerable for the sacrifice.

## ***TIMI ALAIBE***

**Timi Alaibe** is a renowned financial expert and top Nigerian Politician. He addressed this Synod on a serious issue of global concern, poverty.

Trained as an Accountant at the University of Science and Technology, Port Harcourt where he obtained a Bachelors Degree in Accounting in 1984, he also holds a Masters Degree in Business Administration (MBA) from the prestigious Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU), Ile Ife, Nigeria.



**Timi** is an accomplished technocrat both in the private and public sectors. His career started at Peat Marwick Ani Ogunde and Co. (now KPMG Nigeria) where he served as Trainee Accountant. In 1986, he joined African Continental Bank as Head of Operations and rose to become Branch Manager at Okrika, Rivers State, before leaving for All States Trust Bank Plc as Assistant Manager, Risk Management and Skills Acquisition Credit Control in 1991. In 1992, he served as Vice President of Cosmopolitan Bancshares, a top-tier finance and investment company and joined Societe Generale Bank, Nigeria as Manager, Corporate Banking Division in 1994. He became Senior Manager and Head, Corporate/Strategic Planning; Assistant General Manager in 1998; and General Manager, Corporate and Investment Banking in 2000.

Within the period of his career in the financial services industry, **Timi** attended financial and management courses in acclaimed institutions across the world. He is a member of several professional organisations including the Institute of Certified Public Accountants; Institute of Chartered Administrators, Institute of Corporate Executives, and as Fellow of the Nigeria Institute of Management (FNIM) and the Institute of Corporate Administration, among others.

In 2001, he was appointed Executive Director in charge of Finance and Administration at the newly created Federal Government's Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) and he was undoubtedly instrumental to the establishment of a healthy financial regime for the Commission. Along with his colleagues, he set in motion a coordinated response mechanism to the short, medium and long-term challenges of the Niger Delta. These included Integrated Regional Development Master Plan, Interim Action Plan for key projects in the States, as well as programmes for skill acquisition and a re-orientation and empowerment of youths.

In April 2007, he was appointed Managing Director of the Commission; a position he held until April 2009 when his tenure expired. Shortly after that, he was appointed as Honorary Special Adviser, and subsequently substantive Special Adviser to the President on Niger Delta Affairs and the Chief Executive Officer of the Presidential Amnesty Programme. He became the Chief Negotiator and rallying point for the Federal Government in the disarmament of the militants who had held the Niger Delta region of Nigeria hostage for years. He successfully negotiated disarmament

terms and conditions with the Niger Delta Militants and got them to surrender weapons in their possession in an exercise that is arguably the most successful disarmament exercise in the history of Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) in Africa.

Shortly after, he was saddled with the more challenging task of nurturing the Demobilisation, Rehabilitating and Re-integration of the ex-combatants back into society. His immediate constituents were 20,192 warring youth who accepted the Amnesty Proclamation in 2009. He took the challenge with the zeal of priesthood. Although he held the office for about a year, he put in place a five-year framework for the efficient implementation of the Demobilisation, Demobilisation and Reintegration programme. Today, as the Federal Government of Nigeria celebrates the success of the exercise, **Timi Alaibe** stands tall as the midwife of that process.

**Alaibe** believes that the re-integration agenda would only be complete with a massive infrastructural development of the Niger Delta in line with the Niger Delta Regional Development Master Plan. He was a member of the Niger Delta Technical Committee appointed by the President Yar'Adua administration in September, 2008 to collate, review and distil the various reports, suggestions and recommendations on the Niger Delta from the Willinks Commission Report (1958) to the present, and propose a summary of recommendations that will enable the Federal Government achieve sustainable development, peace, human and environmental security in the Niger Delta Region.

A man of peace and a catalyst for change; he has been called a friend of the oppressed whose word is his bond, a symbol of hope and inspiration for the indigent yet hopeful Niger Delta people. In recognition of his contributions to humanity and the society, he has been honoured with several academic and philanthropic awards viz : Distinguished Alumnus Award, Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU) (2002); Outstanding Alumnus, University of Science and Technology (2002); Honorary Membership and Award of Exemplary Leadership, Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) (2005); Certificate of Honour, Euro Market Research (2008); Award of Excellence for Enthronement of Peace in the Niger Delta, Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) (2009); Meritorious Award for Excellent Human and Material Engineering in Development of the Niger Delta by the Catholic Diocese of Port Harcourt (Dec. 2012); and Award of Excellence for various Acts of Unqualified Support to the Catholic Church in Nigeria by the Catholic Men Organization in Nigeria (June, 2013); amongst others.

As a measure of his growing profile, **Timi** has served as resource person at national and international fora on subjects ranging from Development Challenges of the Niger Delta Region, Capital Markets/Country Risk Rating, to Sustainable Development, and Nonviolence, Peace and Security.

He currently sits as Chairman on the board of a private marine logistics organisation, Zomay Marine and Logistics Company Limited, with interest in the Oil and Gas sector and the hospitality industry.

A devout Christian of Catholic faith **‘Timi Alaibe** believes true family values are at the core of life and good society. When he is not discussing sustainable development and politics of Nigeria, or analysing the capital markets, Timi is likely to be seen playing Table Tennis or Squash or swimming with his family.

You will agree with me that Chief Timi’s paper on **“Reversing the Cycle of Poverty and Suffering Amid Plenty in the Land”** was quite thought-provoking and challenging to everyone of us. We thank him for making out time to come to address this Synod at our invitation even in the face of his other numerous engagements. May God bless him and continue to grant him the comfort of His Holy Spirit – Amen.

### **OUR SYNOD THEME**

Through the three sessions of our First Synod we deliberately chose to dwell, in our choice of themes, on the three pillars upon which the motto of the Diocese rests. These are: loving, teaching and preaching Christ. We had to do this because we desired that every parishioner in Evo should be adequately informed about the vision or driving motivation behind the request for the creation of the Diocese of Evo by our founding fathers. We did not want to leave any one in the dark.

In the last four years we have also persistently made our mission clearly known to everyone. Standing out strategically in all we are focusing on and hope to continue with in the years ahead is the business of bringing men (people) to Christ and establishing them strong in their Christian faith. This is Discipleship. Having therefore, taken three years to explain through our past Synod themes the motto of the Diocese, we have prayerfully chosen the theme **“The Word of God: A Great Treasure”**, to begin this (Second) new Synod.

The emphasis in this theme shall be on the **Word of God**. In our effort as a Church to disciple (nurture) everyone under our care unto Christian maturity, we have understood that the Word of God is the greatest instrument God has given us to achieve that.

In his letter to the dispersed Christians, Apostle Peter harped on the importance of the Word of God as a vital instrument for spiritual nourishment and maturity which every believer in Christ must crave for: *“As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby”*, (1Peter 2: 2).

Our theme **“The Word of God: A great Treasure”** is drawn from the Biblical Book of Psalms, chapter 119 verse 162.

## **The Book of Psalms**

This book contains 150 spiritual songs and poems used by Christians of different persuasions throughout the centuries in the public worship of the church and in their private devotions, in meditations and in prayer since the earliest days of the church and above all, in praise to God.

### **Authorship**

Tradition attributes the authorship of a large number of the songs and poems in the Psalter to King David. Modern scholars have however questioned this. Consequently, the authorship of many (i.e. the songs and poems) is uncertain. The argument is that it is probable that in some cases the name affixed to certain psalms may actually be a reference to the collector, rather than the author.

### **Date**

The period in which the Psalms were composed in ancient Israel goes back as early as the time of King David (C. 1000 BC). Whereas some of the psalms were certainly written much later: Psalm 137, for instance, speaks of the exile of the Jews from Jerusalem to Babylon in the sixth century BC; majority of others, however, cannot be dated precisely and might have been written at almost any time within a period of several centuries. The Psalms thus reflect something like three quarters of a millennium in the life and worship of ancient Israel, i.e. the Jews.

### **Topical Arrangement**

Each psalm addresses some topic which appears prominently in it. For instance, majority of the psalms are either hymns of praise and thanksgiving to God for what He is and for what He has done (e.g. Pss. 8, 104, 135), or prayers for help and laments because of the sufferings of an individual (e.g. Pss. 6, 22), or his anxieties (e.g. Ps. 77), or because of some national disaster such as defeat in battle (e.g. Ps. 44) or the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple (e.g. Pss. 74, 79). There are also meditations on God's providence (e.g. Pss. 49, 73, 78).

For **Psalm 119**, the topic or subject matter of the Word of God or His commandments appears prominently in it. **Verse 162** of it reads thus: *"I rejoice at thy word, as one that findeth a great spoil"*. It is specifically from this verse that our theme **"The Word of God: A Great Treasure"**, is chosen.

### **Definitions**

There are two readily distinguishable terms in this theme that we need to define in order to make progress in our discussion or deliberation on it. These are: **"The Word of God"** and **"Treasure"**.

### **The Word of God**

This is usually a reference to The Holy Bible, God's special Book, used by the Christians and Jews. It is not like other Books, but is a supernatural Book. It was written by many different people, who wrote by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (2Timothy 3:16) over a period of 1,600 years.

Unarguably, the Bible is regarded as one of the oldest books in the world. In fact, the most ancient portions of it date back almost 4,000 years. Yet it is still the most modern book in the world today. It is the world's best seller; consistently outselling

any other book. Originally written in three languages – Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek, the Bible has been translated into more languages than any book in the world.

The Bible has been described as library of **sixty six books** and divided into two chief parts: The **Old Testament** which was written between 1,500 and 400 B.C., and the **New Testament**, written during the second half of the first century A.D. The Old Testament tells us about God's work with his people, Israel and her neighbours and tells of many great men and women of faith. The New Testament on its part tells us about Jesus' birth, His life, His great ministry of healing and forgiveness for sick and sinful people, His death on a cross, His resurrection from the dead and ascension (going back to Heaven) to prepare a place for all those who put their trust in Him.

The New Testament also tells us about the continuation of Jesus' healing, forgiving ministry through those who saw Him after His resurrection, i.e. the apostles. Their teachings are contained in the Epistles (Letters), written within the first fifty years after Jesus' resurrection. These make up about half of the New Testament.

One central theme runs through the 66 books of both the Old and New testaments. It is God's loving plan to rescue mankind through His Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ, who also is the supreme subject of the entire Bible.

This takes us to yet another understanding of the term, the Word of God. This is a reference to Jesus Christ. *"In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. The Word became flesh and lived for a while among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and Only Son who came from the Father full of grace and truth",* (John 1:1-3, 14).

Jesus Christ is therefore, the "Word" of God.

When The Word spoke the world into being in Genesis, it was Jesus, in the mystery of the Trinity, speaking the world into existence. When "the Word of the Lord came to Hosea", it was Jesus, in the mystery of the Trinity, speaking to Hosea. When the law was given to Moses, it was Jesus communicating to the heart of His people. not only does the Word include memra, or God's supportive presence among His people, but it contains the law: the words, and the holy judgment of God as seen in the Torah. (The Torah is the first five books of the Old Testament: Genesis through Deuteronomy).

Jesus, as the Word, is here with us and is filled with wisdom, power, and comfort. And as He, through His Spirit and His Word, falls upon hearts eager to receive, he cannot help but produce fruit. Hosea talked about the Lord coming to us *"like the rain, like the latter and former rain to the earth"* (6:3). Likewise, Isaiah extends the analogy, and in his picture is an exciting truth:

*"For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven,  
And do not return there, but water the earth, and make  
it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower  
and bread to the eater, so shall My word be that goes*



*forth from my mouth; it shall not return to Me void,  
but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall  
prosper in the thing for which I sent it” (Isaiah 55:10, 11).*

The second distinct term contained in our theme is “**Treasure**”. The word treasure means wealth in the form of gold, silver, jewels, (precious metals/gems) or other valuable objects. It is a reference to a much loved or highly valued person or thing.

The definitions having been done, the question then is what are there in the Word of God (the Bible) that qualify it to be likened to a treasurer?

The answers are many and varied. The first point we have to make is that in the Word of God we find answers to life’s greatest questions, such as:

- “Where did I come from?”
- “Why am I here?”
- “Where will I go from here?”

In the light of our earlier statement that the Word of God is also a reference to Jesus, we note therefore that the Word of God contains a record of the life and work of Jesus himself, who is also the most important personality in the universe. Behind the pages, storylines, events, and people of His book, Jesus waits to meet personally with every honest seeker. While the natural world reveals God’s power, majesty, and wisdom, the Bible reveals His plan of personal, eternal salvation. It is the Author of this book and what He offers His readers that make the Bible so timeless and important.

### **What’s in a book?**

Where is your Bible? Obviously many of you came to this Synod with one. It may be the first Bible you’ve ever owned, or you may have some others .... on the bookshelf, or lying in some other place. Do you realise that whether it is the very one you are holding right now or any other copy somewhere, that the day you bought them or received them as gift from someone, you actually found and became the possessor (owner) of a highly valued thing – a great treasurer?

King Josiah of Judah (the southern part of what had once been the united kingdom of Israel) found a treasure many years ago. The nation Judah had a capital city, Jerusalem, and in that city was God’s Temple, the centre of the nation’s worship. For many years the nation had been ruled by evil kings who replaced the worship of the true God in the temple to that of pagan gods.

When Josiah came on board as king, he dedicated himself to bringing back the worship of the one true God. He collected offerings from the citizens and gave the money to contractors to work on repairing the Temple. In the process of this restoration, the high priest Hilkiah discovered the book of the Law – the Bible (at least, the portion of the Bible that had been written by that time). When the king got wind of what the book contained, he was amazed. In the book were recorded the laws for God’s people – how they were to worship, live and care for one another. Josiah

took one look around, saw how far the nation had strayed, and tore his robes in sorrow. Then he set to work to make things right.

The Bible is God's love letter to humanity. As it is common with love letters, it carries for us several pieces of exciting, comforting news, one of which, is the reality of God's love for us. The Bible contains the world's greatest promise:

*"For God so loved the world that He gave His one and Only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16).*

The Bible is meant to be opened; to be read daily and reread. That is the only way we can discover the great treasures God, the Author, has packaged for us inside it. The Bible is not meant to sit on a bookshelf gathering dust. Each time we study the Bible we are like someone mining for treasure and we shall always find that it has wonderful things to say to us.

### **Other Terms used to refer to the Word of God**

In the Bible, several other terms have been used to refer to the Word of God. They include the following:

- The Law (Ps. 19:7)
- Statues (Ps. 19:8; 119:12, 54)
- Commandments (Deut. 6:6; 11:8; Pss. 19:8; 119:6)
- Truth (Prov. 23:23; John 17:17)  
Jesus Christ, the Word of God is the Truth (John 1:14; 14:6)
- Gospel (Matt. 4:23; 2Cor. 4:3; Eph. 6:19; Phil. 1:27; 1Thes. 1:5)
- Ordinances (Exod. 18:20; 2Kg 17:37; Luke 1:6)
- Judgments (Rev. 16:7; 19:2).

### **Purpose for the Word of God**

From the Bible, we find the following reasons (purposes) for which God gave His Word and inspired men to write it:

- To Authenticate the Divinity of Christ  
***"But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing, ye might have life through His name" (John 20:31).***
- To give hope to men  
***"And patience, experience, and experience, hope" (Rom. 5:4)***
- To relate human experience as a warning  
***"Now, all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come" (1Cor. 10:11)***

- To give knowledge of eternal life

***“These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God” (1John 5:13).***

### **Good Reasons to Read The Word of God**

There are several good reasons why we all should regularly read the Bible which contains the word of God.

1. For guidance. To know where we are going. We can't foresee the future or exactly where we are heading, but God's Word will order our steps (Ps. 119:133);
2. To have wisdom. The scripture, the Word of God is the source of wisdom (2Timothy 3:15). Knowledge of God's Word is where wisdom begins to grow in us (Ps. 19:7);
3. To find success. When we live according to the teachings of the Bible, life works (Joshua 1:8). It is therefore, a blessing to those who reverence it;
4. To live in purity. We are commanded to live a life of holiness and purity in order to enjoy more of God's presence, but we can't be made pure without being cleansed through the water of God's Word (Ps. 119:9);
5. To obey God. If we don't understand what God's laws are, how can we obey them? (Ps. 119:33-35);
6. To grow in faith. We cannot grow in faith without reading and hearing the Word of God (Rom 10:17);
7. To have joy. We cannot be free of anxiety and unrest without the Word of God in our hearts (Ps. 19:8);
8. To find deliverance. We won't know what we need to be free of unless we study God's Word to find out (John 8:31-32);
9. To have peace. God will give us a peace that the world cannot give, but we must find it first in His Word (Ps. 119:165);
10. To distinguish good from evil. Everything has become so relative today, how can we know for sure what is right and wrong without God's word? (Ps. 119:11).

The Bible you are carrying about or the others resting on your bookshelf gathering dust are great treasures. They contain God's word, thoughts and plans. These are His wealth, His spiritual and material blessings carefully packaged for our sustenance. Consequently, the Bible should be our most treasured possession.

### **Symbols for the Word of God**

Several symbols have been used by scripture itself to describe the Word of God:

1. A Mirror, James 1:23-25. It is called a mirror because it reflects the mind of God and the true condition of man.
2. A Seed, 1 Peter 1:23; James 1:18; Matthew 13:18-23. It is called a seed because, once properly planted, it brings forth life, growth and fruit.

3. Water, Ephesians 5:25-27. It is called water because of its cleansing, quenching, and refreshing qualities (John 15:3; Ps. 42:1; 119:9; Prov. 25:25; Isaiah 55:10; Heb. 10:22; Rev. 22:17).
4. A Lamp, Ps. 119:105, Prov. 6:23, 2Pet. 1:19. It is called a lamp because it shows us where we are now, it guides us in the next step we take, and it keeps us from falling.
5. A Sword, Heb. 4:12; Eph. 6:17. It is called a sword because of its convicting, piercing ability, operating with equal effectiveness upon sinners, saints, and Satan. Of the various armour pieces mentioned in Ephesians 6:11-17, all to be worn by the believer, the only offensive piece is the “**sword of the Spirit**, which is the **Word of God**”. So the Word of God stands out as our most important Spiritual Weapon to fight evil. Jesus used the Word as His “Sword” to resist the devil at the Mount of temptations (Luke 4:1-4).
6. Precious Metals:
  - a. Gold, Ps. 19:10; 119:127
  - b. Silver, Ps. 12:6.

It is referred to as precious metals because of its desirability, its preciousness, its beauty, and its value. These qualities justify our reference to it as a great treasure.
7. Nourishing food. The Word of God is likened to the various foods we eat daily for our health’s nourishment. It is however, much more than physical food. It is spiritual food for the soul, which as children of God we must eat daily to be able to grow in our faith (1 Cor. 3:1, 2; 1 Pet. 2:2; Eph. 4:12-15). *“But he answered and said, it is written, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God”* (Matt. 4:4). Some of the foods that are taken as symbols for the Word of God include:
  - a. Milk, 1 Pet. 2:2
  - b. Meat, Heb. 5: 12-14
  - c. Bread, John 6:51
  - d. Honey, Ps. 19:10

The Word of God is referred to as nourishing food because of the strength it imparts. Those who do not regularly read their Bible or attend Bible Study of the Church are weakening their faith and are likely to starve themselves gradually to spiritual death. Those who read it or attend Bible studies occasionally are actually undernourished. Pastors who do not organize, teach Bible studies or hold counselling sessions to impart the Word are starving such parishioners. They may be likened to a mother who refuses to breast feed her new born child just because she wants to prevent her breast from falling.

8. A Hammer, Jer. 23:29; Acts 9:4; Jude 20. It is a hammer because it possesses the ability to both tear down and build up.
9. A Fire, Jer. 20:9; Luke 24:32. It is called a fire because of its judging, purifying, and consuming abilities.
10. A Light, 2 Peter 1:19. It is called a light because it furnishes a light (i.e. it gives understanding) to the reader in a dark world (Ps. 19:8; 119; 105, 130; Prov. 6:23).

## **Profitability (Benefits) of the Word of God**

Perhaps the grandest and most conclusive description of the Word of God was penned by the Apostle Paul in a letter to a young pastor. He wrote:

*“And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to **make thee wise unto salvation** through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture given by inspiration of God, and is **profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness**: That the man of God **may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works**” (2 Tim. 3:15-17).*

In this remarkable passage Paul claims that the Word of God is profitable –

- i. For doctrine – that is, it may be used as the perfect textbook to present the systematic teachings of the great truths relating to God Himself.
- ii. For reproof – that is, the Word of God is to be used to convict us of the wrong in our lives.
- iii. For correction – that is, it will then show us the right way.
- iv. For instruction in righteousness – that is, God’s Word provides all the necessary details which will allow a Christian to become fully equipped for every good work.

## **The Bible as a Ready Help**

Another benefit we derive from the Word of God is that it offers us the strength, help and solution we need in the face of many life situations. For instance, the Book of Psalms offers us ready help at various trying times, such as:

- (a) In a time of fear, you can read psalm 27
- (b) In a time of doubt, Psalm 73
- (c) In a time of illness, Psalm 6
- (d) In a time of trouble, Psalm 46
- (e) In a time of sin, Psalm 51
- (f) In a time of thanksgiving for forgiveness, Psalm 32
- (g) In a time of loneliness, Psalm 12.

The Word of God will shed light on your way and on your hopeless situations of life and bring you comfort. It will help you make right choices, it will heal your wounds and settle your heart; it will warn you of danger; it will protect and cleanse you from sin; it will lead you; it will make you wise. It is bread; it is water, it is a counsellor, it is life. It is satisfying; it is sufficient; it is supreme; it is supernatural.

## **HOW SHOULD WE RESPOND TO THE WORD OF GOD?**

The scripture says that God has exalted His Word above even His own name (Ps. 138:2). If God esteems His Word that highly, what should be our attitude toward the Word? In Psalm 119, David speaks of loving the Word (Jer. 15:16);, reverencing it,

delighting in it, longing for it (1Pet 2:2), trusting in and fearing it. God says through the prophet Isaiah, “But on this one will I look: on him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, and who trembles at My Word” (Isa. 66:2. Cf – Ps. 119:161). What does it mean to tremble at the Word of God? It means to have an attitude of reverential awe and fear. It is the opposite of a cavalier attitude toward the Word. We are strongly enjoined to respond additionally in the following ways:

(1) **Read** it privately and during public worship (Rev. 1:3; Deut. 31:11; Luke 4: 16; 1Thess. 5:27); **study & rightly divide it** (2Tim. 2:15).

(2) **Hear it, Heed it, Live by it and bear bountiful fruit by it.**

The Lord Jesus tells the parable of the sower in Matthew 13:3-8 and explains its meaning in Matthew 13:18-23. This parable is also recorded on Luke 8:5-8, 11-15.

This parable tells of a man who sowed seeds on four different kinds of soil, each kind of soil producing a different result. Some seeds fell beside the road, some upon rocky places, some among the thorns, and some on the good soil (vs. 3-8).

The Lord Jesus explains that the seed represents the “Word of God” (vs. 19), that is, truth concerning the kingdom of God. The soil on which the seed was sown is the man hearing the Word.

The soil beside the road represents the hearer who does not understand the Word of God, and whatever he has heard is snatched away by the evil one (vs. 19). The rocky places represent the hearer who responds enthusiastically but superficially. Because of the lack of depth in his response to the Word of God, he falls away from the faith when things get difficult (vs. 20-21). The thorny ground represents the hearer whose life proves unfruitful because he is overcome by the worry of the world and the deceitfulness of riches (vs. 22). Finally, the good soil speaks of one who listens attentively to the Word of God, understands it and responds to it wholeheartedly. In him, the Word of God bears bountiful fruit (vs. 23). Luke 8:15 tells us that these are the ones who have heard the Word in an honest and good heart and hold it fast, and bear fruit with perseverance.

Though it is known as the parable of the sower, this parable can also be appropriately referred to as the parable of the four soils or four grounds because its emphasis is on the four different kinds of ground on which the seed fell. The thrust of this parable is *how we should respond* to the Word of God.

God wants us to retain His Word, enrich our lives with it (Col. 3:16) and be ready at all times to do it.

*“But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves”* (James 1:22).

*“Therefore whomsoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it” (Matt. 7:24-27).*

When the Word of God is communicated through reading by us and preaching to us, how do we respond? Do we seek to understand it and respond to it deeply, thus bearing fruit, or do we respond to it only superficially, thus bringing no fruit to maturity?

How we respond to the Word of God has implications of eternal significance.

- (3) **Believe it.** Believe it because God’s Word is truer than anything we feel or experience; it is truer than any circumstance we will ever face. God says of His word, *“Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away”* (Matt. 24:35) and, *“The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: both the Word of God shall stand for ever”* (Isaiah 40:8).

It is sure and absolutely trustworthy (Ps. 119:138; 1kg 8:56; Ezek 12:25).

The best reason to believe the Word of God, the Bible, is that Jesus Christ, the perfect God-man Himself; believed in it (Matt. 12:39-42; 19:4-5; Luke 17:26-29). The most personal reason to believe in the Word of God is found by each individual in the wisdom, rightness and strength that comes from following the Bible.

- (4) **Seed it** (Matt. 28:19, 20)

- (5) **Preach it** (2Tim. 4:2)

- (6) **Use it** (Eph. 6:17) to build up your faith, for counselling/instruction of others and for prayers. It is creative, Ps. 33: 6, 9, Heb. 11:3.

- (7) **Suffer for it**, and if need be, **die for it** (Rev. 1:9; 6:9; 20:4)

The Christian is to know the Word of God in his head, stow it in his heart, show it in his life, and sow it in the world. To be able to do all these, he is further enjoined to hunger for it like food, thirst for it like water, soak it in like a Jacuzzi; put it on like a garment; weave it into his soul so that it becomes part of the fabric of his life.

The Word of God impacts beneficially on the society and has transforming power in the lives of those who read and or listen to it believingly. Those who despise it do so

because they have no idea of the power behind it. Consequently, they stumble in life, expose themselves to the wrath of God and are thereby destroyed (Amos 2:4; 2Chron. 36:16; Hosea 4:6).

## Conclusion

We conclude by recalling what some great global personalities have said about the Bible, the Word of God:

From six former Presidents of the United States of America, we note the following statements:

- (1) “It is impossible to rightly govern the world without the Bible”  
– George Washington (1<sup>st</sup> President);  
*This should be a serious food for thought for our politicians and present day world leaders who despise God’s Word.*
- (2) “The Bible is the best book in the world. It contains more....  
than all the libraries I have seen” – John Adams (2<sup>nd</sup> President);
- (3) “It is an invaluable and inexhaustible **mine** of knowledge and virtue”  
– John Quincy Adams (6<sup>th</sup> President);
- (4) “But for this Book we could not know right from wrong. I believe the Bible is the best gift God has ever given to man”. – Abraham Lincoln (16<sup>th</sup> President);
- (5) “The more profoundly we study this wonderful Book.... **the better citizens we will become**” – William Mckinley (25<sup>th</sup> President);
- (6) “No educated man can afford to be ignorant of the Bible”  
– Theodore Roosevelt (26<sup>th</sup> President);
- (7) “The Bible is not only a great book of historical reference, but it also is a guide for daily life, and for this reason I respect it and I love it”  
– Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia.
- (8) “Believe me, Sir, never a night goes by, be I ever so tired, but I read the Word of God before I go to bed” – Douglas McArthur, a Military General.
- (9) “Young men, as you go forth, remember that I, an old man, who has known only science all his life, say unto you that there are no truer facts than the facts found within the Holy scriptures” – James Dwight Dana, a Scientist.
- (10) “Everyone who has a thorough knowledge of the Bible may truly be called educated....I believe knowledge of the Bible without a college course is more valuable than a college course without the Bible”  
– William Llyon Phelps, an Educator.
- (11) “Of all the books, the most indispensable and the most useful, the one whose knowledge is the most effective, is the Bible”  
– Charles Dana, a Philosopher.



- (12) “It cannot be otherwise, for the scriptures are Divine; in them God speaks, and they are His Word. To hear or to read the scriptures is nothing else than to hear God” – Martin Luther, a Church Father.

For the hymn writer, John Burton (1773-1822) the only way to summarise his feelings and thoughts about the Bible, the Word of God, was to compose this hymn:

Holy Bible, book divine’  
Precious treasure, thou art mine’  
Mine to tell me whence I came;  
Mine to teach me what I am.

Mine to chide me when I rove;  
Mine to show a Saviour’s love;  
Mine thou art to guide and guard;  
Mine to punish or reward.

Mine to comfort in distress,  
Suff’ring in this wilderness;  
Mine to show, by living faith,  
Man can triumph over death

Mine to tell of joys to come,  
And the rebel sinner’s doom;  
O thou Holy Book divine,  
Precious treasure, thou art mine.

May the Lord who has given His Word for a light to shine upon our path: grant us to meditate upon that Word and follow its teaching, that we find in it the light that shines more and more unto the perfect day; through Jesus Christ, our Lord – Amen

## OVERVIEW OF THE DIOCESE

### 1. MISSIONS & EVANGELISM

Our Diocesan quarterly mass evangelism programme, “**On the Highways and Hedges**” introduced in 2011 was consistently held in the various churches of our Diocese. This weeklong programme seeks to take church members out to the streets, house to house, neighbourhoods, markets and other public places on a one-on-one evangelism/soul winning exercise, that is, sharing their faith in Christ with others and bringing them the church. Despite the much emphasis we have placed on this programme, we are sad to note that the level of commitment to it by the clergy and laity of our churches has remained poor. On the part of some clergy, not much publicity is given to it; neither do they lead their parishioners out on this exercise. Other programmes are fixed to clash with this all important outreach. The result is that members are distracted and unavailable. A church that pays lip service to what ought to be the primary purpose of its existence is obviously preparing for its extinction. A pastor who plays down on the outreaches of the church will very soon have nobody to minister to in the church. Henceforth sufficient effort should be made to ensure the effective participation of all church members in this programme.

The communities in which our churches operate must feel the impact of our existence in their midst. The churches we are pasturing today were planted by those before us. We should rise up and prepare, that is, plant for those coming after us. God intended that His church on earth should maintain a steady process of growth. Pastors are to ensure that henceforth no other local activity is held during the week of 'On the Highways and Hedges'.

The Mission, Evangelism and Church Planting Board has continued to invite the various major Diocesan activity groups like the MCA, MU/WG, Council of Knights, Lay Readers, AYF, Sisters' Forum, etc. to partner with it on periodic weekend outreaches to the various administrative blocks of the Diocese. Again, our lay leaders and members of these groups have failed to show sufficient commitment to this laudable initiative. The women are however an exception. Their recent weekend outreach to Evo South East Archdeaconry was a far better outing compared to the other groups. We wish to remind leaders and members of all groups in the church that they exist primarily for missions and evangelism which is the heartbeat of God, and this 'charity' must necessarily begin here at home. If we fail to evangelize, a time will come when there shall be no persons to fellowship within our various groups. We pray for improved response to this collaborative outreach with the Missions Board.

- We have commenced the broadcast of a weekly outreach programme '**The Anglican Hour of Good Tidings**' on the Christian Missions Television - a cable network. In fact, sometimes the programme is aired twice a week – on Wednesdays and Saturdays at 3:00pm and 7:00pm respectively. We encourage everyone to regularly tune in to this programme and send us feedbacks.

#### ➤ **Boxing Day 2012 Prisons Outreach**

We the Bishop, the clergy, the choir and a sizable number of members of the All Saints' Cathedral Church embarked on a special outreach to inmates of the Port Harcourt prisons on 26<sup>th</sup> December, 2012 being Boxing Day. It was a wonderful time of fellowship with these special members of our society who on account of their falling short of the expectations of the laws of our land, are now confined in prisons for a period of time. They were all in high spirits and we too were edified in their midst. The Diocesan Board at a meeting held on the 30<sup>th</sup> December, 2012 approved the request of the prisons authorities for our provision of a water borehole at the prisons. This we hope to accomplish before the end of the year.

#### ➤ **Visit of Director of Missions and Evangelism, Primate's Office, Abuja**

The Director of Missions and Evangelism in the Abuja Office of the Primate of All Nigeria, The Venerable Cyrenius Okoriko visited from Monday 27<sup>th</sup> – Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> May, 2013 on a fact-finding and assessment tour of our Diocese. The visit took him to all the newly planted churches of our Diocese in the last four years and was concluded with a session with the house of clergy.

#### ➤ **Our support to other Dioceses**

We extended our financial support to some other Dioceses within the Church of Nigeria towards their missions and other developmental efforts. They include Diocese of Enugu North (Enugu State) – Bishop’s Court Project, Diocese of Bari (Kano State) – towards the roofing of a new church building in a Muslim dominated area, Diocese of Kebbi (Kebbi State) – towards mission and evangelism, Diocese of Ikwerre – towards youth development, Diocese of Ohaji/Egbema (Imo State) – towards the payment of accumulated clergy salaries and Ibru-Centre – towards the purchase of vehicles by the office of the Primate. We intend to launch out in the coming months to some three dioceses within our Province of Niger Delta by sending and sponsoring willing, mission-minded church teachers/evangelists to serve in the chosen Dioceses for a period of time to be agreed upon with the requesting Bishops. Persons from the Diocese who have a genuine call to go on this long-term external mission (within the Province) from two years and above should apply to the office of the Bishop for necessary screening. For the avoidance of doubt, we wish to warn that this is not going to serve as a shortcut to persons looking for opportunity to sneak into the ministry of the Church. We hereby declare that we shall not be under any obligation to ordain any volunteer at the end of his missionary assignment.

We will appreciate the assistance and support of willing members of our Diocese in the sponsorship of these would-be missionaries to some critical areas of our Province. Those prepared to offer us any form of assistance should please get in touch with the office of the Bishop.

### ➤ **Industrial Chaplaincy**

This unique chaplaincy was established with the aim of taking the gospel of Christ to all who work in the various companies, banks business outfits and markets scattered across the Diocese.

We are happy that members of the chaplaincy have continued to stage quarterly evangelism outreaches at the Oil Mill (Rumuokwursi) market, and maintain relationship and fellowship centres in the following establishments:

- Stetech Integrated Service Limited, Km 14 Eleme Road, Elelenwo,
- Intercontinental (Now Access) Bank, Plc, Oil Mill Branch,
- Pentagon Securities, opposite Steel Village
- First Bank Nigeria Plc, Rumuomasi
- Slot engineering Ltd,
- Sago Food industries,
- Papas Restaurant by PH/Aba Expressway, Toll Gate
- Pre-eminence Hotels & Towers, Elelenwo
- Jessilor Hotel, Iriebe
- Daffodil Hotel, Elingbu
- Che-Che God Supermarket, Rumuokwursi
- Amaktanvic Nigeria Limited, Rumuogba

- Global Gas Industries, Eleme Junction, Rumuokwurusi
- First Bank Nigeria Plc, Rumuokwurusi

While we commend the efforts of the Acting Chaplain, Rev. Ugochukwu Nwahaghi and his team we wish to remind them of the fact that Evo is a highly industrialized area and so fresh strategies must be prayerfully devised to enable us reach out to every industrial/business concern within our jurisdiction. The ministry is in dire need of more volunteers. Those the Lord is leading to join should please see the Chaplain.

## 2. CHURCH PLANTING/CHRISTENING

We are just a few churches away from actualizing our 50-church target within the first five years of our existence as a Diocese, which is just one year from now. Unfortunately, not much was achieved by the churches and groups in the area of planting of new churches within the last one year. We however commend one of our youngest churches, the Daystar Anglican Youth Church which came into existence on 7<sup>th</sup> August, 2011 for catching the vision of planting more churches by their opening of a new church on Sunday, 25<sup>th</sup> November, 2012 at Okene Street, Harmony Estate, Rumuwokerebe, Rumuokwurusi. We christened that new congregation “**The Anglican Church of the Beatitudes**” on Sunday the 9<sup>th</sup> of December, 2012. We are glad with the report of steady progress being made by the infant church.

We are also glad to report that the long awaited new church planting project – an assignment we gave to the Diocesan MCA has been finally accomplished. The MCA on Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> July, 2013 started a new congregation at King Bishop Plaza along Trans Slaughter-Woji Road. We commend the Chaplain, Ven. Okechukwu Owihonda, the President of the MCA, Sir Reginald Wagboso and the men of our Diocese for a job well done. May God enlarge your coasts, in Jesus name – Amen.

The following churches planted before the last Synod were christened by us during the year:

- |                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
| <b>a. Name:</b>     | Anglican Worship Centre, Egbelu, Rumunduru, Oroigwe.  |
| <b>Planted by:</b>  | All Saints’ Cathedral, Rumuokwurusi   |
| <b>Date:</b>        | 24 <sup>th</sup> June, 2012   |
| <b>Christened:-</b> | <b><i>Our Saviour, Christ Anglican Church, Rumunduru</i></b> on Sunday 9 <sup>th</sup> December, 2012 |
| <b>b. Name:</b>     | Anglican Worship Centre, Pre-eminence Hotel, Elelenwo   |
| <b>Planted by:</b>  | Evo South-East Archdeaconry   |
| <b>Date:</b>        | 19 <sup>th</sup> February, 2012   |
| <b>Christened:-</b> | <b><i>Jericho-Inn Anglican Church, Elelenwo</i></b> on Sunday 27 <sup>th</sup> January, 2013.         |
| <b>c. Name:</b>     | Anglican Worship Centre, Abuja Estate, Iriebe   |

- Planted by:** Missions/Evangelism Board on behalf of Diocese of Edo in partnership with Holy Ghost Anglican Church, Iriebe
- Date:** 28<sup>th</sup> August, 2011
- Christened:-** ***True Vine Anglican Church, Iriebe*** on Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> February, 2013.
- d. Name:** Anglican Worship Centre, Promise Plaza, Elelenwo
- Planted by:** St. Mark's Anglican Church, Elelenwo Deanery
- Date:** 8<sup>th</sup> December, 2010
- Christened:-** ***Anglican Church of the Passion, Elelenwo*** on Palm Sunday, 24<sup>th</sup> March, 2013.  
*This Church also moved to its permanent site at Rumuodani, Elelenwo on this day. The effort of the Mother-Church, St. Mark's Elelenwo Deanery under the Venerable Akuro Omubor is highly commended.*
- e. Name:** Anglican Worship Centre, Rumurolu
- Planted by:** Woji Archdeaconry
- Date:** 15<sup>th</sup> July, 2012
- Christened:-** ***Cornerstone Anglican Church, Rumurolu*** on Sunday, 23<sup>rd</sup> June, 2013.

### 3. CLERGY AND LAITY HUMAN CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT (TRAININGS)

We have continued to seek ways of enhancing the spiritual and intellectual capacity of our clergy, their wives and other categories of Diocesan ministers, workers and the laity

The council for continuing education organised a series of **bi-monthly Clergy school** lectures from August 2012 – June 2013. Topics treated included family issues, church ministry, communication and the power of dialogue, strategic retirement planning, prudent investment, ethics and discipline etc.

#### ➤ **Chancellors and Legal Officers Conference**

The 2012 Conference of Chancellors and Legal Officers of Dioceses within the Church of Nigeria held at the Basilica of Grace, Gudu District, Abuja between Monday 6<sup>th</sup> – Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> August.

Our Legal Officers led by the Registrar participated in the conference and training. We implore our Legal Officers to use the knowledge acquired to improve on their services to our Diocese. The next conference/training for diocesan legal officers organized by the Church of Nigeria has been slated for 5<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> August, 2013 at Abuja.

#### ➤ **Senior Clergy Training Course**

The second (course 02) and third (course 03) phases of the Church of Nigeria Senior Clergy Training Course were held from Monday 13<sup>th</sup> to Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> August, 2012

and from Monday, 21<sup>st</sup> January, to Friday, 1<sup>st</sup> February, 2013 respectively at the International Ecumenical (Ibru) Centre, Agbarha-Otor, Delta State. The Venerables Godwin Chinda and Okechukwu Owhonda participated at the course 02 while Venerable Sunday Opara, Rev. Canons Chris Chukwumati, Chimaobi D. Nwachukwu, Ikechukwu Anene, and Olufemi Igbamerun participated at the course 03. It is our prayer that participants will utilize the knowledge gained from these trainings for a more effective discharge of their pastoral duties. It is usually painful when we observe that clergymen who have severally benefitted from series of training programmes and courses continue to underperform in their duties. We pray that this trend will not continue to be the case. The following Priests: Venerables Fyneface Akah, Alex Usifoh, Rev. Canons Charles Mordi, Leo Nwachukwu and Chuka Opara are to prepare to participate in the next phase of this specialized training coming up from Monday 12<sup>th</sup> – Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> August, 2013 at the Ibru Centre, Agbarha-Otor, Delta State. The Archdeaconries, Deaneries and Churches where they serve are to please sponsor them.

#### ➤ **Church of Nigeria Publications Writers' Workshop**

A team from this Diocese was invited by the Church of Nigeria Liturgy, Prayer and Spirituality Committee along with several others from across the country to participate in a training/workshop preparatory to the production and publication of the 2014 editions of the Church of Nigeria Bible Study Manual, Children Sunday School Manual and the Daily Fountain Devotional. Those who attended the training included we the Bishop, Rt. Rev. Innocent U. Ordu for the Daily Fountain Devotional, The Rev. Cephas Okarefe, Brothers Azubuike Obi and Tony Udoezika for the Bible Study Manual; and Brother Justin Anunobi for the Children Sunday School Manual/Workbook. The training took place at the Faith Plaza, CMS, Bariga, Lagos from Wednesday, 20<sup>th</sup> to Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> February, 2013. We and the several others to whom we extended the training here at home will be contributing articles to the 2014 edition of the above named publications of the Church of Nigeria. May the Spirit of the Lord inspire them while writing.

#### ➤ **Post Vestry Meeting Trainings/workshops.**

The Diocese organised a **Post Vestry Meeting Training/ Workshop** for all newly elected leaders from the Cathedral Archdeaconries, Deaneries, Parishes and Stations. The training was conducted in two Batches. The first batch was held at St. Matthias's Church, Atali from Friday, 15<sup>th</sup> –Saturday, 16<sup>th</sup> of March, 2013 and it attracted leaders from the Cathedral, Evo South East, Oroigwe/Eliogbolo, Trinity Missionary Archdeaconries and Okporo Deanery. The second batch was held at St. Nicholas Church Woji District from Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> – Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> of March, 2013 and in attendance were leaders from Rumuomasi, Rumuobiokani, Elelenwo, Oginigba Deaneries and Woji Archdeaconry. The resource persons were the retired Bishop On The Niger and wife, the Rt. Rev. Ken & Dr Mrs Ngozi Okeke. We thank them for accepting to come and for the enriching training package delivered at the workshops. The high point of the trainings was the centralised inauguration of newly elected

Council members of the various Churches by us the Bishop on the closing day of each session. We commend all our Church leaders who cheerfully attended these training sessions without waiting to be coerced. Prior to these trainings we did our best to mobilise would-be participants well ahead of time through the Clergy. It is regrettable that some persons who willingly accepted their nomination and election into the Councils of their Churches failed to see the need to yield themselves to such an enriching training that will enable them serve the people of God better. Leadership goes with several responsibilities, one of which is to yield oneself to a higher authority. Those who find it difficult, whether they be Clergy or laity to submit to superior authority do not themselves deserve to lead in the first place or to continue in office if they are already there. We have since made our position clear: that all those who failed to attend the trainings or those who attended without being a part of the inauguration service and even those who smartly sneaked in a few minutes to the inauguration proper just to give the impression that they attended the trainings are not to continue in the Councils of their respective Churches no matter how important they or their Priests consider them to be. Anyone who has continued to hold office in his or her Church in disregard to this directive is doing so at his or her own peril. Same goes to their Priests who were adequately briefed about this before and after the trainings. We have not changed our stand on this. Those who must lead in God's house must be willing to learn about what they are required to do as officers of the Church.

➤ An enlarged **Sunday School/Discipleship Ministry Training for all Teachers** was held at All Saints Cathedral on Sunday March 24<sup>th</sup>, 2013. 105 persons attended from 23 Churches. The main thrust of the training which was facilitated by Dr Mrs Ngozi Okeke was to help Bible Study Teachers imbibe a better way of handling of Bible Study in the Church (whether in the adult Sunday School, Home Cell Fellowships or Discipleship classes) with a view to enhancing better participation and understanding in the classes and gaining more time during our Church services. According to Dr. Mrs Okeke, Bible Study Leaders “should only serve to guide the studies rather than dissipate energy on teaching”.

➤ **Lay Readers School.**

We have not lost consciousness of our drive for proper packaging of our Lay Readers. **The Lay Readers School** of the Diocese was segmented into two sessions. The first segment of trainings comprising the Cathedral, Elelenwo Deanery, Evo South East, Oroigwe /Eliogbolo and Trinity Missionary Archdeaconries took place on Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> April 2013 at the All Saints Cathedral, Rumuokwursi. The Rev. Ozioma Iheanetu was the Chief resource person. The second segment which will cover Lay Readers from Rumuomasi, Rumuobiokani, Oginigba, Okporo Deaneries and Woji Archdeaconry will come up before the end of the year.

The Council also organised special 2- day training for church drivers from Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> – Friday 26<sup>th</sup> April, 2013. Sadly, most of the drivers did not attend the training. They were apparently held back by their Pastors who unfortunately fail to realise that

denying the drivers this type of periodic training exposes they themselves and the parishioners whom the drivers carry about almost on a daily basis to serious danger on the roads. We thank Mr Paul Chukwumati for being available to offer this training despite the poor turnout.

➤ **Training for Church Account Clerks & Other Office Staff**

**The Church Clerks and other office Staff** also benefited from the training activities of the Council. From Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> – Friday 17<sup>th</sup> of May, 2013, the Council, in conjunction with the Phoenix Projects Resources – a Port Harcourt based Corporate Training team held a training /Retreat for Church Accounts Clerks and Administrative staff at the Chapel of Grace and Knowledge, Elelenwo. The Training covered the following areas

1. Accounting Principles and ethics
2. Computer appreciation
3. Using the computer for record keeping
4. Developing effective work habits
5. Conflict management
6. Communication skills at work
7. Staff/Boss relationship

We thank Mr Justice Kalio and his Phoenix Project Resource team and the Venerable John Adubasim of St. Paul's Cathedral Diobu for their well packaged presentations at the training.

➤ **Training for and Inauguration of Church of Nigeria Directors of Ecumenism/Interfaith Dialogue.**

We nominated the Rev. Canon Chris Chukwumati to attend the training organized by the office of the Primate of All Nigeria for Diocesan Directors of Ecumenism and Interfaith dialogue and their formal inauguration as a national network. This took place at All Saints (Ang.) Church, Wuse, Zone 5, Abuja from Monday, 20<sup>th</sup> – Friday, 24<sup>th</sup> May 2013.

In the words of His Grace, Most Rev. Nicholas D. Okoh, Primate of All Nigeria, “the inauguration of the network of Directors of Ecumenism/Interfaith Dialogue is in line with the vision of the Church of Nigeria to take her rightful position in the leadership of the several ecumenical organizations around the world especially in Nigeria and Africa”.

Following the directive of His Grace we shall appoint a Diocesan Director of Ecumenism and Interfaith dialogue who shall accompany us (the Bishop) to or on our behalf attend regularly all ecumenical meetings of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), the Christian Council of Nigeria (CCN) etc, at the state and local government levels and report back to us and to the national director of ecumenism in the Primates' office.



## Looking Ahead

In the next few months we shall be starting a **Diocesan Leadership School** with focus on training people in the faith and for meaningful roles in the service of their local churches within the Diocese. Participants will be drawn from our Parishes and Stations. **This is not** a preparatory school of ordination into the Holy Orders.

We are working very hard towards the establishment of a Diocesan Theological Institution in partnership with the Nashotah House Theological Seminary in the United States of America. Our discussion with the authorities of the Seminary on this has reached advanced stage with the Venerable Fyनेface Akah as our facilitator.

## 4. DIOCESAN CONVOCATIONS

### ➤ **Diocesan Discipleship/Revival Conference**

The 2012 Discipleship/Revival Conference of the Diocese took place from Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> to Sunday, 7<sup>th</sup> October, 2012 at the All Saints' Cathedral, Rumuokwursi. The theme was 'Rediscovering our Biblical Heritage'. The main speakers were – The Rt. Rev. Prof. Dapo Asaju, Bishop Theologian, Church of Nigeria and Dean, Crowther Graduate School, Abeokuta, Pastor Tunde Fowe, Ourselves, the Bishop and a host of others who were drawn from both members of clergy and laity. The book of exposition was Ezra, with over 20 sessions comprising of celebration of the Bible, teaching sessions, Bible engagements sessions, school of ministries, special workshops and discussion sessions all aimed at drawing lessons for life application from the book of Ezra. A peculiar feature of the conference was special testimony session by the Rev. Chidi Aneke of the Diocese of Ihiala who testified of his encounter with the Lord about heaven and hell in the course of a surgical operation he had in a hospital at Nnewi.

This year's edition will be holding at Bethel church, Rumuibekwe Parish from Wednesday, 2<sup>nd</sup> to Sunday, 6<sup>th</sup> October. The theme is 'The King and His Kingdom'. We are expecting the Most Rev. Benjamin Kwashi, Archbishop of Jos and Barrister Emeka Nwankpa as key speakers at the conference. We invite everyone to join us.

### ➤ **Life Changing, Life Giving Diet Seminar by the Hallelujah Acres USA/Nigeria**

Our Diocese hosted a seminar on diet and nutrition which was sponsored by Sir Godfrey & Lady Angela Ohuabunwa in partnership with the Dr. Paul Malkmus, President, Hallelujah Acres-USA, founders of hallelujah diets. The seminar took place from Tuesday, 27<sup>th</sup> to Friday 30<sup>th</sup> November, 2012 at St. Andrew's Church, Rumuobiokani Deanery. In attendance were the wife of the Executive Governor of Rivers State, Dame Judith Amaechi, Mazi Sam Ohuabunwa and of course, Keynote speaker, Dr. Paul Malkmus and his wife, Ann. We thank the churches for sponsoring clergy wives to the conference. Let me use this medium on behalf of the Diocese to very specially thank Sir Godfrey Ohuabunwa and his wife for bringing the Hallelujah Acres team to our Diocese and for sponsoring the Bishop's wife, Mrs. Chinyere Ordu, through her online training here at home and to the United States of America for a weeklong training in the month of May, 2013 as an Hallelujah Acres health minister. We sincerely appreciate this gesture and huge sacrifice on your part towards the Bishop and his wife.

### ➤ **Diocesan Harvest**

The 2012 Diocesan Harvest/Thanksgiving was held at Bethel Anglican Church, Rumuibekwe Parish on Sunday, 2<sup>nd</sup> December. The Guest Preacher was the Venerable Godfrey Ekpenisi from the Diocese of Abuja. As against previous years, attendance to this service was very poor which ought not to be the case. Diocesan Harvest Thanksgiving ought to be a time of celebration of the Lord's faithfulness to us as a Diocesan Community and we expect that every church and members of our Diocese should carefully plan to identify fully with the events of such a day. We pray that beginning from this year, preparations towards this event and actual participation by all churches and individuals will witness an improvement. Meanwhile we commend the good work done by the Harvest Committee members led by Sir Silas Nnodi and the host church (Bethel) for cheerfully taking up the responsibility of receiving the entire Diocese. The 2013 edition will be held at St. Philip's Anglican Church, Oroigwe District on Sunday, 1<sup>st</sup> December. We pray that the new Harvest Committee will improve on the performance of the old.

### ➤ **Ordination/Collation Services**

The following persons, Rev'ds Anderson Owzor and Steven Thompson were ordained Priests at the **Trinity Ordination** service we held on Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> October, 2012 at All Saints' Cathedral, Rumuokwurusu. In that same service, the Venerables Godwin B. Chinda and Okechukwu Owchonda were formally collated Archdeacons. We thank the Venerable Ernest Onuoha, the Rector of Ibru-Centre, Agbarha-Otor for his efforts in preparing these four persons for their ordination and collation service. The Rt. Rev. Prof. Dapo Asaju preached the sermon on the occasion which also marked the end of the 2012 Diocesan Discipleship/Revival Conference. Furthermore, we ordained three new deacons at the **Advent Ordination** service of Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> December, 2012 held at St. Michael's Rumuomasi Deanery. They are Rev'ds Ahamefula Sampson Otuka (Principal of our Woji Town Word of Faith group of schools), Chukwuemeka Samuel Udeh and Collins N. Daniel. Again, the Venerable Ernest Onuoha of the Ibru-centre, Agbarha-Otor prepared them and preached at the service.

The Venerable Okechukwu Owchonda was inducted Rector of St. Jude's Oginigba Deanery on Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2013.

### ➤ **Diocesan Rededication Service**

We began the year 2013 with the Diocesan Rededication Service which was held at St. Andrew's Rumuobiokani Deanery on Sunday, 13<sup>th</sup> January. The service featured the celebration of the Eucharist, prayers for the Diocese, state and nation, activity groups, individuals and families; worship and the Word. The preacher was The Rev. Chukwuemeka Samuel Udeh (a newly ordained Deacon) of our Diocese. On the occasion we announced the theme of the Diocese for the year which is '**Manifesting the beauty of Christ**' (Isaiah 52:1; Eph. 5:27). We appreciate the effort of the priests, choir/band and members of St. Andrew's Rumuobiokani in playing host to the Diocese.

### ➤ **Diocesan Prayer Convocation**

The 2013 Diocesan Prayer Convocation was held at St. Andrew's Church, Rumuobiokani Deanery from Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> – Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> June, 2013. The

Convocation which had as its theme **“Rebuilding the breaches of many generations”** (Isaiah 58:12) featured Apostle Victor Uchegbulam of the Ministers Prayer Network Africa, Lagos as the main speaker. The gathering was convened for the entire Diocese solely for the business of seeking God’s face in prayer for our Diocese, State, Church and the nation. It was such a rich package yet poorly attended by our members from the churches. A similar poor attendance was recorded at the last Diocesan Vigil of Friday 28<sup>th</sup> June at St. Matthias’ Church, Atali Parish in which the Lord was mightily present and visited His people; yet most of those He came to bless were absent at the said meeting. We condemn this lukewarm attitude of a vast majority of us when it has to do with gathering to pray for others. Pastors and other church activity group leaders should endeavour not to engage in or fix any other programme(s) when an all-important event such as a Diocesan convocation requiring everybody’s participation is going on.

## **5. ANNUAL DIOCESAN BIBLE WEEK:**

For two years running we have tried to strengthen the culture of Bible reading and knowledge through the organization of a week-long annual Diocesan Bible Week. That of 2012 held in two categories: A & B. Category ‘A’ Churches celebrated the Week from Monday, 5<sup>th</sup> to Sunday, 11<sup>th</sup> November, while those in category ‘B’ observed the Week from Monday 12<sup>th</sup> to Sunday, 18<sup>th</sup> November. The theme was **“Rediscovering Our Biblical Heritage”** with a major focus on the Book of Ezra. In addition to the talks, teachings and Bible studies that feature during the Bible Week, it is our desire to have the Cathedral, Archdeaconries and Deaneries vie for a prize in a Bible Quiz competition in subsequent editions beginning from this year. We invite Bible-loving individuals to support us with the donation of trophies and other prizes for the competition. The Diocesan Adult Sunday School and Discipleship Ministry that has facilitated the week so far is hereby charged to continue and improve on their past efforts.

## **6. NEW ARCHDEACONRY & PARISH INAUGURATIONS**

As part of our plans towards rapid evangelisation of every part of our Diocese, we proposed to and received the approval of the Diocesan Board in September last year for the creation of the **Trinity Missionary Archdeaconry** with St. Matthias’ Church, Atali Parish as the District Headquarters. Other churches constituting the new Archdeaconry include – Church of the Epiphany, Azumini-Rumuokwursi Parish, New Covenant, Eliminigwe Parish, Elelenwo, Anglican Church of the Pentecost, Rumuogba Parish, Holy City Anglican Church, Pipeline-Rumuokwursi, Bethany Anglican Church-Pipeline, Rumuokwursi and Great Physician Church, Atali. The new Archdeaconry was inaugurated on St. Matthias’ Day, Sunday, 24<sup>th</sup> February, 2013 with the Rev. Canon Chimaobi Nwachukwu as the Supervisor. The clergy and the laity have been charged to work in partnership with the Diocesan Missions, Evangelism and Church Planting Board to plant more churches within the vast Atali and Pipeline areas covered by the new archdeaconry.

The following churches were approved parishes by the Diocesan Board and were subsequently inaugurated as follows:

- i. Christ Harvest Anglican Church, Faith Avenue, Woji Parish, inaugurated on Sunday 28/10/2012;
- ii. Anglican Church of the Pentecost, Rumuogba Parish, on Sunday 11/11/2012;
- iii. Chapel of Grace & Knowledge, ACMGS – Elelenwo, inaugurated as Firstfruits Parish on Sunday, 28/04/2013;
- iv. Anglican Church of the Messiah, New Haven Parish, Iriebe, on Sunday, 30/06/2013.

We congratulate the Archdeaconry and Parishes on the attainment of their new heights.

## 7. ADMINISTRATIVE ADJUSTMENTS

With effect from the end of this Synod, the following stations will operate as **Archdeaconry Churches**. By this the Supervising Priests/Church Teachers and Steering Committees are to report directly to their Archdeacons and Archdeaconry Boards. Henceforth, the Archdeacons in charge of the areas where these stations are located should relate to them as Superintendent/Vicar. These stations concerned will no longer report to their district or parish headquarters. They are:

- |  |                                  |
|--|----------------------------------|
| • Mount Zion Church, Eliogbolo,            | } Oroigwe/Eliogbolo Archdeaconry |
| • Church of the Advent, Rumuewhara         |                                  |
| • Emmanuel Church, Okporo, Iriebe,         | } Evo South East Archdeaconry    |
| • Jericho Inn Church, Elelenwo             |                                  |
| • Holy City Church, Pipeline, Rumuokwurusi | } Trinity Missionary             |
| • Bethany Church, Pipeline, Rumuokwurusi   |                                  |

This arrangement will stay until these particular churches mature to attain parish status. This new arrangement notwithstanding, Bethany Church, Pipeline Rumuokwurusi will however continue as a mission station under the sponsorship of St. Andrew's Church, Rumuobiokani Deanery until 1<sup>st</sup> January, 2015.

We commend the commitment of St. Andrew's, Rumuobiokani towards the establishment and steady nurturing of Christ, the Redeemer Anglican Church, Eliogbolo. With effect from January 1, 2015, this station will become an archdeaconry church under the Oroigwe/Eliogbolo archdeaconry. We trust that by this date, the young station should be able to start fending for herself with the support of Oroigwe/Eliogbolo Archdeaconry.

**The Chapel of Grace & Knowledge Firstfruits Parish, ACMGS, Elelenwo** will henceforth be under the office of the Bishop as a **Mission-Oriented Parish**. The Parish Priest (Vicar) there will report directly to the Bishop until we decide to assign the Church to an Archdeaconry. In view of her new status, the Chapel is hereby directed to adopt the Holy City Anglican Church, Pipeline, Rumuokwurusi as her mission field in conjunction with the Diocesan Lay Readers Association. We trust that the Priest and the leadership of the Chapel will accept this role willingly and cheerfully for their blessing.

**Also as part of these adjustments, the newly planted church by the DMCA along Trans-Woji road shall be under the Bishop's office till further notice. The Church Teacher there shall report to the Bishop through the Chaplain of the DMCA.**

## **8. OUR DIOCESAN CONSTITUTION**

We now have a Diocesan Constitution of our own. The draft copy of it as approved by this Synod last August (2012) at St. Michael's Rumuomasi Deanery which we presented to the Church of Nigeria Committee of Reference at the September 2012 Standing Committee meeting held at Ado-Ekiti was approved in just one sitting with very minor amendments. We thank the Committee and all who made contributions at our local level here, especially the legal officers of the Diocese for an excellent work done.

The constitution is a public document. Every member of this Diocese is entitled to a copy on payment of a token fee. We shall produce copies for sale before the end of the year.

Relevant provisions of the Constitution on the conduct of church yearly vestry meetings and composition of membership of the Cathedral Standing Committee, Archdeaconry Boards, Deanery councils, Parish Church Councils, Station Church Steering Committees as well as representation at the Synod and various Boards of the Diocese were applied in this year's February Vestry meetings at all levels. We took the clergy through a full day orientation on the Constitution before the start of the vestry meetings.

## **9. REVISED LAW ON THE BURIAL OF OUR DECEASED MEMBERS**

For many years now we have had to observe the constitutional duration of the 2 weeks for the burial of our deceased members. Following the decision of Synod last year and the approval of our new constitution the burial of any deceased member of our Diocese **SHALL HENCEFORTH BE WITHIN AND NOT LATTER THAN 28 DAYS FROM THE DATE OF DEATH.** The new Diocesan Constitution does not make room for extension by the Bishop. Everyone should therefore be guided by this provision and endeavour not to mount any form of pressure on the Archdeacons and Priests in charge of our churches or on the Bishop himself.

The clergy are hereby advised in their own interest to strictly enforce this law as non compliance or failure on their part will attract severe consequences from now on.

## **10. FOUNDATION-STONE LAYING**

The Groundbreaking/Foundation-stone laying of the following projects were performed by us:

- a. 25/11/2012 – Parsonage and Church Hall Building, Christ Church, Federal Housing Estate Parish, Woji.
- b. 08/12/2012 – New Church Building, The Church of Advent, Rumuewhara.

- c. 23/02/2013 – New Church Building, Church of the Holy Spirit, Elioze Parish.
- d. 14/04/2013 – New Parsonage Building, New Covenant, Elimigwe Parish.
- e. 20/04/2013 – New Church Building of Holy Trinity Anglican Church, Elimbu Parish.
- f. 28/04/2013 – New Church Building, Chapel of Grace & Knowledge, Firstfruits Parish, ACMGS, Elenwo.
- g. 05/05/2013 – Bishop Crowther Memorial Secondary School, Rumuobiokani.
  - Principal's House being constructed by St. Andrew's, Rumuobiokani Deanery.
  - Sickbay by the Ladies (Wives of the Knights) of our Diocese.
  - School Chapel/Assembly Hall by the Old Boys' Association.

## **11. DEDICATIONS**

The following infrastructure and furnishings by our churches and institutions were dedicated by us:

- ii. 16/09/2012 – Dedication of Christ, the Redeemer, Eliogbolo Church building.
- iii. 17/09/2012 –
  - Renovated Dormitory Block by the Parent-Teacher Association at ACMGS, Elenwo.
  - New Six Classroom Block built by ACMGS, Elenwo for the Nursery/Primary Schools.
  - Renovated School Assembly Hall of ACMGS, Elenwo by the Chapel of Grace & Knowledge.
- iv. 23/09/2012 – Marble Pulpit & partly completed new parsonage building at Immanuel Anglican Church, Ogbatai, Woji.
- v. 21/10/2012 – New Church building of the Great Shepherd Anglican Church, Mgbuesilaru.
- vi. 17/11/2012 – New Church building of the Church of the Holy Spirit, Elenwo District.
- vii. 25/11/2012 – New parsonage building complex at St. Nicholas', Woji District.

- viii. 02/12/2012 – 50 KVA electricity generating set by Bethel Church, Rumuibekwe Parish.
- ix. 09/12/2012 – New Church Bus, All Saints’ Cathedral, Rumuokwurusi.
  - New Church Bus, Daystar Anglican Youth Church, Rumuokwurusi.
- x. 23/12/2012 – St. Michael’s Rumuomasi Deanery multipurpose hall.
- xi. 06/01/2013 – New library building project donated by late Barr. Wobidike Nwanodi (SAN) to ACMGS, Elelenwo.
- xii. 20/03/2013 – 110 KVA electricity generating set acquired and donated to the All Saints’ Cathedral, Rumuokwurusi by the Cathedral Mothers’ Union/Women’s Guild to mark 2013 Mothering Sunday Celebration.
- xiii. 23/02/2013 – New Church Bus by the MU/WG, Church of the Holy Spirit, Elioazu Parish.
- xiv. 18/03/2013 – New School Bus, BCMSS Rumuobiokani
- xv. 24/03/2013 – St. Mark’s Elelenwo Deanery multipurpose complex (service and conference halls, offices, library, Bishop’s lodge & seven guest rooms).
- xvi. 04/05/2013 – Diocesan Garment Factory & power generating set.
- xvii. 26/05/2013 – Archdeacon’s Seat & Choir Robes, St. Jude’s Oginigba Deanery.
- xviii. 02/06/2013 – New Choir Robes, for Our Saviour Christ Ang. Church, Rumunduru by the Cathedral Church.
- xix. 16/06/2013 – New Choir Robes, Holy City Ang. Church, Pipeline, Rumuokwurusi.
- xx. 15/06/2013 – All Saints’ Cathedral new frontal fence and gatehouse projects rebuilt after the demolition of the old ones.

- xxi. 25/06/2013 – New School Bus, Woji Town Word of Faith Group of Schools.
- xxii. 14/07/2013 – Outdoor Crusade Equipment purchased & donated to All Saints' Cathedral by the Cathedral MU/WG.  
– Money Counting Machine at the All Saints' Cathedral.
- xxiii. 15/07/2013 – New Church Bus by the MU/WG of St. Philip's Church, Oroigwe District

## 12.CONFIRMATIONS

A total of **233** baptized members of our church were confirmed in the following churches:

- a. 28/10/2012 – Christ Harvest Anglican Church,  
Faith Ave. Woji Parish – 16 persons
- b. 02/02/2013 – St. Jude's Oginigba Deanery – 29 "
- c. 24/03/2012 – (Palm Sunday)  
St. Mark's, Elelenwo Deanery – 27 "
- d. 31/03/2013 – (Easter Day) – St. Andrew's  
Rumuobiokani Deanery – 47 "
- e. 28/04/2013 – Chapel of Grace & Knowledge,  
Firstfruits Parish, ACMGS, Elelenwo – 33 "
- f. 30/06/2013 – Anglican Church of the Messiah,  
New Haven Parish, Iriebe – 20 "
- g. 14/07/2013 – All Saints' Cathedral, Rumuokwurusi - 61 "

## 13.DIOCESAN ACTIVITY GROUPS

### i. MEN'S MINISTRY

The work of the Diocesan Men's Christian Association under the leadership of Sir Reginald Wagboso witnessed significant improvement despite the lukewarm and indifferent attitude/response from majority of Christian men in the Diocese. The Association held the 3<sup>rd</sup> Session of her 1<sup>st</sup> Conference and Harvest Thanksgiving from Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> to Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> September, 2012 at St. Andrew's Anglican Church, Rumuobiokani Deanery. The theme was '**Rebuilding the broken walls**' (**Neh. 2:17**). We used the occasion of the conference to charge the men to rise from their slumber and start repackaging the men's ministry for better results. The Niger Delta Provincial Conference of the MCA was also held at the Diocese of Uyo, Akwa-Ibom



State from Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> to Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> February 2013. At the Conference Bible/Anglicanism Quiz competition, our men defeated participants from all the other dioceses and took the first position, thus bringing home the golden trophy. We congratulate them.

Towards the ongoing church building project of the True Vine Anglican Church, Abuja Estate, Iriebe, the Diocesan Men's Christian Association has assisted us with the donation of the sum of One Million Naira (N1,000, 000). Work has reached advanced stage on this project.

As earlier reported in this Address, our Diocesan men have joined the league of groups that have responded to our directives for the planting and nurturing of new churches. They have successfully planted a new church in Woji, along the Trans-Woji-Slaughter Road. They have furnished the auditorium and have committed themselves to the upkeep of the Church Teacher there. We are encouraged by this renewed zeal on their part. May God continue to strengthen the president and members of the Association. We charge other men of our Diocese still sitting on the fence to be part of what God is doing through their fellow men.

A Diocesan service of induction of men into the Men's Christian Association was held on Saturday, 29<sup>th</sup> June, 2013 at Church of the Holy Spirit, Elelenwo District. A total of 54 men were inducted into the DMCA after undergoing preparations with the chaplain, Ven. Okechukwu Ow'honda. We thank the Chaplain and other clergy who assisted for their efforts.

We thank the various local chapters of the MCA for their projects and other forms of support rendered towards the rapid development of their churches.

## ii. **WOMEN'S MINISTRY**

During the past one year, the Women's Ministry carried out a number of programmes and projects. Diocesan conferences for the Girls' Guild, Clergy/Church Workers' Children, Sisters' Forum and widows as well as trainings were sponsored by the Ministry. About 243 girls were inducted into the Diocesan Girls' Guild. The Diocesan Women's Conference was held at St. Nicholas' Woji District from Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> to Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> November, 2012 with the theme **'Sing to the Lord'**. Like the above mentioned Conferences this one featured talks (including talks on healthy diets by the Hallelujah Acres team), seminars, Bible studies, prayers, outreach to widows and other needy persons, rally and evangelism.

The Women's ministry presented a total of **152** and **107** women to us for induction and admission into the Diocesan Women's Guild and Mothers' Union respectively at a service held at Church of the Holy Spirit, Elelenwo District on Saturday, 29<sup>th</sup> June, 2013. We call on these new entrants into the women's ministry of our Diocese and the Anglican Communion at large to remain faithful in their service to God and to His church at all levels.

We commend the clergy wives who took time to prepare these candidates and the Bishop's wife, Mrs. Chinyere Ordu who examined them before the induction/admission.

We commend the women for their giant strides in purchasing 5 plots of land for the building of a new church and parsonage at Atali in response to our directive to major activity groups on church planting.

At their request, we handed over the Diocesan Garment Factory to the women for the sewing of cloths, aprons, school uniforms, coveralls, clergy vestments, etc. and for the training of interested persons in fashion and designing. Serious business has since commenced at the factory located at the Women's Work Office Complex at the ACMGS Premises, Elelenwo following its dedication by Us on Saturday, 4<sup>th</sup> May, 2013. We call on individuals, schools, other institutions, churches and groups to both assist us in the upgrading of the factory and also patronize its services.

Members of the Mothers Union and Women's Guild of the various churches in our Diocese have risen in several ways to support the growth of their local churches through the provision of one infrastructure or the other. We appreciate them.

### iii. **YOUTH MINISTRIES**

#### ➤ **The Anglican Youth Fellowship**

Our rebranded Anglican Youth Fellowship is waxing stronger by the day. The Fellowship organized series of activities at the Diocesan level for her members, including for those in the Youth Star.

The general Diocesan meetings have continued to attract massive participation of the youths. No fewer than 500 youths from across the Diocese now attend these meetings at each sitting.

Members of the Anglican Youth Fellowship took the streets en route to the Cathedral on Saturday, 11<sup>th</sup> May, 2013 on a cleanup exercise. This is quite commendable. On Sunday, the 12<sup>th</sup>, there was a youth exchange of pulpit during which they gave the word in all our churches and raised funds to support youth work in the Diocese.

Our Anglican Youth Fellowship members, including those in the Sisters' Forum regularly attended all Provincial and Church of Nigeria AYF meetings and conferences. From the meeting of the National Executive Council of the Fellowship held at the Diocese of Gboko, Benue State from the 16<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> May, 2013, we received this cheering assessment of the performance of our Evo Diocesan AYF by the national leadership of the Fellowship: *"It is on record that Evo Diocesan AYF Council has been faithful in all national events and is recognized as the number one Diocese in the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion), in terms of representation, quality of programmes and activities and conduct during national meetings and activities"*.

The Diocesan President of the AYF, Mr. Chika Amadi was appointed the chairman, Planning Committee of the first-ever AYF National Leadership Conference to be held in Delta State in November this year. May the wisdom of God and Spirit of excellence guide him through this assignment.

One notable programme that has taken our youths to national/international limelight was obviously the Youth Motivational/Socio-economic Empowerment Seminar hosted by the Diocese of Evo in April 2012 in partnership with the UK-based

Focus Learning Support Limited. Our desire is to give our youths every available opportunity to excel in life and become what God would have them be. We have concluded plans to stage the second edition of this Youth Seminar from Thursday, 15<sup>th</sup> – Sunday, 18<sup>th</sup> August, as soon as the youths return from their 2013 National Bible Study Conference holding at the Diocese of Otukpo, Benue State.

At our invitation, Mr. Alex Ihama, an internationally acclaimed inspirational speaker and executive coach who has been delivering keynotes on leadership, personal development and corporate strategy to a variety of audiences all over the world for two decades will be coming from the United States of America (USA) to minister to our youths and others in business at the youth seminar. We invite all youths in Edo, the Province of Niger Delta, and other Dioceses of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) and Rivers State to attend en mass. The Venue is St. Andrew's Anglican Church, Rumuobiokani Deanery.

At the end of this year's seminar we shall be setting up a **Diocesan Foundation for Youth Development**. In addition, we intend to establish a centre specifically for training in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for the personal development of our youth. We appeal to everyone with passion for youth development and empowerment to assist us sponsor this seminar and also donate computers and accessories towards the proposed centre. We thank all the Churches, our schools and the Women's Ministry of our Diocese for donations already received from them.

While we commend the efforts of our Diocesan AYF media crew in spreading the gospel of our Lord Jesus via social networks, we however wish to remind the Executives and entire members that they are yet to accomplish the task of planting and nurturing a new church which we assigned to them since 2009. We believe that our youths have all it takes to fulfil this mandate. They should endeavour to achieve this by the next Synod.

#### ➤ **Daystar Anglican Youth Church**

We are glad to report that our first Youth Church, the Daystar Anglican Youth Church planted by the Cathedral on August 7<sup>th</sup> 2011 is growing rapidly. Though still a station church, it has caught our vision of churches reproducing themselves. Three months after her first anniversary celebration she planted and equipped a new church at the Harmony Estate area of Rumuokwursi. She has in addition rented a one-bedroom apartment for the Church teacher, bought a brand new 18-seater Hiace Bus, empowered 3 members of the church (All youths) in the areas of sewing, marketing of fruits and printing/sale of MTN recharge cards and payment of the schools fees of 3 others in institutions of higher learning. We commend our Daystar Youths, their priest, Rev. Samuel Fedigha for their efforts and the mother church, the Cathedral for the support.

The story is however not the same with the **Youth Church** established by **St. Michael's Rumuomasi Deanery**. For as much as the youths are striving to move forward they seem not to be receiving the required fatherly pastoral presence and support they need to grow. They are like sheep without a shepherd. The priests at Rumuomasi should henceforth incorporate these youths into their pastoral schedules especially on Sundays. They should in synergy with the Deanery Council provide an

alternative worship centre for the youth church or we shall be forced to withdraw our recognition of them as a station in the Diocese. Our idea of church planting is not for two congregations to share in one building. The youth church at Rumuomasi could as well be taken as the early morning (first service) of the church under the charge of the Rector and the other priests. St. Michael's Rumuomasi is hereby given three months from today to address comprehensively the challenges of the youth church.

#### ➤ **Anglican Corpers Fellowship**

We have an outreach ministry to all Anglican Youth Corps members serving in institutions, companies and organizations within our Diocese. The chaplaincy headed by Rev. Gospel Onuchukwu successfully organized life-changing retreats and seminars to equip NYSC members to live a fulfilled life after their service year and also meet their spiritual needs. We commend the efforts of the Chaplain in going out to identify Anglican corps members posted to our area. Pastors should assist the chaplaincy as well by regularly fishing out the Corps members and incorporating them into the life of the local church where they have chosen to worship.

We organized a joint send forth/reception event on Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> June, 2013 at the Bishop's Court Chapel for the outgoing and incoming Corps members. The outgoing set were presented souvenirs, exhorted and prayed for.

#### ➤ **Anglican Communion Brigade**

The Anglican Communion Brigade is an academy of Christian youths in the church striving for the positive spiritual and moral development of our boys and girls.

The group now has a new Executive Committee members elected on Sunday, 14<sup>th</sup> October, 2012 at St. Michael's Church, Rumuomasi.

They are:

- |                                  |                          |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| • Mr. Sampson Edward Kofi (capt) | – Diocesan Coordinator   |
| • Onyebuchi Oti (capt)           | – Assistant Coordinator  |
| • Kingsley Ekpeberechi           | – General Secretary      |
| • Loveth Okeah                   | – Assistant Secretary    |
| • Adele Nyeche (capt)            | – Training Officer       |
| • Charles Amadi                  | – Treasurer              |
| • Rose Wutche                    | – Financial Secretary    |
| • Ifeanyi Amajoyi                | – PRO 1                  |
| • Chile Ajoku                    | – PRO 2                  |
| • Clarkson Njor                  | – Provost 1              |
| • Chubueze Ucheagha              | – Provost 2              |
| • Oge Okoye                      | – Welfare Officer 1      |
| • Destiny Amadi                  | – Welfare Officer 2      |
| • Simon Ndamati                  | – Chief Security Officer |

These elected officers were inducted by us on Sunday, 23<sup>rd</sup> December, 2012 during the Advent Ordination service held at Rumuomasi. The group also inducted twenty persons as patrons.

We are sad however, to report that on Sunday, 6<sup>th</sup> January this year, the cold hands of death picked the new Diocesan Coordinator, Captain Edward Kofi to the shock of all of us. It was a big loss to the Diocese considering Kofi's many years of service to

the church as a chorister, a Pastor's Warden and a brilliant officer of the Boys Brigade. While we commiserate with his family and the ACB of our Diocese, we use this medium to very specially thank the clergy and Deanery Council of St. Andrew's Rumuobiokani Deanery for giving the young Kofi a befitting burial in the absence of any family member.

Mr Onyebuchi Oti, the Assistant Coordinator has since been appointed to take Kofi's place as the new Diocesan Coordinator.

The Diocese of Evo successfully hosted the conference of the Provincial Anglican Communion Brigade from Friday 7<sup>th</sup> – Sunday, 9<sup>th</sup> June, 2013 at the Bishop Crowther Memorial Secondary School, Rumuobiokani. About 300 ACB members were in attendance.

At the end of the various competitions held at the conference, our Diocese emerged winner as follows:

1. Bible Quiz Competition  
(For both Junior and Senior boys) – 1<sup>st</sup> Position
2. Drum/Trumpet Competition – 1<sup>st</sup> Position
3. Drill – 3<sup>rd</sup> Position.

We commend the Chaplain, Rev. Moses Anyaefena and the leadership team for these achievements.

#### iv. **Our ministry to the Public & Private Secondary Schools in Evo**

As a Diocese, we are concerned with the spiritual, moral and academic well-being of all youths around us. We are convinced that towards the youths the Lord has opened unto us a wide door of ministry. Our aim is to liaise with the authorities of all government and privately-owned schools within our Diocese for some of our priests to regularly visit them and share the blessings and great treasures of God's word with staff and students.

Actualizing this vision has not been that easy for us due largely to its slow implementation by those charged with this task and also due to the not too cooperative posture of some principals and heads of these schools.

We have however, to the glory of God been able to penetrate these schools through our sponsorship of an Inter Evo Public & Private Secondary Schools Debate which held between the months of June and July this year. A total of eleven Secondary schools participated in the debate competition which was widely covered by both the electronic and print media in the State. The grand finale which centred on the motion ***"The Social media has done more harm than good to the Nigerian society"*** was held on Friday, 5<sup>th</sup> July at the Cathedral Church hall.

The winning schools were:

- King David College, Rumuokwursi – 1<sup>st</sup> position
- Sharon International Secondary School, Rumuokwursi – 2<sup>nd</sup> position
- Woji Town Word of Faith Group of schools – 3<sup>rd</sup> position.

Plaques and customized exercise books in the name and logo of Diocese of Edo were distributed to all participants and their schools. We commend the Rev'ds John Chinda & Favour Iroegbulem for the reinvigorated zeal with which they carefully planned and successfully executed this event. Our special gratitude is equally extended to the Rev. Canon Chuka Opara, Debate Moderator and Ven. Alex Usifoh for their invaluable inputs to the conduct of the Schools Debate. It is our desire to seriously make an all round impact on the lives of these precious young ones as our contribution to their eternal salvation and their future academic and social development. We pray that those appointed and charged with this special ministry will open their eyes wide enough to see the large and ripe harvest field that abound in these youths scattered in the various schools.

v. **ANGLICAN CHILDREN'S MINISTRY**

The Anglican Children's Ministry of our Diocese was quite busy during the year under review. They held and attended a number of conferences, trainings and seminars at the Diocesan, Provincial and Church of Nigeria levels. The 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Diocesan Teachers' Conference for 2013 with the theme **"if I perish, I perish"** (Esther 4:16<sup>b</sup>) was held from Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> to Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> July at the Church of the Holy Spirit, Elelenwo District. It attracted speakers from within and outside our Diocese.

Last year, the Ministry initiated a mission work to some children's chapels in the Diocese and we are glad to note that they have continued with this laudable initiative. We are further glad to announce to Synod that our children have continued to promote the name of our Diocese at various external gatherings. At the Niger Delta Provincial Teachers' conference held at the Diocese of Ikwerre in August last year, our children took the first position at the Children Bible quiz competition and also returned home with the winners' trophy. We congratulate them. The following children's teachers are now leaders of the Ministry following the conduct of Diocesan elections in February this year. They are:

- Mr. Justin Anunobi – Leader
- Mr. Solomon Okubor – Secretary
- Mr. Stanley Onwuchi Asst. Secretary
- Mrs. Ifeoma Muanya – Treasurer
- Ms. Uzoamaka Okonkwo – Financial Secretary
- Mr. Bright Onyeokoro – PRO
- Mr. Uchechi Emeaghara –Asst. PRO
- Mr. Uwaoma Imuka – Director of training
- Mr. Evans Odili – Registrar
- Mr. Joseph Benjamin – Prayer Secretary
- Mrs. Kabor Antonia Obowu – Bible Study Coordinator

At the Provincial level, three of our members are serving in the executive committee. Venerable Alex Usifoh as the president, Rev. Canon Olufemi Igbamerun, our Diocesan Chaplain, as the Provincial Public Relations Officer, and brother Justin

Anunobi, the Diocesan leader as the Assistant Provincial Trainer. We are glad that Mr. Justin Anunobi, the leader of children's ministry in the Diocese is now one of the writers of the Church of Nigeria children's manual. We pray for the grace of God upon him as he faithfully discharges this task with others across the country. This year's Diocesan Children's Week was held in churches in the Diocese from 27<sup>th</sup> May to June 2<sup>nd</sup>. We the Bishop paid brief visits to some of the churches to pray for the children on Sunday, 2<sup>nd</sup> of June, 2013.

The use of the Church of Nigeria Bible Teaching Manual and Workbook for the instruction of our children remains mandatory for all churches. We remind all Priests of our churches to ensure that adequate copies of these materials are acquired for use in their children's chapels. The Chaplain has continued to lament the non patronage of these teaching materials by some churches. We do not expect this to continue. Churches that fail to acquire these necessary materials should be prepared to face the necessary sanctions.

The Church of Nigeria will be organizing a train the trainers' conference for the Anglican Children's Ministry from 13<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> August, 2013 at Abuja. It is our desire to send participants to the conference who shall be sponsored by their churches.

We sincerely thank all children teachers in this Diocese for their commitment towards raising godly children in all our churches.

➤ **Clergy And Church Workers' Children Ministry**

This ministry seeks to provide a platform for the coming together in Christian fellowship (young and old) of the children of all serving and retired clergy and church workers in the Diocese.

The aim is to build a united family among them; assist them understand and appreciate the peculiar nature of God's call on their parents and also assist in preparing them early for a life of future service in the Lord's Vineyard or any other field of human endeavour to which God may call them.

In pursuance of this objective, the ministry has organized series of programmes such as retreats, conference, holiday camp and a special Christmas party and end of year thanksgiving service on the 16<sup>th</sup> December, 2012.

The result of these engagements with these children is that some of their parents now testify to the great positive change in their daily conduct at home.

Clergy and church workers should always release their children and even wards for the activities of this ministry.

vi. **DIOCESAN COUNCIL OF KNIGHTS**

The tempo of activities in the Diocese of Edo Council of Knights has been on the rise since the last one year. We thank the pioneer Executive Committee of the Council led by HRH, Sir W. W. Onunwor, JP for their great job of putting the vital structures in

place to make for what promises to be a great and successful Council of Knights in the years to come.

Eze Onunwor on Sunday 2/12/2012 handed over the mantle of leadership of the Council to a new Executive Committee led by Sir Chief Ike B. S. Chinwo as President. Other executive members are:

- Sir Victor Dania – Vice President
- Sir E. C. Izuehie – Secretary
- Sir E. Amadi – Assistant Secretary
- Sir A. O. Ibe – Financial Secretary
- Sir Sam Amanda – Treasurer
- Sir Silas Nnodi – Public Relations Officer
- Sir R. A. Odum – Provost

The Council had on the day before, i.e., 1<sup>st</sup> December, 2012 held her annual retreat at St. Michael's Church, Rumuomasi Deanery. The guest speaker was The Venerable Godfrey I. Ekpenisi from the Diocese of Abuja who spoke on the theme: **“Actualizing the Mission of Christ”**.

Under the new leadership team headed by Sir Chief Ike Chinwo, the Council of Knights has promptly responded to our charge to them to adopt Emmanuel Anglican Church, Okporo, Iriebe as their new mission field. The Council has already started raising funds to assist in the construction of a new building for Emmanuel Church.

The Council also hosted a lunch at the Shell Club Rumuokwursi on Saturday, 25<sup>th</sup> May to raise money for welfare, empowerment and scholarship for indigent widows and students. This is in support of our vision as a Diocese. They intend to use the occasion of this synod to make their presentations to 10 of the widows being empowered.

The Council has also supported the Anglican-owned Ibru International Ecumenical Centre, Agbarha-Otor with the donation of a plasma television set for the comfort of users of the retreat venue. We commend the knights. May the Lord bless them abundantly.

The ladies (wives of the knights) under Lady Catherine Wachukwu are tasking themselves to provide a befitting Sick Bay for Bishop Crowther Memorial Secondary School, Rumuobiokani. We laid the Foundation Stone of this project on Sunday, 5<sup>th</sup> May, 2013 and work has reached advanced stages. We are encouraged by this huge sacrifice by the ladies and pray for God's divine blessings on every one of them.



## **vii. DIOCESAN LAY READERS' ASSOCIATION**

On the 16<sup>th</sup> of September 2012, we licensed 39 new Lay Readers of the Diocese. The service took place at Christ, the Redeemer Anglican Church, Eliogbolo. The event coincided with the dedication of the remodelled church building by St. Andrew's Rumuobiokani. One of those licensed was the Rivers State Commissioner for Information and Communication, Hon. Mrs. Ibim Semenitari. They were all licensed after going through a prolonged training school.

The Diocesan Lay Readers' Association now has a new Executive Committee following their recent election. Members are:

- Mr. Paul Chukwumati – President,
- Sir A. C. Ozuzu – Vice President
- Lady M. N. Osuagwu – Secretary
- Mrs. Christie Laguda – Asst. Secretary
- Mrs. R. N. Onunwo – Financial Secretary
- Mrs. Joyce Amaewhule – Treasurer
- Mr. Christian Osonkie – Prayer Secretary 1
- Mrs. Nyemachi Alison – Prayer Secretary 2
- Mrs. Nkechi Ejekwu – Welfare Officer 1
- Mr. Chima Wachukwu – Welfare Officer 2
- Mr. Okey Victor Nath – Provost 1
- Mrs. Beatrice Davis – Provost 2
- Mr. Justin Nwaogwugwu - PRO

We commend the association for rising up to the challenge of sponsoring the Holy City Anglican Church, Pipeline Rumuokwurusi which they planted three years ago. With the assistance of the Diocese, the association acquired two plots of lands for the infant church to facilitate its movement to its permanent site. We have enough Lay Readers in the Diocese of Evo capable of raising all the money required. It is regrettable that so many of these Lay Readers have not identified with the efforts of the association in the nurturing of the said Holy City Church. The outstanding sum of Three Million, Five Hundred (N3, 500, 000. 00) provided by the Diocese is expected to be refunded by the association. We therefore urge all Lay Readers in the Diocese to team up with the executive in raising the amount. We believe that heaven would like to credit the account of each Lay Reader in the Diocese who supports this worthy cause. Every Lay reader should therefore be willing to commit him/herself to this project.

## **14. DIOCESAN PUBLICATIONS**

### **➤ Adult Sunday School Manual**

We commend the Adult Sunday School/Discipleship Ministry for their commitment in the writing and publication of our yearly **Adult Sunday School Manual**. The quality of study materials has continued to improve, making Sunday Bible study sessions more enriching and spiritually rewarding. We appreciate the effort of The Rev. Cephas Okarefe and his team in this regard.

For the second year running we distributed this year about 10, 000 copies of the Adult Sunday School manuals free of charge to all worshippers in our churches. This is an expensive outreach aimed at encouraging everyone to participate in the weekly Sunday morning Bible Study programme of the Churches. Therefore, no one has any further excuse not to attend Sunday School. We wish to reiterate here the old sayings that *“Your Sunday Worship service is not complete without your participation in the Sunday School”* and *“Each lesson missed is like a treasure thrown into the sea”*. Please endeavour to attend the Sunday school classes of your local church. You are sure to encounter God there.

➤ **Diocesan Quarterly Prayer Bulletin**

We commend the efforts of The Rev. Samson Abada, the Diocesan Prayer Ministry Chaplain in compiling, publishing and equally distributing free of charge the Diocesan quarterly Prayer Bulletin.

Just as we aim at building up your Bible Study life through the Sunday School Manual so do we hope through the Prayer bulletin to assist you know what issues there are to pray about each day of the week.

The Prayer Bulletin is to be used during our personal and family devotions, Church early morning prayers and other prayer meetings, intercessory prayer sessions at church services etc. It is strongly commended to all. Endeavour to get your personal copy. If the Lord touches you to pay for this quarterly publication and free distribution please do not hesitate to indicate your readiness.

➤ **Go – tell magazine:**

We do not yet understand the reason for the inconsistency of the Diocesan Media and Communications Department in coming out with quarterly editions of our Diocesan magazine “Go – Tell” as we had directed. The last edition was published during the synod of last year. Since then, the Department went to sleep. The unit will hardly grow if it persists in this style of ‘waking up a little and going back to deep, deep sleep’.

We desire to reorganize this arm of the Diocese. We therefore invite all genuine Anglican Media men and women who worship in our Diocese and are willing to use their training and experience in this field to serve God to please come forward and assist us.

Other materials published by the Diocese to aid our teaching, counselling and discipleship ministry include the *Discipleship Manual* for follow-up studies, the *Marriage & Family life Counselling Manual* and the *Confirmation Manual*. Pastors should procure these materials for themselves and their churches and use them compulsorily for their preparatory and counselling classes.

Henceforth any pastor who is discovered not to use these publications will be doing so at his own peril. We must be sure of what we are giving out as teaching menu to the flock of God committed to our care.

## **15. DIOCESAN SPORTS MINISTRY**

This ministry was established to initiate and coordinate all sporting activities within the Diocese as well as support our Diocesan schools in the hosting of their Annual Inter House Sports Competitions.

During the year, the ministry organized the second edition of the Diocesan Youth Football competition from 10<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> November, 2012.

Oginigba Deanery youth team emerged champions for the second time while the second and third positions went to Okporo and Rumuobiokani Deaneries respectively.

We remind all Priests in charge of churches and our youth leaders that this competition is open only to faithful and active youth members of our churches. We deplore the practice of going outside the church to hire non Anglican youths for the competition out of desperation to win. Pastors should please not allow or collaborate with our youths to perpetuate this fraud.

The Ministry also organized in conjunction with the leadership of the Diocesan Men's Christian Association the first edition of the DMCA sports competition from Monday, 3<sup>rd</sup> to Saturday, 8<sup>th</sup> June, 2013. The men competed in March Past, Relay races, Table Tennis, tug of war, filling the bottle and dressing in our typical traditional outfits. At the end of the competition, St. Andrew's Rumuobiokani Deanery emerged as overall winner. They were followed in the second and third positions by the Cathedral and Rumuomasi Deanery respectively.

Though poorly attended by the men of the Diocese, the concluding events of the competition provided a fitting comic relief and relaxation for everyone present at the occasion.

We encourage every member of our Diocese to identify with the monthly ‘Keep Fit Exercise’ and quarterly ‘Walk for Life’ programmes of the sports ministry to enable us maintain good health.

## 16. DIOCESAN SCHOOLS

As a Diocesan Community we still remain committed to our educational mission. Through our engagement in education we believe the gospel can easily be passed on to the upcoming generation. In addition, we consider it an opportunity for us to contribute positively towards the present and future growth of our nation.

So far, our 3 Diocesan Secondary Schools are making consistent progress at their respective ends in a bid to actualize our dream in this (education) sector. We commend Rev. Chimaobi Chieme, Mrs. Chinyere Ordu and Rev. Timothy S. Otuka, Principals of Bishop Crowther Memorial Secondary School, Rumuobiokani, Archdeacon Crowther Memorial Girls’ School, Elelenwo and Woji Town Word of Faith Group of Schools with their other teaching and non teaching staff for their sincere efforts towards making our schools centres of academic, spiritual and moral excellence. We thank very specially the Venerable Fyनेface N. Akah, JP for his untiring zeal and sacrifices in coordinating these schools as Director of Schools. We are equally pleased with the support we have continued to receive from parents of our students and pupils across the 3 schools. We appreciate the confidence they have reposed in us and promise not to let them down.

To encourage continued patronage we have granted various minimal tuition rebate to children and wards of clergy, serving staff and other parents of various standing. And this has paid off. We have also carried out an upward review of the basic salaries of staff to fall in line with what the Diocese pays the clergy and other church workers. We hope this will encourage the staff.

Statistics below show the present staff strength and students population in the schools:

		Staff Strength for both Secondary & Nursery/Primary Schools		Population	
		Academic	Non academic	Students	Day care/Nursery/Primary pupils
S/N	School				
1	Bishop Crowther Memorial Secondary School, Rumuobiokani	30	23	230	81
2	Archdeacon Crowther Memorial Secondary School, Elelenwo	51	33	460	295
3	Woji Town Word of Faith Group of Schools	26	17	130	98

## **Projects in the Schools**

### **In Archdeacon Crowther Memorial Girls' School (ACMGS), Elelenwo:**

- Completion of a Six-Classroom block for her Nursery/Primary section as well as the renovation of a twin student's dormitory block by the Parent-Teacher Association under the chairmanship of Captain Clement Ejiofor. These projects were dedicated by us on 17<sup>th</sup> September, 2012.
- The School's library project built and donated by the late Barrister Nwobidike Nwanodi (SAN) was furnished by the School and dedicated on 26<sup>th</sup> July, 2013.
- The issue of power which has been a major challenge in the School has been resolved with the purchase and installation of an electricity transformer and a 75 KVA generating set.
- The renovation and furnishing of the offices of the Principal, the two Vice Principals, the Headmistress of the Nursery/Primary, as well as those of the Principal's Secretary and the Accounts Department of the same school have been completed.
- The Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) has completed work on the internal roads and drainages of the School. The Commission also donated 20 computers, 20 UPS, 20 computer desks with chairs and 1 Printer to the School.

### **In Bishop Crowther Memorial Secondary School (BCMSS), Rumuobiokani:**

- Work on the new students' 300-bed dormitory project by the Diocese is virtually completed.
- St. Andrew's Church, Rumuobiokani Deanery is almost completing the building of a Principal's quarters.
- A Sick Bay to cater for the health needs of staff and students is being constructed by the Ladies Auxiliary of the Diocese of Eyo.
- The Old Boys Association has also commenced the building of a modern Chapel for the school.

## **New School Buses**

Bishop Crowther Memorial Secondary School, Rumuobiokani and Woji Word of Faith each acquired a brand new Bus for School shuttles to complement their old ones.

## **Performance at External Contests**

Students of ACMGS Elelenwo participated in a Chemistry Quiz Competition organized by the Chemical Society of Nigeria on the 25<sup>th</sup> of May, 2013 at the Federal Government College, Port Harcourt and emerged **overall 5<sup>th</sup>** among all the participating schools (Boys and girls) and took the **1<sup>st</sup> position** among the Girls' Schools.

Word of Faith, Woji participated in the Evo Inter Public & Private Secondary Schools debate organized by our Diocese and **emerged 3<sup>rd</sup>**.

Bishop Crowther also participated in external competitions organized by the Rotary Club, NNPC, Mobile and Cowbell Mathematics competition in which they were awarded the only consolation prize. The school won the star prize at the National Union of Evo Students Inter-Secondary Schools' Quiz Competition.

A student of Bishop Crowther, Jonah Okpaefi was among three successful students selected by a group – *Future Trust Initiative for Capacity Building* to represent Rivers State at *the Model United Nations Conference For Secondary School Students* holding at the United Nations headquarters in New York, USA in 2014.

Another student of the school – Master Collins Eze was among those that won the MTN Students Abroad Football Scholarship.

## **Professor Joe Amadi-Echendu Scholarship Scheme**

Our parishioner, Prof. Joe Amadi-Echendu, based in South Africa has awarded scholarships to two brilliant students of our schools, Princewill Azorom of BCMSS and Favour Kelvin of ACMGS. Six others from the same schools were awarded consolation cash prizes of N20, 000 each after series of screening examinations.

## **2013 Children's Day Celebration**

As we directed at our last Synod, the staff, students and pupils of the three schools with their Nursery/Primary sections celebrated this year's National Children's Day *together* on 27<sup>th</sup> May at the BCMSS sports field. The day's events featured March

*Past, Children's parliamentary debate, Drama, Cultural dances, etc.* It was a colourful outing with ACMGS, Elelenwo taking the **overall 1<sup>st</sup> position**.

### **Schools Audit**

The Diocesan Board has so far carried out a financial audit of two of the schools – Bishop Crowther Memorial Secondary School and Woji Town Word of Faith. The attempt revealed the fact that the financial accounting documentation, accounting and reporting competencies of our Accounts officers needed improvement. Consequently, our Diocesan Audit Team has advised the Education Board to assist the Principals and Accounts Officers to straighten out their financial documentation and transactions.

### **Establishment of New Parish Schools**

The Director of Schools has confirmed to us that our directive in our last Synod Charge for some of our parishes to start new Parish Schools from September this year has not been vigorously pursued. As at date only St. James', Iriebe Parish has communicated their proposals in this regard. We hereby direct the Vicars and the selected church councils to respond to this vital aspect of our mission and ministry in collaboration with the Education Board.

### **Looking Ahead**

It is our desire to see our existing schools particularly Bishop Crowther Memorial Secondary School and Archdeacon Crowther Memorial Secondary School reproduce themselves within the next two to three years. The management of these schools should begin now to include this in their annual growth plans.

With the construction of a dormitory block already a reality, our next major and very urgent project in BCMSS will be the building of an 18-classroom, laboratory and administrative block to solve once and for all perennial infrastructural problem of the institution. We are confident that God will help us once again achieve this. Please be ever willing to support us so soon as we commence.

### **Our Expectation of Government**

A word about the role which government is expected to play in support of the effort of the voluntary agencies in the education of our youth cannot be over emphasized. May we use the privilege of this time to reiterate our appeal to the Rivers State government to return to the practice which offered grant-in-aid of the efforts of the churches in providing qualitative education to our children. It is happening in some states of this country; we do not see any strong reason why it should not happen in Rivers State particularly as it has to do with schools returned to mission agencies by government.

### **17. EVO INVESTMENT COMPANY**

We wish to inform the Synod that within the year we applied to the Corporate Affairs Commission and successfully secured the registration of our company: the **Diocese of Evo Investment Company Limited**.

With this development, all the present investment outfits of the Diocese viz: Diocesan Printing Press, Garment Factory, Wafer production and future ones will now be legally protected by this company.

### 18.DIOCESAN ENDOWMENT FUND

The Diocesan Board in 2010 approved the introduction of the Diocese of Evo annual Endowment Fund as one of the major sources of income generation for the Diocese. Since then each year, we assign clergy and lay members of our Diocese to visit the churches once or twice to preach and sensitize the congregations and secure their voluntary commitments towards the Fund.

We thank all who have kept faith with the Diocese in this regard, but regret to inform us that apart from the first year when over N9m was generated from this source, there has been a steady annual decline in members' response to the Fund ever since; coupled with the fact that many of those who made pledges towards specific areas are not forthcoming in redeeming same.

This is very discouraging. We therefore call on all of us in the Diocese to please show greater commitment towards the Diocesan Endowment Fund.

We appeal to those who made pledges since 2010 and are yet to redeem them to please come and pay up. This appeal is equally extended to those owing in respect of Diocesan harvest and pasty Synod launchings.

Money generated from the Endowment Fund will assist us attend to matters of missions and evangelism, land acquisition for church planting, development of infrastructure in our schools, youth scholarship and economic empowerment, support to external mission fields, general social welfare, etc.

We remind all Priests-in-charge of churches and their finance officers that payments made by individuals at the church offices for the purposes of the Diocesan Endowment Fund are to be **remitted fully** to the Diocese. The practice of tampering with such payments either wilfully or in error should please stop forthwith.

Below is a summary of the 2013 pledges and payments (Covering January to June) made by individuals from the ten administrative blocks in respect of the Diocesan Endowment Fund.

S/N	ADMIN BLOCK	Total Pledges Made 2013	Summary of <b>amount realised</b> (Jan – June) according to areas of endowment									
			Land Acquisition	Church planting	Missions	Schools' Projects	Special ministries	Scholarship	GAFCON	Youth empowerment	Education	Total amount realised
1	Cathedral	2,817,700	10,000	Nil	1,000	Nil	350,700	15,000	Nil	15,000	5,000	396,700
2	Rumuomasi	2,435,800	Nil	2,000	44,000	Nil	59,700	19,000	3,000	Nil	Nil	127,700
3	Rumuobiokani	4,06,700	Nil	Nil	10,000	Nil	931,000	Nil	Nil	3,000	30,000	974,000



4	Eledenwo	2,930,470	100,000	21,000	100,000	6,000	385,200	15,000	500	Nil	Nil	627,700
5	Woji Archd.	1,904,900	1,000	Nil	12,000	Nil	71,600	3,000	39,500	7,000	Nil	134,100
6	Oginigba	366,700	55,000	Nil	Nil	32,000	2,000	Nil	9,000	27,000	Nil	125,000
7	Okporo	1,038,900	Nil	10,000	Nil	Nil	28,500	Nil	10,000	Nil	Nil	48,000
8	Evo South East	1,215,900	20,000	7,000	12,000	2,000	Nil	50,000	25,500	11,000	Nil	127,500
9	Oroigwe/Eliogbolo	1,963,700	4,000	Nil	Nil	Nil	44,000	10,000	48,000	Nil	Nil	100,000
10	Trinity Missionary Archdeaconry	1,028,100	Nil	21,000	Nil	Nil	42,500	12,000	53,500	10,000	Nil	139,000
		<b>N16,108,870</b>										<b>N2,799,700</b>

## 19.SOME MAJOR DIOCESAN CAPITAL EXPENDITURES

In readiness for the building of a **Diocesan Centre Complex**, we acquired a piece of land (9 plots in all) beside the All Saints' Cathedral (Behind the Health Centre), Rumuokwurusi at a cost of **Forty Million naira** (N40, 000, 000.00).

Our papers are hopefully being processed by the relevant government agencies for a Certificate of Occupancy. We thank Barr. Chimezie Otuonye and Mr. John Okene for their invaluable roles in our securing of this property.

We intend to commence work on the Diocesan Centre Project immediately and this is going to require a lot of funds. *This proposed Complex will be providing office accommodation for the Bishop and his staff, the Diocesan Central Office staff, the Synod Secretariat, offices for all the major Diocesan Activity Groups/Units, library, ICT Centre, Archives Department, meeting halls, office chapel, guest rooms for retreat, etc.*

We are therefore soliciting the generous financial support of everyone in the Diocese and all our friends to enable us achieve this goal in the shortest possible time.

We assisted **St. James' Church, Iriebe Parish** with the sum of Three Million (N3, 000, 000) only to enable the Parish buy back a piece of the church land sold many years ago by a serving Catechist (now Archdeacon) in another diocese.

A similar assistance (to the tune of N3, 000, 000) was given to **Holy Ghost Church, Housing Estate Parish, Iriebe** to enable her acquire a piece of land by the Church.

These Parishes are however to refund these sums of money to the Diocese within a given time.

Work has progressed satisfactorily on the **True Vine, Abuja Estate, Iriebe** church building project started by the Diocese. We restructured the building to make for galleries and an expanded auditorium and altar. The Diocesan Men's Christian Association supported our efforts with a donation of **One Million naira** (N1, 000, 000). We thank them. We have directed the Holy Ghost Anglican Church, Iriebe Parish to continue with the roofing of the building.

The **new 300-bed dormitory project of Bishop Crowther Memorial Secondary School, Rumuobiokani** which we started in October 2011 is virtually completed.

We thank the chairman of the Diocesan Projects Committee, Mr. Lawrence Chinda, Sir Promise W. Owhor and all members of the Taskforce on the project for their dedication to duty. May God bless them. We have fixed the dedication of the dormitory building project for Sunday, 15<sup>th</sup> September, 2013 shortly before the students resume for the new academic session. As at the time of writing this address last month, the Diocese had spent a total of **Eighty Four million, two hundred and ninety four thousand, three hundred and eight naira, fifty kobo** (N84, 294, 308.50) on the project.

We acknowledge the support in cash and kind received from the following toward the project:

- The Parent-Teacher Association of BCMSS, Rumuobiokani which undertook the construction and installation of the burglary proofs;
- Sir Adolphus Opara who undertook the construction of the giant metal doors;
- Mr. Victor Otubu, a cash donation of N20, 000
- Mr. Paul M. Chukwumati – N100, 000
- Mr. & Mrs. Chituru Obowu – N100, 000
- Sir & Lady Emmanuel Edeghere – N100, 000
- Evangelist Christian Osonkie – N10, 000
- Sir & Lady Obele Poloamina – N200, 000
- Diocesan MU/WG – N700, 000
- Lady Prisca C. Worlu – N100, 000

We thank these persons and groups and pray that the Lord will graciously reward them.

Work on the **New Cathedral Building** is in progress. The Altar slabs, casting of columns and roof beams, roofing design and steel structure are completed. We commend members of the Cathedral Church for their untiring efforts in constructing a befitting Cathedral for the Diocese. From our inception as a Diocese, we have consistently contributed towards this project and will continue to do so until it is executed. For this year, the Diocese has since released the sum of **Five Million Naira** as grant to the Cathedral for the project.

## **20. AWARDS TO PERFORMING CHURCHES/PRIESTS**

We have continued to recognize and reward the positive performances of our churches and the priests in the remittance to the Diocese of the 10% and 15% of their total weekly (Monday to Sunday) income. For the year 2012, the following churches and groups excelled in their respective categories:

### **❖ Category A**

(For the Cathedral & Deanery Churches and St. Nicholas' Woji District)

1<sup>st</sup> position – St. Andrew's Rumuobiokani Deanery with a total remittance of N21, 946, 164.37;

❖ **Category B**

(For Archdeaconry Headquarters Churches)

1<sup>st</sup> position – Church of the Holy Spirit, Elenwo District with a total remittance of N4, 662, 206.71;

❖ **Category C**

(For Parish Churches)

1<sup>st</sup> position – Church of Pentecost, Rumuogba Parish with a total remittance of N2, 294, 160.00;

❖ **Category D**

(For Church Stations)

1<sup>st</sup> position – Retained by New Wine Church, East/West Road, Okporo with a total remittance of N5, 283, 061.18;

❖ **Category E**

(For Worship Centres)

1<sup>st</sup> position – Retained by Ang. Worship Centre (Now Christened True Vine Anglican Church), Abuja Estate, Iriebe with a total remittance of N269, 770.00;

❖ **Category F**

(For Diocesan Activity Groups)

1<sup>st</sup> position – Retained by Diocesan Women's Ministries (MU/WG) with a total remittance of N2, 415, 568.00;

❖ **Category G**

(For the Archdeaconries)

1<sup>st</sup> position – Oroigwe/Eliogbolo Archdeaconry with a total remittance of N254, 960.50

The records available to us from the Finance Department of the Diocese indicate no remittance for 2012 from Woji and Evo South East Archdeaconries and the Diocesan Council of Knights. These blocks and group are owing the Diocese because it is difficult to believe that for a whole year they generated no income. The Archdeacons and President of the Council of Knights should cross check their income for 2012 and make the required remittance to the Diocese without delay.

## **21. FOURTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DIOCESE**

We marked the fourth anniversary of the inauguration of the Diocese of Evo and our consecration and enthronement as Bishop from Monday, 8<sup>th</sup> to Sunday, 14<sup>th</sup> July, 2013 with the following programmes:

- ❖ Day of Prayer & Fasting for the whole Diocese on Monday, 8<sup>th</sup> July, concluding prayer meetings involving members of the various activity groups, chaplaincies, and church workers, clergy and wives were held at 4 venues – St. Andrew’s, Rumuobiokani, St. Mark’s Elelenwo, St. Simon’s, Okporo Deaneries and Holy Trinity Elingbu Parish.
- ❖ A 3 – Day Diocesan Awareness Seminar on Missions and Evangelism from Wednesday, 10<sup>th</sup> – Friday, 12<sup>th</sup> July at the All Saints’ Cathedral, Rumuokwursi. The guest speakers were Rev. Reuben Ezemadu, Rev. Churchill Anozie and Mrs. Joy Anozie of the Christian Missionary Foundation, Ibadan and Port Harcourt. The team delivered talks on:
  - “Global trends and their implication for missions”
  - “Mission fields and opportunities closest to everyone”
  - “The nature and mission of the Church”
  - “The part (role) of the clergy in the involvement of members in missions”
  - “Church planting movement”
  - “Health and missions”
  - “The place of women in missions”
- ❖ Diocesan Choir Singing competition was also held in the Cathedral on Saturday, 13<sup>th</sup> July.

The weeklong anniversary was concluded with thanksgiving services in all churches across the Diocese on Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> July.

We are very grateful to the Cathedral Standing Committee, the Canon Residentiary and the priests for cheerfully hosting both Seminar and the singing competition.

## **22. DIOCESAN SINGING COMPETITION**

We appreciate the continued commitment of Prof. Joe Amadi-Echendu in sponsoring this event. In addition to his initial trophies, the University of Pretoria, South Africa-based Professor donated for the second time, a giant trophy for the overall best choir in the Diocese. Professor Walter Ollor, a friend of our Diocese from Akpajo also redeemed his three-year old promise of donating trophies for singing competition among choirs in our Diocese. To make for proper utilization of these trophies, we have directed that our annual Diocesan singing competition among church choirs be organized henceforth in the following order:

Group A – The Cathedral, Archdeaconry and Deanery Headquarter Churches to compete for the initial (old) trophies donated by Prof. Echendu and

Group B – Parishes & Station churches vying for the new set of trophies donated by Professor Walter.

The best three (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup>) choirs from each group will thereafter compete for the newest giant trophy donated by Professor Echendu to determine the best overall choir in the Diocese. Based on this advice, this year’s singing competitions were conducted on Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> June at Bethel Anglican Church, Rumuibekwe Parish

and at St. Andrew's Church, Rumuobiokani Deanery for groups A & B choirs respectively. Winners in Group A were:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Position – St. Andrew's Rumuobiokani Deanery
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Position – All Saints' Cathedral, Ruuokwursi
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Position – St. Jude's Oginigba Deanery

For Group B, the winners were:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Position – Church of The Epiphany Azumini, Rumuokwursi Parish
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Position – New Covenant Church, Eliminigwe Housing Estate Parish
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Position – Holy Trinity Church, Elimgbu Parish.

These six choirs converged on the Cathedral Church on Saturday, 13<sup>th</sup> July, for the grand finale as part of activities to mark our Fourth Diocesan Anniversary celebrations. At the end of the highly thrilling, exciting and refreshing contest St. Jude's, Oginigba Deanery church choir emerged the overall BEST CHOIR in the Diocese for the year 2013 with 74 points and took home the new giant trophy donated by Prof. Joe Amadi-Echendu. They were followed in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> positions by All Saints' Cathedral church choir with 71 points and St. Andrew's, Rumuobiokani Deanery church choir with 70 points respectively.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> best choirs i.e. All Saints' Cathedral and St. Andrew's Rumuobiokani Church choirs we also presented trophies donated by one of our Evo daughters married at Isiokpo, Mrs. Chinyere Paul (Nee Nnodi). We appreciate her kind gesture. The 4<sup>th</sup> position went to Church of the Epiphany, Azumini, Rumuokwursi with 56 points, while the 2012 winners, New Covenant Church, Eliminigwe, Elelenwo came 5<sup>th</sup> with 55 points. The sixth expected at the occasion, Holy Trinity, Elimgbu did not turn up for the grand finale.

We congratulate all the participating choirs and especially the **overall Best Choir**, St. Jude's, Oginigba Deanery for their wonderful performance and victory. We thank the two music loving professors and Mrs. Chinyere Paul, donors of these trophies, for their kind gestures and support. To the Diocesan Music Ministry Chaplain, Rev. Samuel Obialor, the Director of Music, Engr. Jolly Nnodi and all members of Diocesan Choir Council, we say, well-done and God bless. While we call for more persons to sponsor this competition by way of cash prizes for the winning choirs, we hereby announce the very special boost the competition has received from Sir Chief Alex Orakwue who at the grand finale pledged cash donations as follows:

- N50, 000 to the overall best choir at the grand finale and N10, 000 to each of the other participating choirs. This is for a period of five years with effect from the just concluded competition. We appreciate him.

### **Looking Ahead**

We have directed both the Diocesan Director of Music and Music Chaplain to work hard to urgently put in place a permanent 50-man Diocesan Mass Choir which will regularly feature at major Diocesan services and events. We have equally mandated them to work in collaboration with the Vicars, Supervising Priests of churches and the Diocesan Children's Ministry Chaplaincy to organize Annual Diocesan Children Choir Singing Competition for kids not above 12 years of age. There should be no further delay on this.

### 23. COMMENDATIONS

We appreciate and commend the generosity of St. Andrew's Church, Rumuobiokani in steadily providing for the churches under its charge. The Deanery blazed a trail when on Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> November, 2012 and on Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> June, 2013 it donated the sum of Two million naira (N2,000, 000) and Five hundred thousand naira (N500, 000) to Anglican Church of Pentecost, Rumuogba and Church of Messiah, Iriebe both previously under the Deanery on the occasion of their respective inaugurations as Parish Churches. You will recall that the Deanery had in the past spent heavily to purchase the plots of land on which these Parishes now stand. Similar gestures were extended by them to the churches they planted at Eliogbolo (Christ, the Redeemer) and Mini-Ewa (King of Glory), Rumuobiokani and also to Bishop Crowther Memorial Secondary School where they are about to complete a three bedroom flat to house the Principal.

We also commend St. Mark's Church, Elelenwo Deanery for their parting cash gift of One Hundred thousand naira (N100, 000) to Chapel of Grace & Knowledge, ACMGS, Elelenwo on the occasion of the latter's inauguration as a Parish; the purchase of 3 ½ plots of land for the permanent site of their 'baby church', (The Anglican Church of the Passion, Rumuodani). We are pleased with these gestures because we see in them a clear departure from the practice of the past where Dioceses, Archdeaconries and Parishes were known to part ways on a rancorous note to the shame of those behind such strife and mockery of the entire message of the church.

We commend the New Wine Church, Okporo, a station church which is still battling to secure a place for its permanent site and yet could sacrificially give as much as Five Hundred thousand naira (N500, 000) to another sister baby church – Faith Community Anglican Church, Eliowhani to assist in the movement of the congregation to their permanent site;

The Cathedral Church for the donation of steel protectors to St. James' Church, Iriebe for the building their fence;

St. Nicholas' Church, Woji for all the assistance towards the rapid infrastructural development of the young Cornerstone Anglican Church at Rumurolu.

We have noted that in the Church of Nigeria Dioceses and Churches which have remained consistent in the proper cheerful channelling of their God-given resources have never suffered impoverishment; they have rather continued to flourish. At their moments of need God has always risen to meet such needs. His word will always come to pass..... *"He who sows bountifully, will also reap bountifully", "the liberal soul shall be made fat", "...and my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus"* (2Cor. 9:6; Prov. 11: 25; Phil. 4:19). This is the secret of such flourishing Dioceses as Lagos, Abuja, Lagos West, Lagos Mainland, On The Niger, Niger Delta North, and Awka, to mention but a few. Here in Evo God has continued to provide for those churches that have remained consistent in their support to others in need. Churches and their leaders that are slow and reluctant to reach out to others in need have a great deal of lessons to learn from these other exemplary ones. The position of the scripture is *"Freely you have received, freely you should give", "It is more blessed to give than to receive"*.

#### **24. PROGRESS ON THE REHABILITATION OF THE FAMILY OF THE LATE REV. CANON CHUKWUEMEKA OGU**

The sad memory of the demise of our Priest, the Rev. Canon Chukwuemeka Ogu is still fresh in our minds. We commend and deeply appreciate the kindness and patience of the leaders and members of St. Philip's Church, Oroigwe District in accommodating his widow and children and also providing for them up till early this year. The support of the Archdeacon, Ven. S. C. Opara and his Oroigwe/Eliogbolo Archdeaconry Board is equally appreciated.

On her part, the Diocese renovated and also furnished an old 2 bedroom apartment at ACMGS, Elelenwo at a cost of **Two Million, Five Hundred & Eighty Four Thousand, Four Hundred naira (N2, 584, 400.00)** into which the wife and children of the deceased have now moved. The Clergy Welfare Association was quick to provide an electricity generating set for the use of the family. We thank them.

A more permanent 3 bedroom accommodation for the family has been proposed by the Rehabilitation Committee and approved by the Diocesan Board. A conservative sum of **Six Million naira** is estimated for this. It covers the purchase of one plot of land at Eneka and the actual erection of the building. The Committee led by Ven. Godwin Chinda has been mandated to visit individuals and churches to source for this fund on behalf of the Diocese. Please respond generously when they come to you. God will reward whatever cheerful support you give towards this project.

#### **25. RETIREMENT FROM SERVICE**

We hereby announce the retirement from active church ministry of the Rev. Canon Ben Nwaoha, the present Vicar of St. Philip's Anglican Church, Oroigwe District with effect from 31<sup>st</sup> August this year. This retirement is coming upon his attainment of the mandatory retirement age of sixty five (65) years for clergy and church workers and after 16 years (from December 1997) in the ordained ministry of the church. We thank God for His great mercies and grace upon the life of the Rev. Canon through these years of active ministry and wish him a very fruitful life and robust health even in retirement. The Diocese will present him with a parting token before the close of this Synod. We also hope that his present station will accord him a befitting send-forth.

#### **26. DONATIONS & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

We acknowledge and thank the following for various donations and services rendered to the Diocese, her churches and institutions within the Synod year:

- The Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) for the donation to and mounting of an electricity transformer at St. Philip's Church, Oroigwe District through the Archdeacon, Ven. Sunday C. Opara and also for the several community development services rendered at Archdeacon Crowther Memorial Girls' School, Elelenwo.
- a. The Venerable Dr. Christian Amatu, the Vicar of St. Mary's Anglican Church Harmondsworth, London, United Kingdom for the donation of an official seal for the Bishop's office at a great cost.

- b. An Anglican faithful in the Diaspora who prefers to be anonymous the donation of One Million, one hundred and seventeen thousand naira (**N1, 117, 000. 00**) for the renovation and furnishing of the office of the Principal of ACMGS, Elelenwo and books for the school's library.
- c. Hon. Mrs. Ibim Semenitari for the donation of the sum of One Million Naira (N1, 000, 000) for the printing of **10, 000 copies** of our 2013 Diocesan Adult Sunday School (Bible Study) manuals which were distributed free to all worshippers in the Diocese.
- d. A group of six parishioners of the New Covenant Church, Eliminigwe Housing Estate Parish, Elelenwo for the voluntary purchase and donation of a car to their Vicar and wife, The Rev. & Mrs. Chukwuma Anukem in appreciation of their hard work in the Parish.
- e. A group of four parishioners of the Anglican Church of the Messiah, New Haven Parish, Iriebe for the voluntary purchase and donation of a car to their Vicar and wife, The Rev. & Mrs. John Nkuene also in appreciation of their hard work in the Parish.
- f. Sir & Lady Victor Dania for the gift of an official car (a ford jeep) to the Cathedral;
- g. Mr. & Mrs. Charles Gbandi for the sum of two million naira (N2, 000, 000) towards the purchase of an 18 seater bus for the Cathedral;
- h. Barr. & Mrs. Boma Obuoforibo for the donation of a brand new money-counting machine for the Cathedral;
- i. Mr. & Mrs. Boniface Ukeje for the gift of a plot of land to New Covenant Church, Eliminigwe Housing Estate Parish, Elelenwo.
- j. Sir Chief & Lady Ray Amadi, JP for the offer of 2 apartments of 2 bedrooms each for the accommodation of two Cathedral Priests for a period of three years.
- k. Rev. Canon & Mrs. Chris Chukwumati for the donation of a glass pulpit to the Great Shepherd Anglican Church, Mgbuesilaru;
- l. Professor Joe Amadi-Echendu for the award of scholarships to some academically outstanding students of two of our Diocesan schools.

May the blessings of God abound unto these and many others whose generous gestures we are unable to highlight in this address. We use this medium to appeal to and invite you to identify specific areas of need in the Diocese and willingly offer your support and assistance.

## **27. NIGER DELTA PROVINCIAL MATTERS**

The **Provincial Council & Women Executive Meetings** were held in September 2012 and January 2013 respectively. The September meetings were



hosted by the Diocese of Niger Delta at St. Cyprian's Church, Port Harcourt between the 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> with the theme **"Fear Not"** (2Kings 6:16).

The January 2013 meetings were hosted by our Diocese of Edo from Friday 18<sup>th</sup> to Sunday 20<sup>th</sup>. This edition of the Provincial Council Meetings was a very unique one. Unique in the sense that it marked the beginning of the new arrangement of holding revival services/crusades within the hosting Diocese. During their stay with us, the Archbishop and Bishops ministered at special weekend revival services held at the Cathedral, Archdeaconry and Deanery Headquarters and also worshipped and preached at the combined church services held in these areas on Sunday, 20<sup>th</sup>. The theme of the January Meeting was **"Our sufficiency is of God"** 2<sup>nd</sup> cor. 3:5. At the end of the meetings, the Archbishop, Bishops, their wives and other delegates were quite satisfied with the quality of hosting by us and we too were convinced that we gave a good account of ourselves.

We want to use this medium to express our very sincere appreciation to all members of the Planning Committee for the hosting of the meeting headed by the Registrar, Barr. Nlerum Amadi, the Canon Residentiary, Archdeacons, Rectors, Supervisor, the Priests and members of the various Church Councils for their roles and co-operation which largely contributed to the successful hosting of the meetings. We wish to put on record the outstanding donations and support the Diocese received from the following groups and persons towards the hosting of the Archbishop/Bishops, their wives and delegates: The Diocesan Men's Christian Association, Mothers' Union and Women's Guild, Anglican Youth Fellowship, Lay Readers Association, Council of Knights, HRM Eze Dr. Frank A. Eke, Hon. Mrs. Ibim Semenitari, Hon. Timothy E. Nsirim, Lady Pauline Tasie, Lady Gladys Ihunwo, Lady Victoria Emelu, Mr. Eze Egwurugwu, Sir & Lady Ugo Ohuabunwa, Dame Meg Orianwo, Mrs. Yellowe, Sir & Lady F. I. Mbeledogu, Sir & Lady Festus Adegbuji, Sir Ken Utchay and Mr. & Mrs. Promise Okene and others.

We thank them and pray for God's abundant blessing upon them.

#### ➤ **Relief for Victims of The 2012 Flood Disaster**

On the 18<sup>th</sup> of October, 2012, His Grace the Archbishop, The Most Rev. I. C. O. Kattey set up a Seven-man Committee headed by We, the Rt. Rev. Innocent U. Ordu, JP, Bishop of Edo to mobilize resources – financial and material – within the Province to alleviate the sufferings of members of our church who were affected by the flood disaster of late 2012. We thank all our churches and individuals who generously donated cash and materials in response to the Committee's appeal for support. Records show that the highest cash donation of One Million, two hundred and thirty thousand, five hundred and eighty naira (N1, 230, 580.00) came from our Diocese. This is in addition to other numerous relief materials – rice, yams, beverages, detergents, toiletries and bails of clothing. We commend all the churches and individuals that supported this Provincial relief effort.

The visit of the Archbishop, the Most Rev. I. C. O. Kattey and some bishops of the Province to victims of the flood affected parts of the Province took place on Monday 12<sup>th</sup> November, 2012 and covered places like Ahoada, Abua/Odual, Kaiama, Ogbia, Yenagoa and Calabar.

#### ➤ **Provincial Bishops, Clergy & Wives Retreat**

The maiden edition of the Niger Delta Provincial All Bishops, Clergy & Wives Retreat took place at St. Paul's Cathedral, Diocese of Ahoada from the 19<sup>th</sup> to the 22<sup>nd</sup> of February 2013 with the Archbishop, The Most Rev. I. C. O. Kattey, JP presiding. The theme of the retreat was “**Maintaining the Ancient Landmark**” and had the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) Bishop Theologian, The Rt. Rev. Professor Dapo Asaju as the chief speaker. We thank our churches for sponsoring our clergy and their wives. We also commend the effective roles played by the Rev. Canon Chris Chukwumati and Mrs. Priscilla Alex-Usifoh, our Diocesan Representatives in the Provincial Planning Committee's preparations towards the retreat.

## **28. JOINT PROVINCIAL COUNCIL (EAST)**

The meeting of the Joint Provinces of the East of the Niger comprising of Niger Delta, Niger, Owerri, Enugu and Aba took place at All Saints' Cathedral Church, Onitsha, Diocese On The Niger between Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> and Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> January, 2013.

With his appointment as Dean of Church of Nigeria and now the most senior Archbishop, our Archbishop, the Most Rev. Ignatius Kattey, JP has assumed the chairmanship of the meeting of the Joint Ecclesiastical Provinces, East of The Niger.

### **➤ Our Link Diocese**

As part of efforts at promoting strong spiritual and social relationship among the Dioceses of the Joint Provincial Council East of the Niger, Dioceses have been grouped into *links* with each other. The Diocese of Edo has been linked with the **Diocese on the Lake** in Imo State.

The two Dioceses are encouraged to engage in exchange programmes, visitations, share prayer concerns with each other and render any form of assistance or support to each other as the need arises.

We welcome this development and commend the former chairman of the Joint Ecclesiastical Council (East), the Most Rev. B. C. I. Okoro for this initiative. We pray for a healthy link between our two Dioceses. We specially welcome the Bishop On the Lake, The Rt. Rev. Chijioke Oti who has come to personally identify with us at this Synod.

We the Bishops are determined to make this 'marriage' (i.e working relationship) between our two Dioceses succeed. Consequently, we the Bishop of Edo will be leading the clergy and wives of our Diocese to Oguta on a Special retreat as well as Outreach to that Diocese. Our clergy and their wives will be staying with their counterparts over there for the period of the retreat and also minister in churches as the host Bishop will determine. This mission retreat has been scheduled for Thursday, 31<sup>st</sup> October to Sunday, 3<sup>rd</sup> November, this year.

## **29. CHURCH OF NIGERIA MATTERS**

### **➤ Meetings/Bishops' retreat and general convocations**

Since our last Synod in August 2012, the Church of Nigeria has held the following meetings, Bishops' Retreat and general convocations.

The Standing Committee and Mothers' Union Executive Meetings were held as follows:

- 11<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> September, 2012 at The Cathedral Church of Emmanuel, Ado-Ekiti, Ekiti State with the theme **“Resist the Devil and he will flee from you” (James 4:7)**,
- 5<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> February, 2013 at Our Saviour's Church, G. R. A. Benin City, Edo State with the theme: **“Overcoming the Challenge of our Time”**,
- 2013 edition of the annual Bishops' retreat took place at the Ibru-Centre, Agbarha-Otor from Monday 7<sup>th</sup> – Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> January, 2013. The theme was **“The labourer is worthy of his wages” (Luke 10:7)**.

The communiqué and Pastoral letters issued from these meetings and retreat are attached as Appendixes.

The next meetings of the Church of Nigeria Standing Committee and the Mothers' Union Executive holding in September this year will be hosted by our Province from Monday, 9<sup>th</sup> to Saturday, 14<sup>th</sup>. The venue is Yenagoa, Diocese of Niger Delta West. It will be preceded by a service of consecration of the new Bishop of Ogbomosho on Tuesday, 10<sup>th</sup>. The Province has levied our Diocese the sum of Four Million, Four Hundred and Twenty Thousand naira (N4, 420, 000) for the hosting of these meetings. We have accordingly levied some of our churches based on their status and strength (excluding the financially weak stations). All clergy and church council members of levied churches should endeavour to pay in their respective amounts to the Diocesan coffers not later than 20<sup>th</sup> August, 2013 to enable us fulfil our commitment as a Diocese to the Province. Failure to comply with this directive will be deemed as sabotage.

#### ➤ DIVCCON:

The Second Edition of the Divine Commonwealth Conference, a National Convocation of all Anglican Faithful in Nigeria and from abroad took place at the National Christian Centre, Abuja from the 5<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> November, 2012 with the theme **‘Contending for the Faith’** Jude 3. It featured talks, seminars/workshops, worship and prayer sessions. We want to remind everyone that this national gathering of our church is open to all clergy and members of our church and it was designed to be a time of refreshing in the presence of the Lord. We encourage everyone to endeavour to participate in it. We are not encouraged by the poor participation of members of this Diocese in this spiritual gathering so far.

The next edition has been fixed for Monday 18<sup>th</sup> – Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> November, 2013.

#### ➤ Church of Nigeria Prayer Convocation

The Church of Nigeria Prayer Convocation was held at St. Paul's Cathedral Diobu, Port Harcourt from 23<sup>rd</sup> through 27<sup>th</sup> April, 2013. The theme of the conference was

**“Overcoming the challenges of the time” (Rev. 2:8-11).** Some clergy and members of our Diocese attended the Conference.

➤ **St. Matthias’ Day, 2013**

This year’s St. Matthias’ Day offering took place in all Anglican churches in Nigeria on Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> February, 2013. As usual, funds generated from this special offering are channelled towards the support of weak missionary areas within the Church of Nigeria. Last year, 2012, our Diocese raised and remitted a total sum of **N7, 121,465.00m**. The office of the Primate of All Nigeria considered this as one of the best performances and consequently wrote a special **Letter of Commendation** to our Diocese for **‘the handsome returns’** made by our Diocese. (Please see appendix for details). We had thought that we would improve on this performance in this year 2013. Regrettably this was not the case as the record show that we were able to raise and remit the sum of N7, 000, 095.00 (Seven Million and Ninety Five Naira) only. This slight low performance notwithstanding, we were still able to maintain our place among the best seven performing Dioceses for this year. We give God the glory.

➤ **Purchase of official vehicles for the Ibru-Centre, Agbarha-Otor**

Evo was among 11 Dioceses selected by the Primate, His Grace, Most Rev. Nicholas Okoh to assist the Church of Nigeria purchase a bus and a car for the official use of the Ibru Ecumenical Centre and the International Secondary School, Agbarha-Otor. Both institutions are owned by the Anglican Church. Our Diocese made a voluntary contribution of Seven Hundred and fifty thousand naira (N750, 000.00).

➤ **2012 All Nigeria Anglican Clergy Conference**

This national conference of our clergymen which holds every four years took place at The Ajayi Crowther University Oyo, Oyo State from Monday 24<sup>th</sup> – Friday 28<sup>th</sup> September, 2012. The theme of the conference was **“Earnestly Contend for the Faith”, (Jude 3)**. Nearly all the clergy of the Diocese of Evo attended the conference. We thank the churches for sponsoring them.

➤ **Retirement of Bishops**

The following bishops have retired from active ministry of the church:

- Rt. Rev. Samuel C. A. Chukwuka – Isikwuato/Umunochi Diocese
- Rt. Prof. Emmanuel Iheagwam – Egbu
- Rt. Rev. Michael Ipinmoye – Akure
- Rt. Rev. Peter Adebisi – Lagos West
- Rt. Rev. Martyns Minns – CANA
- Rt. Rev. Prof. Matthew A. A. Osunade – Ogbomosho (to retire in October 2013).

We wish them well in retirement.

➤ **New Bishops**

We congratulate the following new bishops who have since been consecrated:

- Rt. Rev. Manasseh Okere – Isikwuato/Umunochi
- Rt. Rev. Godfrey E. Okoroafo – Egbu
- Rt. Rev. Simeon O. Borokini – Akure
- Rt. Rev. James O. Odedeji – Lagos West
- The Very Rev. Olayinka Titus Babatunde (Bishop-elect) – Ogbomosho (To be consecrated in September, 2013).

➤ **New Dean and Archbishops**

- The Most Rev. Ignatius C. O. Kattey, JP is now the new Dean of the Church of Nigeria. The following were elected/re-elected Provincial Archbishops:
- Most Rev. Caleb Maduoma – Owerri Province
- Most Rev. Prof. Adebayo Akinde – Lagos Province
- Most Rev. Segun Okunbadejo – Ibadan Province
- Most Rev. Edmund Akanya, re-elected Archbishop, Kaduna Province
- Most Rev. Benjamin Kwashi, re-elected Archbishop, Jos Province

They have since been formally presented. We congratulate and wish them well in their Arch-episcopal ministry.

➤ **Global Anglican Future Conference (GAFCON) 2013**

The Global Anglican Future Conference (GAFCON) is a product of the collaborative efforts of the leadership of the Church of Nigeria and other members of the Anglican Communion worldwide, who believe strongly in the uniqueness and sufficiency of Jesus Christ and the authority of the Holy Scriptures. This movement which for the time being runs in parallel with the traditional Lambeth Conference, has become the new global rallying point for the orthodox and evangelical Anglicans. The maiden edition was held in 2008 in Jerusalem. The next edition is billed to hold in Nairobi, Kenya from October 21<sup>st</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> this year.

Our Diocese based on the Primate's directive will be represented by the Bishop, the Bishop's wife and one male delegate. Accordingly, we have chosen the Registrar of our Diocese to go with us. We thank Mr. Sam Azoka for paying for two Business Class Return Tickets for the Bishop and wife for this journey. God bless him. Following the appeal of His Grace, the Primate, Most Rev. Nicholas Okoh, the Diocesan Board approved our payment of the sum of One Million Naira (N1000, 000) to the Primate's office for the sponsorship of two Bishops to this conference.

**30. MEET THE NEW ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY AND HEAD OF THE WORLDWIDE ANGLICAN COMMUNION, HIS GRACE, THE MOST. REVEREND JUSTIN WELBY**

The Most Rev. Welby was born in 1956 in London. He studied history and law at Eton College and Trinity College Cambridge.

He worked with the following organizations within the oil industry:

- Elf UK, Plc, London, 1983 – 1984
- Enterprise Oil Plc, London, 1984 – 1989

In 1989, after sensing a call from God, Bishop Justin stood down from his work in the oil industry to train for ordination.

He obtained a degree theology from St. John's College Durham, majoring on ethics-particularly in business.

He has since published several articles on ethics, international finance and reconciliation. His booklet, *'Can Companies Sin?'*, which drew heavily from his experience in the oil industry, evolved from his dissertation at the theological college.

He was ordained Deacon in 1992 and priested 1993. He served as assistant curate at All Saints, Chivers Cotton with St. Mary the Virgin, Astley, in Nuneaton from 1992 – 1995. In 1995 he became Rector of the St. James, Southam, a small market town in the Diocese of Llorenty and also the next year of St. Michael's and All angels, Upton, a neighbouring Parish. He helped revive both churches, growing their congregations and launching bereavement and baptism teams, where the former was concerned with taking care of bereaved families and the latter involved in preparing candidates for baptism among other things. Between 2000 and 2002, he also chaired an NHS hospital trust in South Warwickshire.

Between 2002 and 2007, Justin served variously as Canon Residentiary and Sub Dean of Coventry Cathedral. He also served as Priest-in-charge of Holy Trinity, Coventry, the main city Centre Church in 2007. On December 8 of the same year he was installed Dean of the largest Cathedral in England, the Liverpool Cathedral. The local area of the Cathedral, Toxteth, is among the most deprived in north-west Europe. During his Deanship, he brought the Cathedral into much greater contact with its local community, working with asylum seekers in partnership with neighbouring churches. The Cathedral's congregation increased significantly under his tenure.

For 20 years, Archbishop Welby's ministry blended deep devotion to his parish communities with Church work around the world, especially in areas of conflict. He worked extensively in the field in Africa and the Middle East. He has a particular interest in Kenya, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Nigeria, where he was and remains involved in work with groups involved in conflict in the north. In our Niger Delta region, he has worked on reconciliation with armed groups. He met with religious and political leaders in Israel and Palestine, and on one trip to Baghdad, Iraq, reopened the Anglican Church with Canon Andrew White, a mission ally, shortly after the allied invasion.

An expert on the politics and history of Kenya and Nigeria, Justin has lectured on reconciliation at the US State Department. In the summer of 2012, he was asked to join the Parliamentary Commission on Banking Standards.

He had in 2011, returned to the place where his journey towards becoming Archbishop began: on 2<sup>nd</sup> June, 2011, he was announced as the new Bishop of Durham, taking over from the Right Reverend Tom Wright. He was enthroned at Durham Cathedral on 26<sup>th</sup> November.

On 9<sup>th</sup> November 2012, Justin Welby was announced as the 105<sup>th</sup> Archbishop of the See of Canterbury. He officially became Archbishop on 4<sup>th</sup> February 2013, succeeding Dr. Rowan Williams who retired at the end of December 2012. The new Archbishop was enthroned at Canterbury Cathedral on 21<sup>st</sup> March, 2013.

His interests include French Culture, sailing and politics

He is married to Caroline, who studied Classics at Cambridge, where they met. They have two sons and three daughters.

### **31.SOLEMN CHARGES TO ALL IN THE DIOCESE**

#### **➤ Clergy & Wives**

All through the ages there have been clear public expectation about clergy conduct. And when we talk about clergy here, we are referring to their wives as well.

The declining moral and ethical values on the part of many clergymen and wives is becoming increasingly worrisome. It is even more painful that the more these issues

are addressed with a view to bringing about a positive change in character and proper adherence to ministerial ethics, the more we witness conducts inappropriate or unbecoming to the office of a minister. Certain men in Holy Orders in this Diocese have remained consistent in their wilful disobedience to and breach of ecclesiastical laws, policies and instructions. From the senior clergy down the line we have observed incidences of neglect, culpable carelessness and gross inefficiency in the performance of duties of office.

In our last Diocesan Board meeting of 2012 held at St. Philip's, Oroigwe District, we had cause to lament about another area of deep concern to us. We will like to repeat here a part of what we said in our address on that occasion which we captioned **'our sorrow'**:

*"Usually when a speech writer like us uses the phrase 'our sorrow' in an address what readily comes to the minds of listeners is the thought of the death of a person or persons. It is true that we lost to death a number of our cherished ones in the Diocese during the year for which our hearts and prayers go out in sympathy with members of their families. As the year ends however, we want to use this medium to state that apart from the deaths that caused us much pains, the attitude of some of our clergymen stood out very distinctly as a major source of pain. And this is most regrettable.*

*The year witnessed so much unnecessary bad blood, acrimony, malice, strife, hate and wilful mischief among some 'men of God' as a result which the work they were called to do suffered much setback".*

Since then, not much positive change has taken place. The plotting, scheming and manipulation against the Bishop and against those willing to offer him their loyalty and sincere service to the Diocese have continued stealthily. We have tried our best to administer and lead the clergy and laity by example and by exposing clergymen and their wives in particular to all forms of helpful trainings and counselling sessions. Yet the desired results are slow at coming. We are fast running out of patience and will not fold our arms and watch some persons who appear not to remember anymore that they are holding our licence, destroy this growing Diocese with their actions which are clearly incompatible with the teachings of the church and public expectation about the clergy. Senior and junior clergy who are too lazy and/or lack the rectitude required of their priestly offices should understand that their days in the Diocese are numbered.

As a step towards curbing or nipping in the bud this rising trend of clergy indiscipline, we shall in the months ahead be constituting a Clergy Discipline Commission to produce a Code of Practice for all clergy presently serving or wishing to serve in this Diocese. At the end of the exercise those willing to abide by such codes will remain to build the Diocese with us and those not so willing will be shown the exit gate of the Diocese. Perhaps they may fit in better elsewhere.

Clergymen and their wives are looked upon as people who are so close to God, a closeness that is expected to rub off on our spiritual and moral conduct. When this is not the case, we invariably destroy the root and effect of the beautiful gospel we preach to our flock.

The fact is that emphasis should shift from us telling the people to do only what we preach or say, to telling them to do what they see us do. If this will constitute the pattern, we must then with our wives ensure that the life we live both in the secret and in the open are sufficiently godly and exemplary enough to be copied.

A clergyman should strive to maintain such a stable character that like Gideon, he is able to say to others: “Look on me, and do likewise... as I do, so shall ye do” (Judges 7:17). We are called to inspire men, both by our preaching (word) and by our exemplary conduct.

As Apostle Paul put it, we owe it as a duty to those we pastor to make ourselves an ensample unto them to follow us (2Thess. 3:9). In his letter to Timothy, he admonished, “Let no man despise thy youth; **but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity**” (1Tim. 4:12). And to Titus, he exhorted, “**In all things, shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine showing incorruptness, gravity, sincerity**” (Titus 2:7).

These two recipients of Paul’s letters were ministers. What Paul wrote to them about how to conduct themselves in ministry, the Holy Spirit who inspired him is still writing to us, ministers, today. Every Christian is called to live out an exemplary life. This call is however extended more to those of us who are at the forefront, championing the gospel of Christ through preaching. May the Lord help us!

### ➤ **All Church Leaders**

Church Wardens, Secretaries, Treasurers, Synod delegates and other members of the Church Council or Committee with the ministers are leaders of the various parish communities, charged with the task of working together to promote the whole mission of the church.

The most crucial/demanding aspect of your task is to make decisions. It is crucial in the sense that by it you will either take the church to the next level or draw it back.

**As leaders you must be next level people.** This is why you must recognize that you need God, whose church you are overseeing (1Chron. 12:18). He alone can take you to the next level. You need His Holy Spirit at all times to guide and enable you move the mission of the Church faster. You need His wisdom. With wisdom, leaders can change the course of a nation, state, community or church (Prov. 28:2). Always pray and ask God for wisdom to enable you function effectively as leaders in His church (2Chron. 1:10; Prov. 2:3; James 1:5).

By your appointment, election or nomination you have been called to serve the church. Endeavour to use your position and the authority it has conferred on you to render sacrificial services to God in His house. True leadership begins with a willingness to serve others and it follows Jesus’ example (Luke 22: 24; John 13: 1-17).

If you have been given the responsibility to lead God’s people, take the tasks associated with it seriously... **“He that ruleth, with diligence”**. (Rom. 12:8).



As leaders ensure to uphold accountability. Be courageous to hold one another, including We, your Bishop and the priests accountable: "Take heed to yourselves: if thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him" (Luke 17:3).

Work in cooperation with the Bishop and the Priest(s) God has used him to assign to your local church in promoting the mission of the church. Bear in mind that God will examine your actions (2Cor. 5:10) and He will reward you based on the deeds you have done: ***"Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour. For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building"*** (1Cor. 3:8,9).

## **32. STATE AND NATIONAL ISSUES**

### **AMAECHI/WIKE/GOODLUCK & THE PRESIDENCY**

On Tuesday, July 9, 2013, a national drama of shame was acted, albeit without script, for the international community of how 'sophisticated' our democracy has become in a matter of years. It was bizarre to say the least. It was embarrassing as it was shocking. Before the full glare of the watching comity of nations, the 'honourable' members of the Rivers State House of Assembly desecrated the floors of the hallowed chambers of the Assembly. In fact, it was a desecration of the mandate given them by the ever-suffering masses. We fell short of crying as we watched those we gave our mandates show us off to the international community as a bunch of touts, for want of a better word.

The script for this shameful theatre had its origin in the suspension of the Executive of the Obio-Akpor Local Government Area by the Rivers State House of Assembly. In lightning fashion, a new Executive of PDP was enthroned by the courts for the state and quickly things began to fall apart. Again, came the issue of the Nigerian Governors' Forum elections and all it had to do with the presidency and Governor Amaechi's ambitions. Here we are now, the laughing stock before our contemporaries because of the inordinate ambitions of those who should be overseeing our well-beings but who are now interested in overseeing the well-being of their already fat pockets.

What is our take on all this? To start with, let us say that disagreements are normal in every sphere of human relations, be it in politics or the family. However, whatever happens, the mark of maturity and leadership is not to wash our linens in the glare of the international camera. We believe that all the gladiators in this Spanish bull-ring are all brothers: Governor Amaechi, the lawmakers, Chief Nyesom Wike and even President Goodluck Jonathan. As such, they all must quickly recall that what binds them is much more than what divides them. We cannot forget in a hurry our recent past when almost all the corporate business organizations in the state relocated their operations from Rivers State as a result of insecurity. The ultimate losers were Rivers indigenes. If we forget our past, it will surely come back to haunt us, and that with dire consequences.

We must call on President Jonathan to act as a father which he is, in these whole crises. He must remember that the path of the South-South people to the presidency was wholly divine and so should act with that in mind. Some unpresidential acts have been recorded in this matter of Rivers State. For a start, the silence of the presidency has given room for gossip, suspicion and finger-pointing. It reminds one of Emperor Nero playing the flute while Rome burnt. If his aides are not acting out his script against Governor Amaechi as is being claimed, then he should speak out and save his integrity. Again, the role of the presidency in the ill-fated Governors' Forum election, in which 16 votes were adjudged greater than 19 votes (if the mass media are to be believed), certainly dents the image of the presidency. Again, a situation where 5 lawmakers out of 32 could be adjudged a quorum to impeach the speaker is at best an example of Nigerian-grown mathematics, which we must call Political Mathematics. How restless and uneasy Pythagoras and his group must be in their graves! This is a recipe for anarchy. President Jonathan should quickly call all parties to the peace table. In a normal family, you cannot expect all your children to behave in the same way; at the same time, you cannot disown a child because you consider him disloyal. The good of the family must supersede all personal goals.

We call on Governor Amaechi, Chief Wike, their individual advisers and supporters to seek the path of peace. Governor Amaechi has done so much for Rivers State and his legacy cannot be removed, even if he leaves office today. Both men (Amaechi and Wike) should not allow external forces or selfish advisers to rubbish this legacy. Dialogue, more than this unending stalemate, will achieve more for us as a people in desperate need of more development. We call on our royal fathers to eschew their current role of taking sides in this conflict. They must recall the result of their similar roles in the Ogoni crises of a few years ago. Who lost? Rivers State! Their duty is to bring peace and not to take sides and make unguarded utterances that heat up the polity. They must remember that a word from them can set the state on fire, but when such fire ignites, even they themselves are not safe. Finally, on this matter, our youths should avoid being used as cannon fodder by any party. They must not allow themselves to be used to settle personal scores. One question they must address is this: as they march the streets either in solidarity or otherwise, can they identify any son or daughter of the feuding parties among them? A word should be enough for them.

#### ASUU, THE NATIONAL STRIKE AND THE FUTURE OF OUR YOUTHS

Here we go again, another round of strike. First, it was ASUP, now ASUU and NUPENG threatening. The picture strikes gloom in our minds. That strike actions have become a 'given' in our national lives is frightening. It has become so normal that now students can spend several semesters at home and those who are in charge would go on as if nothing was amiss. The Academic Staff Union of Universities, ASUU, which came on stream in 1978, has embarked on several strikes, thus: 1988, (which led to the ban of the body which was lifted in 1990), May 1992 which lasted till 3<sup>rd</sup> September, 1992; May 3, 1993; July 25, 1994 (21 days warning strike); August 13, 1994; April 1996; 2007; 26<sup>th</sup> June, 2009; and the current strike which the body has declared is to last for 99 days. According to ASUU, these strikes would have been avoided if our leaders had put the interest of our youths first before every other interest. The genesis of this chain of strikes is the indifferent attitude which our leaders exhibit towards our educational system. If this is not so, how can the federal

government allow ASUU to embark on a strike at this time in our history over non implementation of an agreement signed by both parties in 2009, a whole 5 years after?

Do we need a strike now when

- none of our universities has an international reputation for its research?
- none of our universities has an international reputation for teaching,
- none of our universities can boast of a number of stars and world class leaders in their fields,
- none of our universities is seriously recognized, either by any other international university or outside the world of higher education,
- none of our universities has any appreciable number of world-standard departments
- none of our universities identifies and builds on its research strengths and has distinctive reputation and focus,
- none of our universities produces ground-breaking research output recognized by peers and prizes,
- none of our universities attracts the most able students and produces the best graduates or can attract and retain the best staff
- None of our universities has a sound financial base or can boast of any form of modern infrastructure or equipment?

At present, which of our Nigerian universities can boast of a Nobel Laureate when a single university like Harvard can boast of more than 300? As a matter of fact, it is now strange to see an academic of African origin on a permanent teaching appointment in any Nigerian university. What a shame!

We call on the Federal government to quickly resolve its differences with its teachers in higher institutions. What is at stake here is not who will blink first but what will happen to the certificate we issue our youths in future. We wonder how the federal government will enter into an agreement and deliberately refuse to implement same, 5 years after. We also enjoin our esteemed academics not to destroy the house they are striving to build. In their bid to ensure that our universities of learning do not die, they should not do anything to keep our children at home for long, such that we have them spending 12 years for a 4-year course and graduate at an age their mates in the civilized world are retiring from active service. They should ensure their modus operandi does not make the citizenry think the struggle is all for personal aggrandizement.

#### THE STATE OF EMERGENCY IN THE NORTHERN STATES

The declaration of state of emergency in the 3 northern states of Yobe, Borno and Adamawa was long overdue. The activities of *Boko Haram* has continued till today because of 2 factors – the connivance of highly placed individuals who arm these terrorists and come out in the open to pay lip service in condemning the mayhem unleashed on innocent citizens in their own land by these blood thirsty religious miscreants. The 2<sup>nd</sup> factor is the seeming indecisiveness of the federal government in putting an end to this evil menace. We do not believe that any section of this nation can withstand the federal might. The drive to secure political survival in forthcoming elections is not enough reason for the federal government to turn a blind eye while helpless citizens are slaughtered in their numbers, just because it does not want to antagonize a section of the country.

Again, we call on the Presidency to be bold enough to prosecute any political or religious leader indicted or connected with the activities of this cult. Political leaders in the north cannot reasonably convince even themselves that the members of this cult are ghosts who cannot be identified. This is the time for northern religious leaders and clerics to come out to condemn in unequivocal terms the actions of these evil men if they want us to believe that they are not giving tacit endorsement to their actions. We wonder which God would teach men to destroy other men created by Him in the name of religion. Recently, hundreds of innocent students were lined up like animals and shot dead in their hostels in a secondary school in one of the northern states and all we got are assurances that the authorities are on top of the matter. How does this pacify grieving parents? What we need is the political will-power to act decisively, not press statements. We should not forget that the Nigerian civil war which has left indelible marks on the psyche of the Nigerian people started with such activities as we are witnessing today. Can we afford another war all in the name of winning votes in forthcoming elections? The time to act is now. The state of emergency should not end in window dressing. Every avenue, including the bogus amnesty programme and even force should be explored. No sect in this country should be allowed to hold the future of our unity to ransom.

In like manner, we must point out that the activities of Hausa/Fulani herdsmen is becoming worrisome to say the least. How long can we condone having our own citizens roasted like common chicken in their own homes at night by these blood-thirsty miscreants, and most of it in areas populated by northern Christians, for whatever reason? What are the governors doing or is it a case of religious cleansing in a different guise? Why is it that no matter how long these attacks last, some in broad daylight, the Nigerian army and other security personnel will only arrive hours after whole villages have been razed down and the perpetrators safely gone? For how long will children be slaughtered while their parents are forced to watch and later killed? Since the governors in whose domain these wicked acts are committed seem to be too busy to notice and since it seems that security personnel over there are clueless as to what to do, we call on the federal government and the military authorities to consider stricter security measures including moving troops down south to the north and even prosecuting publicly security agents and politicians found culpable. We call on northern religious clerics to call these men to order, and quickly too, or are they not the same men who congregate in the mosques every Friday? No one has a monopoly of violence.

### **33. CONGRATULATIONS**

On behalf of the Diocese, we congratulate the following:

- ❖ Most Rev. Ignatius C. O. Kattey, JP our Niger Delta Provincial Archbishop on his appointment by the Primate and Presentation as the New Dean of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion).
- ❖ Hon. Sir Justice Iche Nwenenda Ndu on the occasion of his coming disengagement (retirement) as the Chief Judge of Rivers State.
- ❖ Rev. Chukwuemeka Samuel Udeh and his wife, Divine on their wedding earlier in the year.

- ❖ Rev. Ebenezer Owzor and his wife, Chinyere on their wedding in May this year.
- ❖ Ven. Chidi Worgu & his wife Happiness on the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of their marriage and priesthood ordination.
- ❖ Bro. Chibuzor Chukwuemeka and his wife, Ibelema (our Diocesan Accounts Officer) on their recent wedding.
- ❖ All families whose children were joined in Holy Matrimony during the year.

### **34. OUR JOYS**

We thank the Lord and rejoice with the following persons whom God blessed with new babies during the year:

- Rt. Rev. & Mrs. Marcus A. Ibrahim, Bishop of Yola after 26 years of marriage.
- Rt. Rev. & Mrs. Duke Akamisoko, Bishop of Kubwa Diocese for their twin babies
- Rev. & Mrs. Godfrey Onyemelukwe
- Mr. & Mrs. Innocent H. Kasarachi
- Ven. & Mrs. Chidi S. Worgu
- Rev. Canon & Mrs. Charles Mordi
- Rev. & Mrs. John Nkuene
- Church Teacher & Mrs. Moses Anyatonwu
- Church Teacher & Mrs. Frankincense Chukwuma
- Barr. & Mrs. Chimezie Otuonye
- Rev. & Mrs. Bright Welekwe
- Ordinand Theophilus Chukwudi
- Church Teacher & Mrs. Anointed Onyeme
- Church Teacher & Mrs. Joseph Asonye

### **35. OUR CONDOLENCES**

We commiserate with the following on the death of their loved ones:

- The Primate of All Nigeria, The Most Rev. Nicholas Okoh on the death of his mother, Madam Sarah Okoh,
- The family of the late Archbishop and former Primate of All Nigeria, The Most Rev. Joseph Abiodun Adetiloye on his death,
- The Rt. Rev. Christian Ugwuzor, Bishop, Diocese of Aba on the death of his wife, Mgbechi Akudo,
- Rev. Samuel John Ejekwu on the death of his mother,
- Mrs. Ijeoma Kemakolam on the death of her mother,
- Mrs. Caroline Chinda on the death of her mother, Mrs. Gladys Wodi,
- St. Andrew's, Rumuobiokani Deanery and the families of the late Capt. Sampson Edward Kofi, (our Diocesan Anglican Communion Brigade

Coordinator), and Mrs. Glory Okereke on the death of these two members of the church during the Synod year.

- St. Michaels', Rumuomasi Deanery and the families of Mrs. Emilia Olorunloju and Mrs. Justina Adele on the death of these two children teachers.
- The family of Sir Silas Nnodi on the death of their mother aged 105 years, Madam Mabel Werigwara Nnodi (Mama Rumuewhara).
- The family of Elder Collins Amaewhule, JP and Church of the Holy Spirit, Elioza Parish on the death of their wife, mother and Parishioner, Evangelist Mrs. Edna Amaewhule.
- Dame Priscilla Nosiri, our Diocesan Widows Coordinator on the death of her father.

May The Lord minister peace, comfort and the consolation of the Holy Spirit to the hearts of these and many other bereaved members and families of our Diocese, in Jesus name – Amen.

### **36. HOSTING OF SYNOD**

1. 2<sup>nd</sup> Session of our 2<sup>nd</sup> Synod, 2014 – Rumuobiokani Deanery
2. 3<sup>rd</sup> Session of our 2<sup>nd</sup> Synod, 2015 – Oginigba Deanery

We pray that the Lord will equip them adequately for this huge responsibility.

#### **DIOCESAN APPOINTMENTS**

##### **1. Diocesan Legal Officers**

*\*(Members of All Boards of the Diocese)*

- i. Registrar – Barr. Nlerum Amadi
- ii. Deputy Registrar 1 – (Lands) – Barr. Chimezie Otuonye
- iii. Deputy Registrar 2 – (Justice, Equity, Peace & Conflict Resolution) – Chief G. O. Dike
- iv. Barr. Bright Nda-Owhor – Legal Secretary

##### **2. Diocesan Financial Secretary – Ven. Sunday C. Opara**

##### **3. Bishop's Special Assistant on Administration,**

**Protocols and Ecumenical Matters** *\*(Member, All Boards of the Diocese)*  
*(To also coordinate DIVCON)* – Rev. Canon Chris Chike Chukwumati

##### **4. Diocesan Mission, Evangelism & Church Planting Board Members**

- i. Rev. Canon Charles Mordi
- ii. Rev. Kingsley Ohajianya
- iii. Evangelist Isaiah Orji
- iv. Bro. Godspower Ozomeyo
- v. Sister Joy Opiké
- vi. Mrs. Virginia Chinda
- vii. Bro. Emmanuel Legborsi
- viii. Rev. Collins Daniel
- ix. Sir Godfrey Oluabunwa

- x. Mr. Uche Ugwuja
- xi. Eunice Okeke
- xii. Mr. Isaiah Oriaku
- xiii. Mr. Christian Wilson  
*\*Committee Chairman to also serve as member of Diocesan Board, Finance Board and Synod.*

## **5. Diocesan Education Board**

- i. Lady D. Mbeledogu – Chairman  
*\*(Also member – Diocesan Board, Finance Board & Synod)*
- ii. Lady (Mrs.) Catherine Wachukwu
- iii. Mrs. Agnes Ezenta
- iv. Chief (Barr.) G. O. Dike
- v. Sir O. J. Kamalu
- vi. Ven. Sunday C. Opara
- vii. Dr. Nnamdi Ekeocha
- viii. Lady Ogechi Onwuchekwa
- ix. Ven. Fyनेface N. Akah, JP – Director of Schools
- x. The Diocesan Treasurer
- xi. Principals of All Diocesan Secondary Schools
- xii. Captain Clement Ejiofor – representing the P.T.A<sup>s</sup>
- xiii. Dr. Ephraim Elenwo

## **6. Director of Diocesan Schools – Ven. Fyनेface N. Akah, JP** *\*(Also member – Diocesan Board, Finance Board & Synod)*

## **7. Council for Clergy/Laity Continuing Education**

### ***Directors of Studies***

- i. Rev. Canon Olufemi Igbamerun
- ii. Rev. Cephas Okarefe
- iii. Sir Victor Dania

## **CHAPLAINS**

### **8. Diocesan Men's Christian Association** – Ven. Okechukwu Ow'honda

### **9. Diocesan Women & Girls' Ministries** – Rev. Canon Chimaobi D. Nwachukwu

### **10. Diocesan Youth Fellowship** – Rev. Collins Daniel

### **11. Diocesan Anglican Children's Ministry** *\*Rev. Canon Olufemi Igbamerun – Chaplain* *\*(Also member – Diocesan & Finance Boards)* Rev. Ahamefula S. Otuka – Assistant

### **12. Diocesan Council of Knights/Ladies**

– Ven. Alex Usifoh

**13. Diocesan Lay Readers' Association**

– Rev. Ahamefule Olluor

**14. Ministry to Royal Fathers, The Elderly & Retired Clergy**

– Ven. G. B. Chinda

**15. Diocesan Adult Sunday School/Discipleship,  
Literature & Publications Ministry**

- i. Rev. Sampson O. Abada – Chaplain
- ii. Rev. Ozioma Iheanetu – Assistant
- iii. Mrs. Barinem Collins Daniel (Lay Assistant)

**16. Family Life & Home Fellowship Ministries**

- Ven. Akuro Omubor – Chaplain
- Mrs. Ijeoma Anagbogu – Coordinator
- Mr. Godwin Chinda
- Mrs. Mercy Dienye } Assistants

**17. Diocesan Ministry to NYSC Members**

Rev. Gospel Onuchukwu

**18. Diocesan Prayer Ministry**

- i. Rev. Kingsley Ohajianya – Chaplain
- ii. Rev. Samuel Udeh – Assistant

**19. Diocesan Music Ministry**

- i. Chaplain – Rev. Canon Ike G. Anene
- ii. Diocesan Organist/Choirmaster – Mr. Idala Fila

**20. Diocesan Guild of Stewards**

– Rev. Chukwuemeka Okonkwo

**21. Diocesan Sports Ministry**

- i. Rev. Chukwuma Anukem – Chaplain
- ii. Rev. Samuel Fedigha – Assistant

**22. Diocesan Anglican Communion Boys & Girls' Brigade**

– Rev. Moses Anyaefena

**23. Bishop's Stand-in Chaplain to the Obio/Akpor**

**Battalion Council of the Boys Brigade** – Rev. Samuel Gabriel.

**24. Diocesan Industrial Chaplaincy**

- i. Rev. Ugochukwu L. Nwaghagi – Chaplain
- ii. Ord. Chukwudi Theophilus – Assistant



**25. Clergy & Church Workers Children's Ministry**

Mrs. Oluwaseun Ijaware – Coordinator *\*(Also a Synod Delegate)*  
Rev. Anderson Owbor – Chaplain

**26. Diocesan Schools' Chaplaincy**

- i. BCMSS Rumuobiokani – Rev. Ozioma Iheanetu
- ii. ACMGS Elelenwo – Rev. Kingsley Ohajianya
- iii. WTWO Group of Schools – Rev. Raymond Osakwe

**27. Diocesan Schools' Choirs**

Rev. Samuel Obialor – Chaplain  
Mr. Amoson Ijah – Assistant

**28. Evo Public/Private Schools Chaplaincy**

- i. Rev. Cephas Okarefe – Chaplain
- ii. Rev. John Chinda – Assistant

**29. Diocesan Desk Officer/Member, Provincial & C.o.N. Dept of Justice, Equity, Peace and Conflict Resolution – Chief (Barr.) G. O. Dike**

*\*(Also member – Diocesan Board & Synod)*

**30. Director, Diocesan Logistics**

Mr. John Okene

*\*(Also member – All Boards & Synod of the Diocese)*

**31. Diocesan Architects**

- i. Sir O. C. Chukwu
  - ii. Arch. Chiedozie Okoroafor
- \*(Also members – Diocesan Board & Synod)*

**32. Diocesan Surveyor – Surveyor Gaius Assor**

*\*(Also member – Diocesan Board & Synod)*

**33. Diocesan Communicator – Mr. Charles Daniels**

*\*(Also member – Diocesan Board & Synod)*

**34. Diocesan Directorate of Civic & Political Affairs**

- i. Rev. Canon Chuka Opara – Chairman,  
*\*(Also member – Diocesan Board)*
- ii. Barr. Richard E. G. Chinda
- iii. Barr. Bright Nda-Owbor

**35. Directorate of Social Welfare**

*(Hospital/Prisons Ministry, HIV/Aids, Widows and other Welfare Matters)*

- i. Mrs. Sylverline Majebi – Chairperson.  
*\*(Also member – Diocesan Board, Finance Board, & Synod)*
- ii. Sir G. C. Orianwo - Diocesan Representative at Provincial  
Committee on Social Welfare
- iii. Mr. Bright Chuku, JP
- iv. Pharm. Ijeoma G. Ewurum

- v. Mrs. Ngozi Ibeawuchi
- vi. Barr. Christiana Uche
- vii. Rev. Ebenezer Owzor – Chaplain

## **BISHOP'S ADVISERS**

- 36. Adviser to the Bishop on Governmental Affairs –**  
Sir Chief Ike B. S. Chinwo  
*\*(Also member – Diocesan Board & Synod)*
- 37. Adviser to the Bishop on Missions & Evangelism**  
Sir G. N. Ohuabunwa *\*(Also member – Diocesan Board & Synod)*
- 38. Adviser to the Bishop on Finance & Budget Matters**  
Mrs. Agnes Ezenta  
*\*(Also member – Diocesan Board, Finance Board & Synod)*
- 38. Adviser to the Bishop on Community Relations**  
– Sir Silas Nnodi *\*(Also member – Diocesan Board & Synod)*
- 39. Adviser to the Bishop on Youth Affairs/Member, Provincial Committee –** Sir O. J. Kamalu  
*\*(Also member – Diocesan Board & Synod)*
- 40. Adviser to the Bishop on Inter Diocesan Co-operation/member, Diocesan Committee –** Mr. Gilbert Chuku  
*\*(Also member – Diocesan Board & Synod)*
- 41. Advisers to the Bishop on Economic Empowerment**
  - i. Sir Chijioke Tasie
  - ii. Dame Priscilla Nosiri (Diocesan Representative at the Provincial Committee on Economic Empowerment)  
*\*(Both Advisers to serve also as members of Diocesan Board, Finance Board & Synod)*
- 42. Adviser to the Bishop on Historical Artefacts (Archives)/Member Provincial Committee –** Chief G. I. Ebenezer  
*\*(Also member – Diocesan Board & Synod)*
- 43. Adviser to the Bishop on Investments –** Sir Francis Mbeledogu  
*\*(Also member – Diocesan Board, Finance Board & Synod)*
- 44. Adviser to the Bishop on Security Matters –** Captain Clement Ejiofor  
*\*(Also member – Diocesan Board & Synod)*
- 45. Adviser to the Bishop on Media Matters/Press Secretary**  
Mr. Innocent Kasarachi  
*\*(Also member – Diocesan Board & Synod)*
- 46. Diocesan Medical Advisers**
  - i. Lady Ndidi Utchay
  - ii. Dr. Mrs. Atemie Lolomari

- iii. Dr. Bright Amadi  
*\*(Also members – Diocesan Board & Synod)*

**47. Diocesan Projects Committee**

***Members***

- i. Engr. Sunny Worlu
  - ii. Engr. Ben Alalibo
  - iii. Archt. Charles Chuku
  - iv. Engr. Somto Mbamalu
  - v. Engr. Benjamin Uduh
  - vi. Sir P. W. O. Owhor
  - vii. Engr. Geoffery C. Ikenga
  - viii. Chief Chekwas Nnata
  - ix. Mr. Lawrence Chinda
  - x. Mr. Alex Olurotimi Gabriel
  - xi. Mr. Kenneth Oparati
- \*Committee Chairman to also serve as member of Diocesan Board, Finance Board and Synod.*

**48. Diocesan Harvest Committee**

- i. Ven. Alex Usifoh – Chairman
- ii. Sir Chikeze Obi
- iii. Eze Sir John Okpobiri
- iv. Sir Eyioma Ohuoha
- v. Ms. Patience Chinwo
- vi. Mrs. Sharon Chinwo
- vii. Mrs. Oris Gaius Assor
- viii. Mr. Franklin Dike
- ix. Mrs. Edith Ordu
- x. Lady Prisca Worlu
- xi. Mr. Emma Iheidioha
- xii. Representatives of DMCA, MU/WG, AYF, Council of Knights & Lay Readers

**49. Bishop's Commissary (Abuja)**

Sir Enyindah Owabie

**50. Bishop's Commissary (Lagos)**

Mr. Okechukwu Nyeche *(Also member – Diocesan Board & Synod)*

**51. Bishop's Commissary (UK)**

Rev. Emeka Ejinkonye

**52. Diocesan Printing Press Management & Advisory Committee**

- i. Mr. Abie Brown – Chairman  
*\*(Also member –Diocesan Board, Finance Board & Synod)*
- ii. Mr. Gershon Amaewhule
- iii. Mr. Gabriel Amadi
- iv. Lady Lale Aminobiren
- v. Rev. Hosanna Naenwi – Superintendent  
*\*(Also member –Diocesan & Finance Boards)*

### **53. Task Force on the Enforcement of and Compliance with Diocesan Policies and Regulations.**

- i. Mr. Paul Chukwumati *\*(Also member – Diocesan Board & Synod)*
- ii. Capt. Clement Ejiofor
- iii. Mr. John Okene
- iv. Mrs. Augusta Wihika
- v. Sgt. Clement Amadi

These appointments are a call to service. We encourage all those (Clergy and laity) who have just received this privilege to give their **full commitment** to the task of their various assignments. We shall definitely not allow anyone who is slow or shows signs of unwillingness to perform (as we had previously observed) to hold us to ransom anymore. There are many willing hands out there waiting for this type of opportunity to express their love to God through earnest service to His Church. We shall therefore not hesitate to replace any appointed officer whose performance falls short of our expectation.

#### **Our Synod Election**

As we elect officers today to run the affairs of the Diocese with the Bishop for the next three years, we advise everyone to cooperate with the Holy Spirit and ensure that they are not used by our adversary, the devil to bring to office persons who do not have the mandate of God to occupy any leadership position in the Diocese. We need effective, God-fearing, purpose-driven men/women, good team players who have regard for speed and good finishing as officers of the Diocese. Our strong conviction is that all those who have by word or through their body language campaigned to anyone before and in the course of this Synod to be nominated and voted for in today's election have actually disqualified themselves and should therefore not be so honoured. Let us go about today's exercise prayerfully and allow God choose His own men/women.

### **CONCLUSION**

We count ourselves highly privileged by God to be your Bishop, an honour He could have readily extended to any other person.

It has been by His grace that we have so far carried on with the enormous duties of this office. As we mark our four years of existence as a Diocese and We in office as Bishop; and considering how God has faithfully helped us through the smooth and rough times, we are careful to offer unto Him blessing and honour, thanksgiving and praise, more than we can utter.

We have purposed in our heart to use this office primarily to honour God; to promote the cause of His kingdom on earth through diligent and committed service to His Bride, the Church. By His grace, and with the continuous help of the Holy Spirit, your unceasing prayers and support for us we shall endeavour to lead by both word and example. It is our prayer that each and every one of us, leaders and members, be

enabled and as well, be willing to do those things that will be pleasing in the sight of the Almighty God.

May the Lord remove from us all that hinders His divine purposes; establish among us love, peace and concord; continually kindle His flame upon our worship, our work, and our witness; and make us a people single and strong in faith.

We appreciate your patience in sitting and listening to this address/charge.

*To the only wise God our Saviour  
Be glory and majesty, dominion  
And power, both now and ever.  
Amen!*

Thank you.

✦ Innocent, Evo  
August 3, 2013.

## ***References***

(The section of this address that dwelt on the theme of the Synod drew largely from the sources below):

- i. *The Thompson Chain – Reference Bible (Fifth Improved Edition)*
- ii. *Chicken Soup for the Soul Bible*
- iii. *The Woman's Study Bible: Perspectives by*
  - Dee Brestin & Kathy Troccoli
  - Stormie Omartian
  - Nancy Leigh DeMoss
- iv. *Basic Bible Doctrines by Millard F. Day*
- v. *Willimington's Guide to the Bible by Dr. H. L. Willmington.*
- vi. *The two Kingdoms by Lim Kou*

- vii. *The Shepherd's Staff, edited by Ralph Mahoney.*
- viii. *Shepherding The Flock: A collection of Resources for pastors by Radio Bible Class Ministries.*
- ix. *The Complete Christian Dictionary for Home & School by the International Bible Society.*

## **APPENDIX 01**



## THE CHURCH OF NIGERIA (Anglican Communion)

**THE MOST REVD. NICHOLAS D. OKOH**  
Archbishop, Metropolitan and Primate of All Nigeria

June 20, 2012

**Rt. Rev. Innocent Ordu**  
Anglican Diocese of Edo  
All Saints' Cathedral, Rumuokwurusu  
Port Harcourt  
Rivers State.

My Lord,

### LETTER OF COMMENDATION

Grace, peace and love from our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ be unto you. Amen.

I have the mandate of the Primate of our Church, His Grace, The Most Rev. Nicholas D. Okoh to convey to you, and through you to the good people of the Diocese of Edo, the profound gratitude of the entire Church of Nigeria for the handsome returns made by your Diocese in this year's St. Matthias Day Contributions. That you not only mobilized the Church of God under your care to participate actively in this exercise, but also displayed a high degree of faithfulness, commitment and integrity by promptly remitting all the proceeds is worthy of great commendation which this letter conveys.

We are pleased by the exemplary role you are playing towards the stability of our national Church and the growth of evangelism in every corner of our land and beyond. Be assured of our continued prayers for the grace and strength to even do more in the years ahead.

This comes with the assurances of our love and highest considerations.

Sincerely,

**+David O.C. Onuoha**  
Episcopal Secretary





## THE CHURCH OF NIGERIA (Anglican Communion)

**THE MOST REVD. NICHOLAS D. OKOH**  
*Archbishop, Metropolitan and Primate of All Nigeria*

### **COMMUNIQUÉ FROM THE STANDING COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE CHURCH OF NIGERIA (ANGLICAN COMMUNION) HELD FROM 11 - 15 SEPTEMBER, 2012 AT THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF EMMANUEL, ADO-EKITI, EKITI STATE**

#### **1. Introduction**

The Standing Committee of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) under the protection and guidance of the Holy Spirit, and the leadership of the Most Revd Nicholas D. Okoh, Archbishop, Metropolitan and Primate of All Nigeria with his wife Mrs. Nkasiobi Okoh, President of the Women and Girl's Organisations, met at the Cathedral Church of Emmanuel, Ado-Ekiti, Ekiti State, from September 11 - 15, 2012. One hundred and sixty four bishops, one hundred and thirty seven clergymen and ninety members of the house of laity were present. The Rt. Revd C.T. Omotunde, Bishop of the Diocese of Ekiti welcomed the delegates. His Excellency, Dr. Kayode Fayemi, Governor of Ekiti State and his wife attended and gave a goodwill message.

The theme of the meeting was 'Resist the Devil and He will flee from you' (James 4:7), and at the conclusion, the Standing Committee issued this Communiqué:

#### **2. Stand Firm and Resist the Devil's Works**

The Apostles confronted powerful demonic forces. They lost everything and many were jailed for their faithful witness to Christ in the face of brutal enemies. They were despised by their old associates and often feared by their new friends. St. Paul sought to encourage the fledgling communities of faith that he had helped birth and he painted a picture that has encouraged Christians for two millennia. He reminded them to be strong in the Lord and put on the whole armour of God and having done all to stand firm. He is a wonderful testimony and encouragement for the many Nigerian Christians, especially those in the north, who have lost everything in recent months. St. James also reminded all believers that the battle with the Evil One is one that we must all confront, not in our own strength, but in the power that God alone provides.

We remind everyone that the Evil One operates in every aspect of life without regard for geography, status, economics or ethnicity and we urge all to avoid the devil's schemes by rejecting all idolatry, impurity, immorality and corruption that provide fertile ground for his destructive ways. It is only through righteous living, persistent prayer and careful attention to the Word of God that we can guard our lives and country.

#### **3. Concerns about National Security**

The scourge of violence and criminality continues to bedevil much of our nation. Horrific incidents of wanton destruction and brutal murder are part of everyday life for too many of our citizens and this is having a disastrous effect upon the life of our nation and the church. While patience has been urged we believe that the time for



decisive action is long overdue! We call on the Federal Government to ensure that every Nigerian is safe wherever he or she chooses to reside and pursue a legitimate career. It is therefore extremely important and of extreme urgency for the activities of Boko Haram to be brought to an end in the interest of our corporate existence as a nation.

**4. Religious Discrimination and Intolerance**

Standing Committee observed regrettably that while all Nigerians, whether northerner, Christians, Muslims, animists are safe and free to live and worship in southern part of the country; this cannot be said of Christians in the core north. Even in Federal Universities Christians are denied lands for building places of worship. And Boko Haram activities have increasingly made life and expression of Christian Faith extremely difficult in the core north. Standing Committee observed that a situation where one receives, but refuses to give, is a poor sense of charity, and certainly does not encourage unity and national integration and calls on Government to redress this situation.

**5. ₦5,000 Note!**

Standing Committee could not see any obvious economic advantage and compelling necessity for the CBN new currency note, even after perusing its many advertorial intended to educate. Whether it is being printed abroad or locally, it is certainly a commodity with low demand! Standing Committee appeals to Mr. President to prevail on the CBN to halt the grandiose project, and redirect the intended fund for its production to something more rewarding to the poor

**6. Concern about the Proposed Fulani Commission Bill**

The Standing Committee noted that the proposed Bill for Fulani Commission if enacted will be a recipe for endless crises throughout much of our nation. It is clearly an attempt to place the concerns of one ethnic group above all others and will further threaten the unity of our dear country. We therefore call on the National Assembly, the concerned State governments and the civil society to reject the bill. To keep their profession and ancestral pastoral heritage, we encourage the Fulanis to establish permanent ranches in their home states and embrace improved methods of animal husbandry. The advantages of the ranch system over the nomadic are overwhelming.

**7. Concern for the Poor**

The Standing Committee noted that a high percentage of Nigerians are living below the poverty line. Our LORD Jesus Christ addressed the total man and took a preferential option for the poor. Consequently we call on the government at all levels to address the issue of poverty and unemployment so that all Nigerians can benefit from the dividends of democracy.

**8. Divine Commonwealth Conference (DIVCCON)**

The Standing Committee was grateful for the initiative that led to the Divine Commonwealth Conference held in Abuja in November 2011. We believe that this conference was an important demonstration of our desire to engage in the complex issues confronting Nigeria from the standpoint of Biblical truth and Christian faith. We were encouraged by the overwhelming response to the conference, the powerful blessing that resulted and support the plan to make this an annual gift to our nation.

We are therefore delighted to announce and commend the second DIVCCON that will be held from November 5<sup>th</sup> through 10<sup>th</sup>, 2012 at the Christian Centre in Abuja.

**9. Renewed Commitment for Ministry among the Youth**

The Standing Committee joyfully acknowledges that we have been commissioned to “go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:18-20). We believe that we have a particular responsibility to the youth of our nation and have restructured our youth ministry to more effectively engage them with the claims of the Gospel. We believe that this offers the best hope for the future of our nation and indeed of our world. We therefore recommit ourselves to the work of grace-filled evangelism among the youth assured of God’s favour if we obey God’s call.

**11. Call for Prayer and Fasting**

In line with identified weapons of resistance to the Devil, Standing Committee summons all Christians, particularly all Anglicans, to observe Monday 12<sup>th</sup> – Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> November, 2012 for prayer and fasting on:

- a) National security challenges;
- b) For Mr. President, family and Cabinet;
- c) The church under siege in the North;
- d) Pulling down of all strongholds against the Church;
- e) Economic prosperity for our country.

**12. Conclusion**

These are critical times for our nation – disaster looms large! – but we serve a God who specializes in turning disasters into celebrations. He took the destructive evil actions that led to the Cross of Calvary and turned them into the glorious celebration of Easter Day. He has taken the broken lives of men and women throughout the world and turned them into beautiful testimonies. We believe that God is still very much in control of this world and our nation and we invite all people in every part of our country to turn to him and renounce the works of the devil. In so doing we are confident that we will have a certain hope and a glorious future.

*“God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you (James 4:6,7).*



**The Most Revd Nicholas D. Okoh**  
Primate of All Nigeria



## APPENDIX 03



### THE CHURCH OF NIGERIA

(Anglican Communion)

THE MOST REVD. NICHOLAS D. OKOH  
Archbishop, Metropolitan and Primate of All Nigeria

#### PASTORAL LETTER FROM THE STANDING COMMITTEE OF THE CHURCH OF NIGERIA (ANGLICAN COMMUNION) HELD AT THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF EMMANUEL, OKESA, ADO-EKITI IN THE DIOCESE OF EKITI FROM 11<sup>TH</sup> -15<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER, 2012

My dear people of God,

Grace, peace and love from our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ be multiplied unto you. Amen.

The Standing Committee of our Church met under the protection and guidance of the Almighty God at the Cathedral Church of Emmanuel, Okesa, Ado Ekiti in the Diocese of Ekiti, Ekiti State from Tuesday September 11 to Saturday 15, 2012. Our thoughts, prayers and deliberations in this gathering centered on the theme: “...*Resist the Devil and he will flee from you*” (James 4:7). From the various sermons, Bible studies and other presentations, we were again reminded through the power of the Holy Spirit that the devil is not necessarily that ugly and funny creature as presented in films, drawings and paintings, neither does it dwell on top of trees, valleys nor in obscure and dark places of our world. He is a very strong spiritual being who is present in homes, offices, places of worship, schools and indeed everywhere man is found.

May we once again remind you that since the beginning, the devil has had only one mission, which is “to steal and to kill and to destroy”<sup>1</sup>. His main strategy is to corrupt the mind and pre-dispose it to wicked manipulations. Like a roaring lion<sup>2</sup>, he prowls around today through the negative use of various means like music and entertainment, the internet, sports, false doctrines and theologies, some modes of dressing, children’s toys and perverted sexualities like homosexuality, lesbianism, bestiality, etc. We must, therefore, heed the biblical injunction to resist it. We must not give in to its antics and dictates.

It is very reassuring to know that because the Lord Jesus decisively defeated him on the Cross of Calvary, all those who are in Christ in every age and time are more than conquerors. In the fierce struggle with the powers of evil and darkness, only divine weapons can destroy the enemy’s strongholds. Consequently we need to put on the whole armour of God<sup>3</sup>, building resistance

<sup>1</sup> John 10:10

<sup>2</sup> 1 Pet 5:8

<sup>3</sup> Eph 6:10-18

through the power of prayer and the instrumentality of the Word of God. We need to ensure that the often polluted religious environment of our human society does not derail us. We must keep watch over and protect our children against satanic influences from and Information Communication Technology (ICT) and cultism that open the door for the devil to have a stronghold over them.

Brethren, we are aware of the attack of the devil on the Nigerian nation. The wanton destruction of lives and property through the menacing and despicable activities of the Boko Haram sect and kidnappers stare us in the face. We must not surrender to them. We must watch and pray<sup>4</sup>. There is the urgent need to pray now more than ever that this bitter cup will pass over us. Pray for our leaders especially the President Dr. Goodluck Jonathan that God will give them the grace and courage to lead this nation to overcome these challenges. We urge you to ensure that our earlier call for the provision of security in and around our places of worship is not overlooked.

The present security challenge in our nation has led to brutal killing of helpless citizens especially women and children bringing untold hardship to a great number of our brethren especially in the northern part of the country. We need to identify with them. Please, do all you can to support the Relief Fund Initiative of our Church.

We are encouraged by your contributions to the St. Mathias' Day's collections. These have in no small measure provided assistance to our brethren in dioceses facing enormous Mission challenges in their work. We urge for more faithfulness and commitment in subsequent exercises.

It will gladden your hearts to know that our proposed television station will come on air on or before January 2013. The Church of Nigeria Anglican Communion (CONAC) Cable Network will greatly assist our Church in meeting the contemporary challenges of evangelism. Please pray for its success.

We congratulate the Anglican Youth Fellowship of our Church on a very successful national conference in August this year. May we also remind you of our earlier directive that any one above the age of 40 years are expected to have graduated from this body. A new organization is being arranged to accommodate this category of graduands who want to further their Christian witnessing along this line. We appreciate the services of the EFAC and the Anglican Children's Ministry and also congratulate them on their successful conventions within the year.

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<sup>4</sup> Mt. 26:41; I Thes 4:17

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The 2<sup>nd</sup> Divine Commonwealth Conference (DIVCCON) comes up at the National Christian Centre, Abuja from 5<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> November, 2012. Kindly work and pray for its success by registering now.

We urge you all to strive very hard to work together as brothers and sisters to promote unity, peace and love for the progress our church. Those things that unite us should always be emphasized and upheld.

Beloved in the Lord, the efforts of our brethren in the Diocese of Ekiti in ensuring our comfort and wellbeing all through the period are exemplary. Both the government of Ekiti state and the traditional institutions worked very hard to make this meeting successful. May their labours of love ascend the throne of grace as a sweet smelling sacrifice. May the Lord remember this and cause this blessing to be upon them all. Amen.

In our onward march as children of God in this world corrupted by sin, we admonish you with the words of Apostle Peter:

*Be sober, be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion seeking one to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experience of suffering is required of your brotherhood throughout the world. And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all Grace, who has called you to His Eternal Glory in Christ, will Himself restore, establish and strengthen you.<sup>5</sup>*

May the peace of the Lord be always with you all. Amen.

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14<sup>th</sup> Sept 12.

The Most Revd Nicholas D. Okoh  
Primate of All Nigeria

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<sup>5</sup>. 1 Pet 5:8-10



## APPENDIX 04



### THE CHURCH OF NIGERIA

*(Anglican Communion)*

THE MOST REV NICHOLAS D. OKOH

Archbishop, Metropolitan and Primate of All Nigeria.

### COMMUNIQUÉ FROM THE STANDING COMMITTEE MEETING

#### OF THE CHURCH OF NIGERIA (ANGLICAN COMMUNION)

HELD FROM 5 - 9 FEBRUARY, 2013

AT OUR SAVIOUR'S CHURCH, G.R.A. BENIN EDO STATE

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

The Standing Committee of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the leadership of the Most Rev. Nicholas D. Okoh, Archbishop, Metropolitan and Primate of All Nigeria with his wife Mrs. Nkasiobi Okoh, President of the Women and Girls' Organisations, met at Our Saviour's Church, G.R.A., Benin City from February 5-9, 2013. One hundred and thirty five bishops, one hundred and forty eight clergymen and eighty members of the house of laity were present.

Goodwill messages were received from His Excellency Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, GCFR, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, represented by His Excellency, Comrade Adams Oshiomole, Governor of Edo State; the Most Revd. Peter J. Akinola, retired Primate of the Church of Nigeria, the Honourable Justice C.O. Idahosa, the Chief Judge of Edo State; the Oba of Benin Kingdom; Brigadier General Dr. B.O. Aisien, KSC, the President General of the Joint Council of Knights and Chief Gabriel Igbinedion, Esama of Benin. The Most Rev'd Friday Imaekhai, Archbishop of Bendel Province and the Rt. Rev'd Peter Imasuen; Bishop of the Diocese of Benin welcomed the delegates.

The theme of the meeting was "Overcoming the Challenges of the Time."<sup>1</sup> At the conclusion, the Standing Committee issued this Communiqué:

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<sup>1</sup> *"To the angel of the church in Smyrna write: These are the words of him who is the First and the Last, who died and came to life again. 9 I know your afflictions and your poverty — yet you are rich! I know the slander of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. 10 Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for ten days. Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life. 11 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes will not be hurt at all by the second death. (Revelation 2:8-11)*

## **2. OVERCOMING THE CHALLENGES OF OUR TIMES**

Throughout the history of Christianity, the Church has encountered many challenges against her historic faith. She has suffered persecution and is being attacked by those who are in opposition to the Good News of Christ. These circumstances have provided Christians with the choice to remain faithful to Christ 'no matter the cost'.

The Standing Committee is very much aware of the global challenges of secularism and relativism that are also very present in Nigeria. We know well that the struggle between good and evil will only intensify, but the Church will never surrender to these growing pressures.

Jesus Christ is the Alpha and the Omega, the 'First and the Last'.<sup>2</sup> He knows our past; He is with us in the present and has gone ahead to the future. As the pre-existent one, the eternal God, who creates and orders the course of history, who rules in the affairs of human beings; He is the Champion of the Christians at Smyrna. Therefore, we shall overcome.

In particular, we shall overcome the continued terror attack and kidnapping going on against innocent Christians and their churches and Nigerians in general. We shall overcome the widespread corruption across our Nation. We shall overcome the social malaise of unemployment and general poverty in the country. We shall overcome many hiccups in our party politics. We shall overcome the surging assault on biblical marriage from the western world and their allies and we shall overcome the spiritual attacks from the enemy of our souls. "Certainly, in all these things, we are more than conquerors."<sup>3</sup>

## **3. CONCERNS ABOUT NATIONAL SECURITY**

The Church commends the security agencies for improvement in the security situation in the country. We, however, advise that government should take pre-cautionary approach over the call for negotiation with the Boko Haram terrorists group. One would have loved to see a situation where ceasefire and renunciation of their goal of Islamizing Nigeria by force, precede any form of negotiation. We observe also the continuing silent killings of Christians in their homes, continued kidnappings and the incessant Fulani-Indigene clashes across the country. Clearly, to continue to encourage nomadic method of animal husbandry can only worsen the security situation.

## **4. POLICE PENSION FUNDS SCAM TRIAL**

The Standing Committee condemns in the strongest of terms, the incessant breach of trust by people entrusted with public funds. It notes with great concerns the unhappy reactions of Nigerians over the outcome of the recent Police Pension Fund scam trial where the culprit escaped with punishment that is certainly not commensurate with the offence he committed. To this end, the Standing Committee calls on the National Assembly to take immediate steps to repeal the section of the E.F.C.C. Act, which provides for plea-bargaining, so that looters can receive full punishment for their crimes. Hopefully this will act as a deterrent to future looters.

## **5. CONCERN AND CARE FOR FLOOD VICTIMS**

The Church commends the Federal Government on its response to the victims of the recent major flood disaster and pleads that strict measures be applied to ensure that relief materials get to the actual victims. Also, the Church appeals to the victims as well as all those considered to be vulnerable, living along rivers and rivulets, to heed the wise counsel of government and where necessary to relocate. The Standing Committee calls for pro-active efforts on the part of government to prevent future catastrophes.

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<sup>2</sup> Revelation 1:8

<sup>3</sup> Romans 8:37

## **6. RENEWED COMMITMENT FOR POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT**

During these times of challenge the Standing Committee calls on all Anglicans and Christians in general in Nigeria, to actively participate in party politics at all levels. It is in this way, the Gospel imperatives will be brought to bear upon our national life in order to eradicate the numerous political and economic ills afflicting the country. "Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's"<sup>4</sup>

## **7. CONCERN FOR MARRIAGE AND FAMILY**

The Standing Committee reaffirms its commitment to the Biblical standard for marriage as between one man and one woman in a monogamous, life long union. The Church calls on all its members to reject the ploy of the revisionists who are trying to replace this biblical standard with their own ever-changing creations. We believe that the re-definition of marriage, both in theory and practice to accommodate same-sex marriage is unwarranted. Staying true to the biblical standard will ensure stability in our family units and give a renewed hope to our children.

## **8. CONCLUSION**

As we confront these challenging times, we do so in the sure confidence that we are not alone. Therefore, we shall overcome. "...we are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses and so we should lay aside every weight and sin which clings so closely and run with endurance that race that is set before us looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God".<sup>5</sup>



**The Most Revd Nicholas D. Okoh**

Primate of All Nigeria

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<sup>4</sup> Hebrews 12:1,2

<sup>5</sup> Luke 20:25



## APPENDIX 05



### THE CHURCH OF NIGERIA

*(Anglican Communion)*

THE MOST NICHOLAS D. OKOH

Archbishop, Metropolitan and Primate of All Nigeria.

**A PASTORAL LETTER FROM THE STANDING COMMITTEE OF THE CHURCH OF NIGERIA (ANGLICAN COMMUNION)  
MEETING AT OUR SAVIOUR'S CHURCH, G.R.A.BENIN CITY, EDO STATE, FEBRUARY 5-9, 2013**

My dear people of God,

It is with great joy we write you again after our last pastoral letter from Ado Ekiti in September 2012. Since then we have had some developments within the life and ministry of our Church.

We held a meeting of the Church of Nigeria Standing Committee in the Diocese of Benin from 5<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> February, 2013, and we were privileged to discuss a number of issues of great importance to the Church of God. The theme of the meeting "Overcoming the Challenge of our Time", afforded us the opportunity to examine at least four types of persecution that Christians may suffer in our time;

- Government Persecution
- Economic Persecution
- Religious Persecution (including persecution from within the church) , and
- Physical Persecution.

Whichever type you are experiencing now, we urge you not to fear. Our FAITH works! Remember what the Lord Jesus Christ told his disciples in Matthew 10:28 about who we should fear, "him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell".

Beloved, in these trying times, we are called upon to determine not to be intimidated, because intimidation is a weapon of Satan. We call to mind those who have suffered persecution, including Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna of blessed memory, others like Thomas Cranmer, Latimer, Ridley, Bradford, and those of our brethren who have recently been martyred in parts of northern Nigeria by the Boko Haram terrorists. In all and through all, please stand firm and know that God is "our refuge and strength, an ever present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear" (Psalm 46:1, 2) Like the Smyrna Christians , let us cast off fear, rebuff intimidation, and bravely and courageously stand to be counted for Jesus, especially in times like these.

We have noted with deep joy and do hereby appreciate your great and collective effort in making the Saint Matthias' Fund collection in 2012 the huge success it was. We have applied the money to areas of critical need in some Dioceses of our Church, and call on you to remember the third edition of this intervention Fund, which comes up on 24<sup>th</sup> February, 2013. We ask that you mobilize and give more generously.

We have also observed with great pain the unacceptable situation of heavy indebtedness of some Dioceses to their clergy. A number of dioceses have not been able to pay their clergy entitlements, and this has brought enormous hardship on them and their families. We are taking urgent steps as a Church to get into this problem with a view to providing realistic and lasting solutions, including, if necessary, some drastic measures.

In addition, there is the problem of non-patronage of devotionals produced by our Church: The Daily Fountain, Bible Study and Children's Sunday School materials. We urge you to change your attitude and patronize these publications, and equally make prompt payments for what you buy.

We are pleased to report the progress in the project CONAC CABLE NETWORK TV, for which we gratefully thank the donor of ₦250,000,000 to our Church. God willing, we hope to commission the project before June 2013. Please pray for the donor, his family, and the business from which the money has come.

The first and second editions of DIVCCON have been adjudged successful. However, we have been blessed with several critical appraisals of the programme. These benefits will be incorporated into the third edition, by way of improvement. The third edition will hold 18<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2013. Efforts are being made in search of an alternative venue. The organizing committees and sub-committees are being reorganized for better delivery. Please start now to sensitize your diocese. We will appreciate a larger turn out of the laity, and the youth.

In the same vein, GAFCON 2 will hold this year in Nairobi, Kenya from 20<sup>th</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> October 2013, and as many as 450 delegates may attend from our Church. We call on you all to assist your Dioceses to make adequate and necessary financial preparation toward this.

As you are probably aware, a new Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Revd and Rt. Hon Justin Welby has been appointed and will be enthroned on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2013 at Canterbury Cathedral, Canterbury, UK. Although we do not yet know the priorities of this new Archbishop, we call for your prayers for him to be a leader who will in our time stand up against revisionist forces and defend "the faith that was once for all delivered to the Saints".

Sadly, we hereby report the death (14<sup>th</sup> December 2012) and burial of a former Primate, the Most Reverend Joseph Abiodun Adetiloye (1988 – 1998) at Odo-Owa, Ekiti state on 25 January 2013. As the Governor of Ekiti testified of him, "He lived well, he served well, and he died well!"

We commend to you for prayers the newly appointed Dean of our Church, The Most Rev. Ignatius Kattey, Archbishop of the Niger Delta Province and the new Archbishops of the Ecclesiastical Provinces of Kebbi, Jos, Lagos, Owerri and Ibadan,

Finally, we remind you from the Scripture that in times like these you need a Saviour, the Bible, and Anchor – the Solid Rock, Jesus the Christ. With your life Anchored on the Rock, you will stand and remain secure in the midst of all the challenges of our time. Remember, nothing can separate us from the Love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Indeed “In all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us” (Romans 8:37). *Surely, we shall overcome and evil will be defeated; goodness will defeat evil; love will conquer hatred; reconciliation will conquer division, forgiveness will conquer bitterness. The spirit of peace will conquer the evil spirit of killing, maiming, looting, robbery, kidnapping and selling of fellow human beings for personal enrichment. In spite of the social, political and economic tsunamis of the moment, Nigeria, shall abide; the Church of God marches on, “for God is in the midst of her.” (Ps. 46:5).*

May the Peace of God rest upon you all. AMEN!

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'N. D. Okoh', followed by a large, horizontal, oval-shaped flourish.

The Most Reverend Nicholas D. Okoh

Archbishop, Metropolitan, and Primate of All Nigeria

## APPENDIX 06



### THE CHURCH OF NIGERIA (Anglican Communion)

THE MOST REVD. NICHOLAS D. OKOH  
Archbishop, Metropolitan and Primate of All Nigeria

#### COMMUNIQUÉ FROM THE HOUSE OF BISHOPS OF THE CHURCH OF NIGERIA (ANGLICAN COMMUNION) MEETING AT THE IBRU CENTRE, AGBARHA-OTOR, DELTA STATE JANUARY 7<sup>TH</sup>-12<sup>TH</sup>, 2013

##### Preamble:

1. The House of Bishops of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) met under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the leadership of the Most Rev. Nicholas D. Okoh, Archbishop, Metropolitan and Primate of All Nigeria for our annual retreat at the Ibru Centre, Agbarha-Otor, Delta State, from January 7<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>, 2013. 159 bishops were present. We were blessed by the opportunity to spend time together in prayer, worship and teaching at this beginning of a New Year filled with opportunities and challenges.

##### 2. Commendation:

The Bishops noted that the Federal Government has made some progress in the following areas:

- Road maintenance;
- Railways reconstruction;
- A measure of progress in the search for steady power supply;
- A bold step in pursuit of self-sufficiency in rice production.

##### The Christian Family:

3. During much of our deliberation we recognized that the family is at the heart of our churches and our nation and that many political and social issues are increasing the stress to family life. Nigerian culture has always placed a high value on family relationships and yet these are now being threatened by the selfishness and idolatry of secularist culture. As Bishops, we recommit ourselves to the Biblical understanding of marriage as an institution established by God between one man and one woman. We also dedicate ourselves to strengthening our own families and also the families of our clergy and the church families for which we are responsible. The Bible makes clear that in the love of a husband and wife and in their commitment to the care and nurture of their children we see a reflection of the love of God for the world. Male and female are the nucleus of a Christian family.

##### 4. Our Pastoralists: Move into the New Age:

The Bishops discussed various matters of stewardship that affect everyone of us. We were reminded that the protection of individual and community

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rights with regard to property rights are essential towards the attainment of a peaceful and harmonious co-existence. In this regard, we believe that the future for our noble Fulani pastoralists, and their children, socially and economically, lies in establishing organized ranch system. The first factor, land, is abundantly available in the North. Wealthy individuals, Governors and the Federal Government can assist to provide the necessary infrastructure for establishing viable ranches with adequate water, food and veterinary services. Something very much like the Israeli Kibutz. The advantages are many: the social life of the Pastoralists will be much more enhanced by a more settled life-style; so also their economic gains will increase. Opportunity for their children's steady education will become real. And because more veterinary services and research will become available, the resultant effect will be a better life. To create a bush road and rely on natural pasture is to ignore modern life. Our leaders should expose them to more human-friendly pastoral method. The proposed bill will only help to entrench antiquated pastoral methodology, which in our view, is overdue for change. The ranch system can be achieved with the help of government, thus ushering in a more productive animal husbandry, enhanced social life, enhanced opportunity for children's education, among other benefits. The present bill, in practice, will trample the right of one community and enhance that of another. "Robbing Peter to pay Paul", can hardly engender a harmonious co-existence. Bishops encourage Government to be bold and go for a more comprehensive, progressive solution, rather than striving to preserve a methodology that is already an anachronism.

**5. Pursue Peace!**

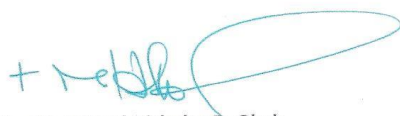
Being Church leaders as well as community leaders, the Bishops resolved to be more hard working in the pursuit of peace and harmonious co-existence, and called upon other religious and community leaders all over the country to shun negative tendencies and intensify efforts in search of peace, happiness and the overall progress of the Nation in order to secure our future. The bishops remind all, of our Lord's pronouncement "Blessed are the peace makers, for they shall be called the children of God" (Mt 5:9).

**6. Prayer Request:**

The Bishops remind all Christians of the powerful and indispensable weapon of prayer at a critical time like this. It is written that "The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous person avails much" (James 5:16). Bishops call upon all to pray earnestly, regularly for peaceful co-existence and progress, unity and love for one another in our country.

7. **Prayer for the Nation:**

O Eternal God, thank you for our country, a precious gift of immense human, material and spiritual resources; you reign from generation to generation without being affected by the changes and chances of this mortal life. You rule in the affairs of human beings, and bring order to control the unruly wills of people. You have graciously brought Nigeria into 2013. This year, may you be our wisdom and our peace. Guide us with your pillar of cloud by day and pillar of fire by night; be our bright guiding star, and save this country from the slaughter house of Herod. In your mercy guide and empower our President and all our leaders aright so that the people of this land, East, West, North and South, may sing a new song of unity, peace, faith and progress. We pray through Jesus Christ, Our Lord. Amen.



**The Most Revd Nicholas D. Okoh**  
Archbishop, Metropolitan, and Primate of All Nigeria

