

**DIOCESE OF EVO**  
**(Anglican Communion)**  
**PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS/BISHOP'S CHARGE**  
**DELIVERED BY**  
**THE RT. REV. INNOCENT U. ORDU, JP**  
**BISHOP, DIOCESE OF EVO**  
**ON SATURDAY, 6<sup>th</sup> August, 2016**  
**AT THE FIRST SESSION OF THE THIRD DIOCESAN SYNOD**  
**HOLDING AT ST. JUDE'S ANGLICAN CHURCH,**  
**OGINIGBA DEANERY**

## **GREETINGS AND PROTOCOLS**

To the King of Ages, Immortal, Invisible,

The only Wise God be honour and glory forever and ever. Amen.

- Your Excellency, The Executive Governor of Rivers State, Chief Barr. Ezebunwo Nyesom Wike, CON,
- Your graces, the Archbishops and my Lords, the Bishops here present or represented;
- The Diocesan Registrar, Sir Barr. Nlerum S. Amadi & all other Diocesan Legal Officers,
- The President of the Diocesan Mothers Union & Women's Guild, Mrs. Chinyere U. Ordu, JP (Mama Evo),
- Venerable Archdeacons, including our guest speakers and their wives,
- Invited heads of churches in Rivers State here present or represented
- Other clergymen and their wives;
- Highly respected Royal Fathers here present, especially His Royal Highness, Eze G. B. Odum, Eze Igwugwu Oha 1, and Paramount Ruler/Nyenwe-eli of Oginigba Town;
- Members of the National and Rivers State Assemblies here present or represented.
- The Chairmen of Local Government Areas here present, especially, Prince (Hon.) Collins Onunwo, Chairman, Caretaker Committee, Obio/Akpor Local Government Area, and Sir (Hon.) Soni Ejekwu, Chairman, Port Harcourt City Council/Mayor of Port Harcourt
- All other Government functionaries at all levels or their representatives;
- All our noble and gallant knights and ladies;
- Church teachers, Lay Readers and their spouses;
- Distinguished nominees of the Bishop to this Synod;
- Other distinguished Synod delegates
- Members of our Diocesan Community of men, women and youths;
- Members of the fourth estate of the realm;
- My dear ladies and gentlemen;

With great joy in our hearts we welcome you all to the **First Session of the Third Synod** of our Diocese of Evo which started here at St. Jude's Anglican Church, Oginigba Deanery, Trans-Amadi, Port Harcourt since Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> August, 2016.

We sincerely appreciate the sacrifice you have made by setting aside your other equally important engagements today just in order to identify with us particularly at this presentation of our Synod Address/Charge. We confess that your esteemed presence is such a great blessing to us. We are quite encouraged by it and we remain deeply grateful.

May the Lord pour upon you the riches of His grace abundantly in Jesus name. Amen.

## OUR SYNOD VENUE

ST. JUDE'S ANGLICAN CHURCH, OGINIGBA DEANERY

### **The Advent of Christianity**

The advent of Christianity in Oginigba led to the spread of the Anglican faith in Evo-Nu-Apara Kingdom and beyond. The seed of Christianity was planted in Oginigba as far back as in the year of our Lord, 1904 when one Nnorom Chinwo Ariolu (of blessed memory), an itinerant trader from Elisara, went to Ogwugwemanga, (Bonny) to sell yam tubers. While there, he discovered a group of people gathering for worship every Sunday and thus became interested. When he returned home, he gathered some group of thirteen (13) persons of whom he named Ogboikneoma, meaning the Good New Group. This group formed the nucleus of the Churches in those days. They met every Sunday at Elisara in his house, in a thatch hut provided by him. Within a short time, a host of other interested persons from within and outside Oginigba joined the worship group. They fellowshipped there for one (1) year and when the number of worshippers increased, they moved to a temporary but more spacious worship centre called Egbelu Oginigba. Two (2) years after, in 1906, the worship centre was further moved to a more central location called Mini-Ewa popularly known now as Railway Camp. As their devotion to worship progressed, they demonstrated their seriousness in faith by practically surrendering their idols and fetish symbols for destruction. They felt they could no longer compromise their new found belief with idols. As time went on, the gospel became more entrenched in their daily lives. The worship centre remained there until various groups from outside Oginigba started leaving to establish similar fellowship groups in their own communities.

Those who started the Church at Oginigba with the Late Chinwo Ariolu then included:-

1. Daniel Ariolu
2. Johnson Echeonwu
3. Bessie Chinda
4. Abraham Amadi
5. Isaiah Wolu
6. Sampson Elikoh
7. John Echeonwu
8. Lazarus Ariolu
9. William Chinda
10. Zacheaus Odum
11. Mariah Ariolu
12. Green Chukwu
13. Micah Amadi

They were later supported and assisted at that time by some young men like Solomon Chinda, Emmanuel Ariolu and others at about 1906-1909. Other people from the nearby communities in Evo and its environs who came to worship with them for some periods and decided to take the gospel to their various communities included:-

1. Mr. Jack Habinuchi Ibeonye and others from Woji, who left in 1909
2. Abraham Wolugbom and others from Elekahia 1910
3. Thomas Amadi and others from Rumuokwurusi who left in 1911
4. Ebenezer Okpara and others from Oroigwe who left in 1911
5. Mr. Nwanwa and others from Okoro-Nu-Odo who left in 1911
6. Charles Adele, Moses Amadi and others from Rumuomasi who left in 1916
7. Daniel Ordu and others from Atali-Elimgbu who left in 1920
8. Jonah and Hezekiah Wopara and Frank Ejekwu from Rumuobiokani and Rumuogba who left in 1928
9. Nworia and others from Eneka
10. Nworia and others from St. Thomas Mgbundukwu (Diobu)
11. Jacob Chinwo and Okujiagu Wuzo from Elelenwo

The gospel gradually spread further beyond Evo Kingdom to places like Rumuola, Mgbuoba, Rumueme, Rumuigbo, Rukpokwu, Diobu and so on. In sum both the present Evo and Aparara Churches grew out of Oginigba.

### **Church Prominence and Recognition**

When the last group of persons had left with the gospel to their communities in 1920, the host community, Oginigba, became more committed to their faith and belief. Realising the gains and popularity of this worship, the community without hesitation decided to donate a more spacious land for a permanent place of worship, and that is where the Church is today, at Rumuolozu, including the Church Cemetery where the Town Hall is also located. This area of the Town Hall was used as the first Oginigba Primary School supervised by the Mission. Prominent among the Rumuolozu people who donated their land to the Church were late Odudu, Echeonwu, Ngenwo and others.

For administrative convenience and properly organised spiritual care, the Church was placed under the supervision of Okirika District in 1927 with Rev. Cole (a white man) as the Superintendent. He preached the gospel and administered holy baptism. He also conducted mass baptism on the worshippers in Oginigba as well as other Evo congregations and thereafter christened the Church, "St. Jude's (CMS) Church, Oginigba" by 1934. In 1935 at the exit of Rev. Cole, the few worshippers in Oginigba were arrested by Colonial Policemen and were detained for some time, but while in detention, they continued to worship God. After a few days the door of the Cell opened by itself and they walked out free. On their coming back home, they found out that their members who were not arrested had gone back to their idols because of fear. In 1953, all the church units were placed under the supervision of Port

Harcourt District. Because of the distance and locations of these groups of Churches in their various communities and Oginigba having not been steady in the worship, plans were made to merge them with a more accessible central administration.

Rumuokwurusi Church was chosen as a Centre and was Christened “All Saints’ CMS Church,”. The term “CMS” (Church Missionary Society) was the umbrella name referring to all Anglican Churches in existence then. Within this period the first wedding recorded in St. Jude’s (CMS) Church, Oginigba, were those of Elder & Mrs. Edward Weli Amadi and Elder & Mrs. Lazarus Ariolu (all of blessed memory) under the presiding Catechist, Nwakamma. Late Elder Edward Weli Amadi was the Church Warden then.

As the congregational strength of the church increased, the youth wing was formed and the pioneer youth leaders were:-

- Bro. Daniel Nyebuchi Amadi (now an elder) and
- Bro. S.A.W. Amadi (now a Knight and Chief) JP

After the Nigerian Civil War, Mr. G. C. Ikengah (now Engr. G. C. Ikengah) took over the leadership of the Youth Fellowship. He was also the Choirmaster and Organist. Due to his tripartite functions in the church and his Civil Service job in Port Harcourt Refinery, Mr. Samuel Aneleowa Amadah (now Knight and Chief) took over the Youth Fellowship Leadership to relieve him of the burden. After several years of his meritorious tenure as youth leader in both the local church and at the district level, he handed over to the younger generations.

### **Church Building in a Permanent Place**

The roof of the thatch hut used temporarily for worship on the Rumuolozu land was de-roofed by storm in 1920. This immediately led to the construction and restructuring of the Church to a more solid state with mud and thatch. In 1940, as the church continued to grow, the thatch roof was replaced with corrugated iron sheets. In 1955, the entire church building walls were done with block, making the building one of the best in Evo group of churches. As the years rolled by, the first Pastor’s house was built and dedicated by The Rt. Rev. Y. A. Fubara in 1962. In 1997, it was renovated with the Rev. S. T. Kalama as the Priest in charge.

In 1972, church worshippers began to settle down and regroup to brace up once more for normal church activities after the war. A gradual increase in the numerical strength began to manifest. With the little resources from some strong and wealthy individuals, the Church which looked unkempt was once more renovated and painted, with a slight expansion including porches and good altar. In 1975, the Silver Jubilee of this Oginigba Church was celebrated by all the church members of Evo District in the new look church structure. This Church edifice remained for some time as worship auditorium for both young and old. The children department was created in 1980 because of lack of space in the main auditorium. It was housed in a hall donated temporarily

by Chief Victor Chike Weli Chinda. This hall is still there today. The children used it for four (4) years, after which they were relocated back to the old church building when the adults vacated it in 1984 for the new building.

In 1978, when the need for structural changes to modernise the church building became obvious, plans to apply the building structure of St. Thomas Anglican Church, Eteo, Eleme, was accepted. In 1979 materials were procured. Preparations lasted for nearly 2 ½ (two and half) years. In 1982, the foundation-laying of the new church was performed by the Late Rt. Rev. S. O. Elenwo, then Bishop of then Niger Delta Diocese. On completion of the building in 1984, permission was granted by The Rt. Rev. S. O. Elenwo, JP to relocate to the New Church Building from the old one to start worshipping there. The ceremony was performed by the Late Venerable Eyindah, then Archdeacon of Port Harcourt Archdeaconry. The District Superintendent at that time was the Rev. Canon Agala-Okor. The achievement of this new building was realised through the contributions of a generation of committed men and women as listed below:-

1. Late Chief G. T. E. Ariolu
2. Late Chief V. W. Chinda
3. Late Chief Loveday N. Dike
4. Late Chief E. A. Echeonwu, JP
5. Sir Eze J. E. Amadi, JP
6. Sir Chief S. A. W. Amadi, JP
7. Engr. G. C. Ikengah
8. Late Mrs. Alice Ariolu
9. Late Mrs. Mabel Amadi
10. Late Madame Josephine Nnaoria Amadi
11. Late Madam Salome Ariolu
12. Late Madam Silverline Ariolu
13. Late Chief Peter N. Amadi
14. Late Mrs. Rose Ogonda Odum
15. Late Madam Eunice Amadi
16. Mrs. Ethel Echeonwu
17. Engr. R. Njoku (a one-time General Manager of NCIE)
18. Late Elder Anderson Amandah
19. Sir Chief Charles Johnson
20. Sir Chief Samuel Amandah
21. Elder Emmanuel N. Dike
22. Late Engr. Charles Onuoha (a lay-reader) and a few other non-indigenes whose names are:
23. Mr. Levi Emeghara
24. Mr. Joel Okechukwu Ukanacho
25. Mr. Mark Okpala

As the worship centre for the children in the old church started showing cracks in the walls (due to old age and lack of maintenance), the children were again relocated to another temporary shelter behind the new church. Due to the

danger of possible collapse of the old church building, an order from the church authority through the Archdeaconry Headquarters at All Saints' Rumuokwursi District under the then Archdeacon, The Ven. I. W. Wopara (now late) was received for the demolition in 1996. When the children began experiencing weather hazards to their health and as there was no other alternative place of worship for them, the Church Council decided to have them worship together with the adults in the New Church Auditorium. Meanwhile an idea to build the Favour House to include a hall where the children could worship was conceived and the construction began in 2002. On completion of the building, the children were relocated and that is where they worship currently.

### **Parish Status**

In spite of several challenges from within and outside the community the Church never failed to find its feet. By 1990 when it became very obvious that the church had received impressive progress in followership materially, numerically and financially, the move for autonomous Parish status was made and was granted by the late Bishop of Niger Delta Diocese, The Rt. Rev. Samuel Onyuku Elenwo, JP on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January, 1991 and was formally inaugurated on October 25<sup>th</sup>, 1993 by the same Bishop.

### **Deanery Status**

In May, 1996, St. Jude's Church, Oginigba was among the churches in then Evo, Port Harcourt, Ikwerre, Ahoada, Omoku, Etche, Eleme, Ogoni, etc. that formed the new Diocese of Niger Delta North out of the old Diocese of Niger Delta. The Rt. Rev. S. O. Elenwo was translated from the old Diocese of Niger Delta to the newly created Diocese of Niger Delta North with headquarters at St. Paul's Church, Diobu as first Bishop.

In further response to the numerical growth of the Church, and in line with the provisions of the amended Constitution (2002) of the new Diocese of Niger Delta North, now under the Rt. Rev. Ignatius C. O. Kattey, JP, the Parish applied to the Diocesan Board for Deanery Status. This was granted on the 4<sup>th</sup> of April, 2008. The formal inauguration could however not hold until the creation of the Diocese of Evo in July, 2009. It was however performed on Sunday the 7<sup>th</sup> of March, 2010 by the Rt. Rev. Innocent U. Ordu, JP, pioneer Bishop, Diocese of Evo.

### **External Mission**

By the special grace of God, in 2005, and while still under the Diocese of Niger Delta North, the burning desire to give birth to a church was mustered and accomplished by the Anglican Youth Fellowship (AYF), an arm of the Church with the planting of a new church at Umungwu-Agbalu, Etche, now under the Diocese of Etche. The Priest in charge of the Parish at the time was the Rev. Canon G. Eche.

Since the birth of the Diocese of Eyo in 2009 Oginigba Deanery has however, not been able to plant a new church. But while we wait to achieve this, we have long directed the Deanery to oversee and cater for the Chapel of Restoration, Rumuogba. And without meaning to embarrass the Deanery, we must state here that We are not satisfied with the level of attention the young church at Rumuogba is receiving from Oginigba Deanery. Consequently, we charge the Deanery to do more.

### **Celebrations**

In the year 1975, the Silver Jubilee of Eyo Churches including St. Silas, Eneka was celebrated at St. Jude's Anglican Church, Oginigba by the then Eyo District, while the Centenary (100 years) attainment of the Church was celebrated on the 12<sup>th</sup> of September, 2004 by the Rt. Rev. Ignatius C. O. Kattey, JP, Bishop of the Diocese of Niger Delta North.

### **Church Projects**

One of the major projects undertaken by the Deanery was the erection of a one-storey building complex known as "Favour House". It houses the Church's Priests, a visitors' apartment, offices and a befitting hall for children's worship. It was completed in 2010 and was dedicated by Us, the Rt. Rev. Innocent U. Ordu, JP on Sunday, 7<sup>th</sup> March, 2010.

### **New Church Building**

The formal take-off process for the erection of this present church building started on 9<sup>th</sup> February, 2013 with the Ven. Okechukwu Monday Owhonda as the Rector and the Late Rev. Samuel Watson Gabriel as Curate. To make way for the construction of this new church building, the congregation moved over to the children's hall for worship on the 7<sup>th</sup> December, 2014. This lasted for one year. The demolition of the old church building started on Monday, 8<sup>th</sup> December, 2014.

We laid its Foundation-stone on Good Friday, 14<sup>th</sup> April, 2014. We commend the Deanery for the immense progress made so far on this building particularly in readiness for the hosting of this Synod. We pray for God's continuous provision and the grace to finish in a not too distant time.

### **List of the Church Agents/Priests who served in Oginigba**

After the pioneering roles of Rev. Cole and Mr. Hart, the following ministers of God have served in the church in the order indicated below:-

- |                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| 1. Catechist Nwakamma     | 1950  |
| 2. Catechist Ngwoke       | 1965-1966                                   |
| 3. Catechist M. A. Ikeri  | 1967-1968                                   |
| 4. Catechist S.W. Ikengah | 1968 (terminated by the Nigerian Civil War) |
| 5. Catechist C. B. Dappa  | 1971 (posted after the Civil War)           |
| 6. Catechist J. Woko      | 1972-1973                                   |



7. Mr. C. O. Okere (Agent) 1974
8. Catechist G. E. Eze 1975-1976
9. Catechist G. E. Eze 1977-1979
10. Catechist I. C. Wenyi 1980-1981
11. Catechist Ossi 1982
12. Catechist Dappa 1983
13. Catechist Amah 1984
14. Rev. S. N. P. Ahiakwo 1985-1989
15. Rev. Canon M. O. Ogonigba 1990-1991
16. Catechist J. U. Wala 1991-1993
17. Rev. Canon. Lawson Eddah 1993-1994
18. Rev. I. A. Chezu 1994-1995
19. Catechist S. F. Epele 1995-1996
20. Rev. S. T. Kalama 1996-1997
21. Ordinand E. Akpan 1998-2001
22. Rev. A. A. Omubor 1998-2000
23. Rev. Samuel O. Ejoku 2001-2003
24. Rev. David Olungwe 2003-2004
25. Rev. Canon S. Agoha 2004
26. Rev. Canon G. Eche 2005-2006
27. Ord. Afoma Ogonu (now Rev.) 2005-2006
28. Rev. Canon A. A. Omubor (now Ven.) 2006-2008
29. Rev. Maxwell Anachunna 2006
30. Ord. Peter Georgewill 2006-2008
31. Ven. Dr. Ben Onu 2008-2009
32. Rev. Samuel Nkrumah (From Ghana) 2008
33. Rev. Godson S. C. Adugbonye 2008-2009
34. Ven. Okechukwu M. Owhonda (Rector) 2009-2014
35. Rev. Chukwuma Anukem (Curate) 2009-2011
36. Rev. Samuel W. Gabriel (late) 2011-2013
37. Mr. John Eze (now Rev.) 2012-2016 (*Church Teacher, Chapel of Restoration, Rumuogba*)
38. Mr. Joseph Asonye 2012-2013 (*Church Teacher, Chapel of Restoration, Rumuogba*)
39. Rev. Favour Iroegbulem (Curate) 2013
40. Rev. Bright Welekwe (Curate) 2014
41. Rev. Canon Joseph Ofoegbu (Curate) August, 2014- February 2016
42. Ven. Dr. Fyनेface N. Akah, JP (Rector) 2015
43. Ven. Sunday C. Opara (Rector) February 2016 to date
44. Ven. Thompson Onyewuotu (Curate) February 2016 to date

## OUR SYNOD SPEAKERS

### **The Venerable Dr. Gideon Ilechukwu**

The Venerable Dr. Gideon Chukwudalu Ilechukwu, is our **main Synod Guest Speaker**. He was born at Oba in Anambra state into the born again missionary family of Evangelist Emmanuel and Augustina Ilechukwu. He grew up under the tutelage of his father who was a sound children teacher, evangelist, church planter and missionary. He came to know the Lord Jesus Christ as a child and by the age of 12, he preached his first sermon in the Anglican Church.

As a lover of the Lord, he was a child evangelist, and grew up to be the assistant leader and Bible study leader of the Evangelical Fellowship in the Anglican Communion of the St Stephen's Anglican Church, Oba, as a teenager. He also founded the Oba Born Again Youth forum. Dr Gideon was the first national president of the Nigerian campus arm of The Evangelical Fellowship in the Anglican Communion (EFAC) between 1993 – 1995.

He served as a pastor's warden in the Diocese of Enugu and was trained as a priest at the Trinity Theological College, Umuahia. He was then ordained a deacon in the diocese of Enugu and priested in same diocese in 2004 and 2006 respectively. A passionate missionary and church planter, he became the Diocesan missionary of the Awgu/Aninri Diocese and saw to the planting of 40 churches within a space of three years. Subsequently, he was preferred and collated Archdeacon in 2007. He has planted a total of 43 Anglican churches both within and outside Nigeria.

Dr Gideon has pastured the following Churches:

- Chapel of Restoration, University of Nigeria Teaching Hospital Enugu 2004-2007
- Church of Divine Compassion-University of Nigeria Teaching Hospital 2007-2009
- St. James Church Dublin, Republic of Ireland- 2009
- St. Wilfrid's Church, Manchester, UK - 2010
- Church of Restoration, Nigerian Anglican Congregation, Manchester, UK- 2011 till date

He has the single vision of winning more souls for the Lord, planting more churches and preaching the undiluted word of God till death. He has mentored many in the ministry and has seen to the training and ordination of more than 40 priests.

He is a priest of God as well as a medical doctor, having trained as a medical doctor at the Nnamdi Azikiwe University and had his postgraduate training at the University of Nigeria Teaching Hospital Enugu where he worked as a consultant emergency paediatrician and senior lecturer, 2005-2008.

Academically, Ven. Gideon has a Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery, Membership of the West African College of Physicians (Faculty of Paediatrics), Fellowship of the National Postgraduate College of Paediatrics, and is an associate member of the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child health. He has about 40 academic publications in paediatrics.

He is blessed with a lovely wife, mission/ministry partner, intercessor and a colleague in the health profession, Dr. Chioma Ilechukwu. The marriage is blessed with five children – 2 girls and 3 boys. The whole family are missionaries with the aim of advancing the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ on earth. We thank The Venerable Dr. Gideon for the huge sacrifices he made in coming to honour our invitation and pray that the Lord will forever bless him and his entire family for being such a blessing to us.

## **Mr. Kiki Briggs, Esq.**

### **Birth and Education**

Kiki Stephen Briggs was born on 7<sup>th</sup> of August, 1954 to the Briggs family of Abonnema in Akuku-Toru Local Government Area of Rivers State.

Between 1967 and 1972, Mr. Briggs obtained his West African School Certificate (WASC) coming out with a Division Two pass. Between 1974 and 1977, Mr. Briggs was at the Rivers State College of Education, Port Harcourt from where he obtained a National Certificate of Education (NCE) in Maths/Physics at Credit Level. Still in pursuit of academic excellence, Mr. Briggs headed to the famous University of Ibadan where he quickly added a Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) degree in Maths/Educational Management (2<sup>nd</sup> Class Upper Division) to his academic kitty. This was between 1978 and 1981. From the same university, he obtained a Master of Education (M.Ed.) in Educational Administration between 1982 and 1983. From 1997 to 1999, Mr. Briggs was at the Evangelical Church of West Africa (ECWA) Theological Seminary, Igbaja, Nigeria, from where he got a Master of Arts (M.A.) degree in Biblical Studies.

### **Work Experience**

From 1985 to 1987, Mr. Briggs was a Principal with the Rivers State Schools Board from which position he rose to the position of Supervisor of Schools with the same Board. He retired voluntarily from this position after putting in 16 years of unblemished service. Meanwhile, in between his service to the Board, Mr. Briggs was at Zaria for the compulsory one year national service (NYSC) where he taught and counselled students. This was between 1987 and 1988.

From September 2008 to date, Mr. Briggs has been the Director/CEO, Glory Educational & Management Consultancy, Makurdi; and Vital Services Managers.

In the vineyard of the Lord, he has also put in years of impeccable service and garnered deep experience in church leadership and management. For instance, from 1988 to 1995, he was Travelling Secretary, Scripture Union (SU), Nigeria, Cross River State, which position conferred on him the responsibilities of supervising, training, organizing conferences, running camps, promoting and coordinating sales, counselling, report writing, etc. Between 1995 and 1997, Mr. Briggs was Scripture Union (SU) Regional Coordinator for Kwara, Lagos, Ogun, Oyo, Osun and Ondo States. From 1999 to 2002, he was Regional Coordinator for Bayelsa, Rivers, Akwa Ibom and Cross River States. He was then moved to oversee Edo, Delta and Anambra states still as regional coordinator. This was between 2002 and 2003. From November 2004 to August 2008, Mr. Briggs was Director & Liaison Officer, Scripture Union (Nig). and his responsibilities included initiating of policies, mobilizing, training, inter-ministries relations, editing, etc. He retired voluntarily from this position in 2008 after giving the Scripture Union 20 years of effective service.

### **Contributions to Humanity**

Mr. Briggs who is married and whose marriage is blessed with 2 grown up children and who has his personal career objectives as the promotion of event planning and organizing as well as project planning and implementation for corporate management through a means of internalizing core values that would enhance excellent services, has contributed in no small measure to humanity. Kiki Briggs, is the founding partner of GEM Consult and as a former college principal and retired supervisor of schools, he brought into this venture his wealth of experience in managing schools and people, being quite conversant with the educational system. His versatile expertise in this industry and others stemmed from his many years of research works, interaction with and opportunity to develop different resources for optimum output.

He also brought into his present career his two decades of ministry experience from his service in Scripture Union (SU) where he was exposed to many activities and programmes that required managerial and organizational skills. He gained much from events planning like camps for youth, conferences for adults and specialized training for senior staff, missionaries and writers of the Union's devotionals. The latter afforded him the opportunity of practicing management throughout Nigeria—from the East to the West (thus covering the entire south of Nigeria) and the vast North of the country. He is also into corporate management through a means of internalizing core values that would enhance excellent services.

The Mathematics and Management background of Mr. Briggs makes him an accurate planner and goal achiever. He has a well-developed skill for setting realizable goals and fashioning out feasible plans to execute them. The success in his 36 years of public service may not be unrelated to his training, specialty and innumerable seminars and workshops he attended both in and outside Nigeria.

Mr. Briggs whose strengths and interests include: developing managers, sensitizing and motivating, supervising and directing, providing leadership, ability to work with and through people, knack for excellence, ability to motivate and persuade, resourceful and innovative and proactivity in strategic in management, holds a professional affiliation with the Nigerian Institute of Management, Lagos.

Brother Kiki Briggs as he fondly referred to within Christian Circles accepted to prepare and teach the two bible study sessions of this synod. We thank him for making himself available and also being a huge blessing to us in the course of this synod.

### **The Right Reverend Chidi Collins Oparaojiaku**

The Rt. Rev. Dr. Chidi Oparaojiaku was born on 27<sup>th</sup> March, 1960 to the family of Late Chief Oliver Akujuobi and Lolo Tryphina Chitumaogu Oparaojiaku in Obazu Autonomous community, Mbieri, Mbaitoli Local Government Area of Imo State. He gave his life to Christ on February 5<sup>th</sup> 1987.

Bishop Chidi holds a Bachelor of Science in Economics from Imo State University Okigwe, Imo State. This certificate was obtained in 1992. In 1995 he bagged a Diploma in Theology from Trinity Theological College, Umuahia Abia State. In the year 2000, Bishop Chidi obtained a Master of Science Certificate in Economics from the University of Port Harcourt. And in 2015, he

capped off his educational journey with a Doctor of Philosophy, Business Policy and Strategy in Management from Rivers State University of Science and Technology.

### **Ordinations and Preferments**

Bishop Chidi Oparaojiaku began his journey in Christian ministry in 1995 when he was made a Deacon. He was Priested in 1996. In 1999, he was installed a Reverend Canon as well as Administrator. In 2002, the Rt. Rev. Oparaojiaku became an Archdeacon in the Diocese of Niger Delta North and Archdeacon of Diocese of Owerri in 2008. In the same year, 2008, he was elected, consecrated and enthroned Bishop of Diocese of Ohaji/Egbema, Imo State.

### **Stations Served**

The Rt. Rev Chidi Oparaojiaku has served in several churches in his years in ministry. Between 1995 and 1996, he was at St. Paul's Anglican Church, Diobu, Port Harcourt Rivers State. Between 1996 and 1999, he was at St. Paul's Cathedral Church, Diobu Port Harcourt Rivers State. From 1999 to 2000, Bishop Chidi was Administrator and Vicar, Port Harcourt West Archdeaconry and Good Shepherd Anglican Church, Agip respectively. Between the year 2000 and 2001, Rt. Rev. (Dr.) Oparaojiaku was Administrator and Vicar, Port Harcourt Central Archdeaconry and Vicar, St. Matthew's Anglican Church Nkpogu, Trans-Amadi Port Harcourt. The ministerial journey took him again to Chapel of Redemption, Rivers State University of Science and Technology, Port Harcourt Rivers State between the year 2001 and 2007 as Administrator/Chaplain and Resident Minister. From 2007 to 2008, he was Archdeacon/Rector/Vicar of St. Andrew's Anglican Church Rumuobiokani Deanery, Rivers State, and from 2008 to date, he has been Bishop, Diocese of Ohaji/Egbema.

In addition to the above, Rt. Rev. Dr. Oparaojiaku has served in served in more than 15 different chaplaincies both in the Diocese and in the larger Church of Nigeria as well as in more than 30 ministerial capacities.

A prolific writer and researcher, Bishop Chidi has authored over 25 publications, thesis and over ten unpublished materials. He also contributes scholarly articles to more than five research journals.

Rt. Rev. Dr. Chidi Oparaojiaku has received over 25 awards in the course of his ministry in God's vineyard. He has also been patron to over six different bodies and organisations at different times. He has also been recognised in terms of appointments. Among them are:

- Ambassador of Goodwill, Texas, USA
- Church of Nigeria, Business Manager
- Member, Imo State Youth Empowerment Trust Fund Management.

Rt. Rev. Chidi Oparaojiaku has been and will remain our brother, friend and partner in ministry. We express our sincere thanks to him for being readily available to stand with us at crucial moments of need and call. We appreciate his earnest contribution towards the success of this synod especially for his talk presented to the clergy and Diocesan officials on Thursday. May God bless him and his entire family and Diocese of Ohaji/Egbema.

### **The Venerable Dr. Fyneface N. Akah, JP**

The Venerable Dr Fyneface Ndubuisi Akah was born in the Advent of 1961 to the family of His Royal Highness, George & Evelyn Akah (Anglicans of blessed memories), the Eze Otu-Onu 1 of Rumuonu-Eneka in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area, Rivers State.

He schooled at St. Silas State School, Eneka, 1971-1976; later attended Akpor Grammar School, Ozuoba, Port Harcourt from 1976-1981 and obtained the West Africa School Certificate. He embarked on proficiency studies in Journalism, English language, Business Communication and Advance Writing and obtained a Diploma in Journalism/Business Communication in 1984. Dr. Akah proceeded to the then Rivers State College, today Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rumuolumeni, Port Harcourt, finished as one of the best graduating students in Religious and Moral Studies in 1990. Consequently, he became the first graduate to be offered a teaching faculty by his department from 1992-1997. He later became a Master of Arts in Ecumenical History, University of Port Harcourt in 1995 and recently earned from Wisconsin, United States, the famous Nashotah House Theological Seminary Doctor of Ministry, 2014 Class, stressing in Anglican Spiritual Tradition, Liturgy and Catechesis.

He trained for the priesthood at Trinity Theological College, Umuahia, graduated in 1992, was made deacon and in 1993 priested by the late **Right Reverend Samuel Elenwo** and was given a minor canonry charge at the Cathedral Church of Saint Stephen, Grand Bonny, Niger Delta Diocese in 1992. Dr. Akah earned, by preferment, the honorary and Residentiary canonry in 1995. Upon the creation of Niger Delta North Diocese, he was appointed pioneer Cathedral Administrator/Canon Residentiary of the Cathedral Church

of Saint Paul, Diobu in 1996 and pioneer Anglican Provost of Port Harcourt in the same Cathedral from 1997-2002.

In the Diocese of Niger Delta North, he was the Administrative Assistant to the Bishop, The Right Reverend Samuel Elenwo; Anglican Representative on the Ecumenical Committee for the Struggle for Return of Schools to the Missions; Member, Board of Governors of Diocesan Schools; Chairman of Diocesan Education Board, Archdeacon of Evo and Vicar of All Saints' Rumuokwurusi District; and Rector, Saint Mark's Deanery, Elelenwo. In the Diocese of Evo he was among others Chairman, Diocesan Education Board, Director, Diocesan Schools, Archdeacon of Evo South East, Archdeacon of Woji and Rector of this primordial home of Evo Christianity, Saint Jude's Deanery, Oginigba. He currently holds for the third time, Diocesan Synod mandate of membership of Church of Nigeria General Synod.

On the global Anglican plain, he is a regular friend of The Anglican Centre in Rome (the Archbishop of Canterbury's diplomatic body for research and ecumenical conversation with the Vatican Pontifical Council for Christian Unity), and was nominated the Programme Participants' Liaison Assistant by the Director, The Right Reverend John Flack from 2007-2010.

Ven. Akah had served on the River State Council on Prerogative of Mercy as a Member. He is also a Senior Fellow, Institute of Administrative Management of Nigeria, Discussion Member, Canon Law Institute, Justice of the Peace, practical and process theologian, academic, teacher, preacher, consultant, author of ten published titles, columnist on educational themes, ecumenist, educationist, psalmodist, hymnodist, liturgist, husband of his cherished darling, **Joy** and father of seven baptized children, currently holds a national charge in our Church of Nigeria as the sitting Rector and Director of the Institute of Theology Seminary, Paul University, Awka, Anambra State.

We congratulate him on his appointment as the Director of the Institute of Theology, Paul University, Awka and very recently, the Chairman of the Rivers State Universal Basic Education Board by the Rivers State Government. We thank him for being available to us in this Synod and also pray for a successful period of service to the Church as well as the State.

### **The Venerable Prof. Udobata Rufus Onunwa**

Born to strong Christian parents: late Pa R.E. Onunwa and Ezinne Dr. (Mrs.) Irene Ogo-oma Onunwa, in Ezihe Mbano, Imo State on February 4, 1951 and



baptized a month after as an infant at Christ Church Ezihe, now Cathedral Church of Christ, Ezihe in the present Isi-Mbano Diocese on March 8, 1951. The original baptismal certificate is available for verification.

### **Schools Attended with Qualifications**

- National High School Arondizuogu, WASC Grade 1, Distinction Aggregate 7
- DMGS Onitsha: 3 Principal Papers, Higher School Certificate, and GCE A Level London, 3As and 1B, Trinity Theological College, Umuahia, Dip. Th. London External (Distinction)
- University of Nigeria Nsukka (1975-1978) BA 1<sup>st</sup> Class (Hons) with 6 prizes
- MA (Nigeria) 1981 and Ph.D (Nigeria) 1984 with Vice Chancellor's Award
- School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London (Ph.D 1987) Post-Doctoral Research Scholar SOAS London, 1988-1989 Dip in Computer Programming and Management, University of Glasgow Scotland 1997, Fullbright Scholar, University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) 1999-2001

### **Church History Ministry**

- Deacon December 15, 1974, Priest June 6, 1975; Preferred Canon, August 8, 1985, Archdeacon, February 10, 1992
- Bishop Nwankiti's Chaplain, Old Owerri Diocese, January 1975 – August 1975
- Domestic Chaplain to Archbishop T.O. Olufosoye, Diocese of Ibadan, First Primate of Church of Nigeria, 1978-1979
- Lecturer, Trinity College Umuahia, 1979-1980
- Canon of Old Okigwe/Orlu Diocese 1985
- Canon of Calabar Diocese 1986-1991. Vicar St. Jude's Calabar 1992, Archdeacon of Diocese 1992-1996
- Clerical Synod Secretary and Director of Ordinands, Diocese of Calabar, 1990-1996
- Member of Provincial Synod, Church of Nigeria, 1990-1996, Member Church of Nigeria Standing Committee, 1990-1996
- Associate Vicar, St. John's Sutton Coldfield, Diocese of Birmingham UK, 1996-2002
- Vicar, St. Andrew's Parish Church Runcorn Chester Diocese, UK 2003-present
- Special Chaplain to Her Majesty the Queen, 2004-2009

- Special Adviser to the Archbishop of Canterbury/Bishop of Chester England, on Inter-religious Dialogue and Race-Relations, 2000-present
- Adviser and Consultant on Mission C.M.S. London, 1998-2002
- Director of Mission and Rector, Centre for CMS Centre for Church Education and Management, Selly Oak Birmingham, 1998-2002. Director, Centre for Anglican Communion Studies, Selly Oak College Birmingham, 1999-2002
- Special Consultant/Director of Mission to Cross Links Mission Agency on Foreign Missions, 2003-2005
- Theological Consultant to the Vatican on African Theology 2001-2009
- Special Theological and Bible Study Consultant to SU and CU, EFAC, NIFES, PAFES, 1982-1996
- Director of Foreign Missions, Partners in World Mission, UK (PWM) 2000-present
- Theological Consultant and Adviser to Association of Black Clergy UK, 2002-present
- Theological Adviser to the Word for Life Trust UK, 2004-present

### **Academic Positions held concurrently**

- Lecturer II, University of Nigeria, 1984-1986
- Lecturer I Department of Religious Studies, University of Calabar, 1986-1989,
- Senior Lecturer University of Calabar 1989-1991
- Associate Professor, University of Calabar Nigeria 1991-1993
- Cadbury Professor of Old Testament Exegesis and Theology, University of Birmingham UK, 1999-present
- Africana-Marbugensia Professor of African Traditional Institutions and Development, University of Marburg, Germany, 2005-present
- Visiting Professor to the Universities of Bristol, UK, UCLA USA, University of Tokyo Japan, University of Calabar Nigeria, University College Punc Mumbai India, Trinity Theological College Singapore, University of Erlangen Germany, University of Munich Germany, Makumira Theological Seminary Tanzania, University of Nairobi Kenya, Australian National University Canberra, Harvard Theological Seminary USA, New York Graduate Theological Seminary USA, Crowther Graduate Theological Seminary Abeokuta Nigeria (ongoing), Currently, Resident Consulting Professor and Rector, Trinity Theological College, Umuahia Nigeria.
- Served as Head of Department in British Universities, Dean, Director of Academic Planning, Director of African Students seeking admission to British Universities (UCCAS), Director of International Studies

Orientation in UK, Director of Centre of African Studies, University of Birmingham, Dean of School of Post-Graduate Studies, Founding Chair and Director, Centre for the Study of African Culture and Development, University of Birmingham UK.

Successfully supervised 56 PhDs, 62 Masters Degree Students, External Examiners to over 10 European and African Universities at Graduate level.

External Assessor for Promotion to Associate Professors and Professors to over 15 universities in Africa and Europe.

### **Publications**

1. At present 15 university peer reviewed text books published by reputable world renown publishers in UK and USA sold and circulating all over the world on the internet.
2. Over 250 peer reviewed and academic journal articles in Europe, UK, Asia, USA, The Oceania and Latin America
3. Editor of 4 international journals
4. Regular commentator on Religious and Social Issues on Radio/TV in UK.

### **Membership of learned Academic Associations**

1. Fellow of the New York Academy of Sciences
2. Member of American Association of Religion/Society
3. Member, Association of the Study of Old Testament
4. Director, Association of Black Clergy UK
5. Member, British Association for Race Relations
6. Member, Partnership in World Mission
7. Member Her Majesty's Church Urban Fund
8. Member, Joint Council for Poverty Alleviation UK
9. Member, Association of Professors of World Peace Academy
10. Member, Chaplaincy Services to UK and European Institutions
11. Member Association of Christian Counsellors of UK and Europe
12. Member of Archbishop's Council on Inter-religious Dialogue

Currently, Udobata is one of the most widely published and highly quoted Black Scholars and Clergymen in the UK and is widely travelled and a highly sought after speaker in Europe and American on African Christianity, Spirituality, Formulation of Cultural Policies for the Third World Nations, Race Relations, Modern Christian Mission and Conversion. He has stood against Revisionism and Liberal Theology in the Modern Church and is constantly invited to give lectures on Biblical Christianity in an Age of Post Modernism.

He is married to Dorothy, a consultant paediatrician and Professor of Neonatology in Birmingham and Strafford Universities, UK. They are blessed with 5 grown children and 4 adopted ones who are all Born Again Christians and now on their own in Europe and America as professionals and Academics. He has an old mother who is a holder of an Honorary Doctoral Degree in Igbo Bible Story and Language from an American Theological Seminary.

We appreciate professor Udobata Onunwa for all his encouragement and support to us since his assumption of office as Rector of Trinity College, Umuahia; his fatherly care and watch over our students there at that institution and his willingness to be available for this Synod. May the Lord reward him abundantly.

### **Mrs. Agnes Ezenta**

Lolo Agnes Uzo Ezenta is the Auditor in-Charge, Office of the Auditor-General for the Federation, Rivers State Branch. She obtained a Higher National Diploma (HND) from the Institute of Management and Technology, Enugu, a Post Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) from Anambra State University of Science and Technology, Post Graduate Diploma (PGD) and a Master of Business Administration (MBA) in Accountancy from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. She is also an Associate Member of the Association of National Accountants of Nigeria (CNA). She is married for over 30 years to Chief Chima Ezenta and they are blessed with children. Lolo Agnes is a licensed Lay Reader and an active member of the Mothers' Union and Women's Guild. She was the Financial Secretary of the Evo Diocesan Women for 5 years and taught for several years in the Anglican Children Ministry. Presently, she is our adviser on Budget and Finance. We appreciate her numerous contributions towards the growth of this Diocese and for her special group talk presented to church treasurers, accounts clerks and auditors on the second day of this Synod.

### **Mrs. Amarachi Orlu**

Mrs. Amarachi Orlu, our Guest Speaker at yesterday's special session of this Synod for the youths was born on the 24<sup>th</sup> of September, 1977 to the family of the late Mr. Vincent Anyanwu of Imo State.

Amarachi is happily married to Mr. Princewill Orlu of Ubima in Ikwerre local Government area of Rivers state. The union is blessed with four children, two boys and two girls – Mirabel, Joyce, King and Blessed.

She holds a Bachelor's Degree in Education, majoring in English Language and is presently the president of the Rare Gems International: a Body that is dedicated to raising young people, particularly girls, in character, competence and virtue, helping them realise their full potentials and fulfilling God's purposes for their lives.

She is currently working with the Rivers State Government as a teacher. She enjoys writing, teaching and as a Christian, preaching the Word of God.

**Amarachi has authored the following books:**

1. The Letter to My Younger Sister
2. Dating Before O'clock
3. My Birthright for My Bridegroom
4. Where Have the Young Girls Gone?
5. Answers to Young Girls' Questions
6. Answers to Questions Students Ask
7. The glory of the teaching profession
8. The Dead are Free and Other Works
9. The Glory of the Teaching Profession
10. My Favourite Teacher

She has three other books yet to be published.

We thank her for coming to pour her heart out on our youths at yesterday's session.

## **PROGRESS REPORT OF THE DIOCESE SINCE THE LAST (2015) SYNOD**

### **DIOCESAN CONVOCATIONS**

➤ **The 2015 Diocesan Discipleship, Prayer/Revival Conference:**

This was hosted by St. Andrew's Church, Rumuobiokani Deanery under the then Rector, The Ven. Charles Mordi from Wednesday, 29<sup>th</sup> September to Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> October, 2015. The theme was "Standing Strong Through The Storm (SSTTS)" (Mark 4:35-end).

Guest speakers were Apostle Timothy Atinnuse, a Nigerian minister based in the United States of America; Rev. Markus Bunu and Rev. Elisha Ezekiel

Da'an both members of the ECWA Church, Jos, Plateau State. Ministering in songs was Pastor Chigozie Wisdom from Lagos.

A major highpoint of the Conference was the Diocesan National (Independence) Day rally on the 1<sup>st</sup> of October at the BCMSS, Rumuobiokani field which featured praise, worship, dance and intercessions for Nigeria.

The host Deanery provide adequate hospitality and care for all participants at no cost to the Diocese. We commend their sacrifice and pray for the continuous flow of God's blessings both on the Church and on the various individuals and families that sponsored some key aspects of the Conference.

We will not forget to also thank Sir Ike Chinwo for his peculiar commitment to the successful staging of this conference for some years now. His huge personal financial support has always helped us.

Some other churches and our schools also supported the Diocese in organising the annual conference. May the Lord reward them abundantly.

The Planning Committee headed by The Ven. Charles Mordi was outstanding in the discharge of their task. May the Lord reward them abundantly also.

➤ **2015 Diocesan Harvest Thanksgiving Service.**

This service was held at the Church of The Holy Spirit, Elelenwo District on Sunday, 13<sup>th</sup> December.

Surveyor Gaius Assor was the Chief harvester at the occasion.

Much of the proceeds from the thanksgiving service was used to visit 3 Orphanages within the Diocese; some widows including those of deceased clergymen; and all the retired clergy and their wives. While we appreciate the Churches for their offerings in cash and kind, we decry the low turnout of members across the Diocese to the service. This ought not to be so! The Diocesan Harvest ought to be a carnival of a sought bringing everyone together in thanksgiving to God. We call on the clergy to endeavour henceforth to enlighten their parishioners adequately on the essence of this all-important Diocesan Convocation with a view to achieving full participation of all. This year's Diocesan Harvest comes up on Sunday, 2<sup>nd</sup> October.

The efforts of the Harvest Committee led by The Ven. Alex Usifoh is worthy of commendation.

➤ **2016 Diocesan Rededication Service**

This took place on Sunday, 17<sup>th</sup> January, 2016 at the All Saint's Cathedral, Rumuokwursi. It featured worship, songs of praise, the Word and intense prayers of intercession, self-consecration and rededication for individuals, families, church groups, the State and Nation. Apostle Onyechi Daniel took the pulpit at the service. Over 7,000 worshippers were in attendance.

➤ **2016 Discipleship/Revival Conference**

This year's conference was organized much earlier than in previous years. It was hosted by the Church of The Holy Spirit, Elelenwo from Wednesday, 6<sup>th</sup> to Sunday, 10<sup>th</sup> July. It was the only major activity lined up to mark the 7<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Diocese. Main Speakers at this year's conference which had "**The New Man**" (Ephesians 4:24) as its theme were the Rt. Rev Ephraim O. Ikeakor, Bishop of the Diocese of Amichi, Anambra State and the Venerable Professor Pic Onwuchie a priest from the Diocese of Jos, Plateau State. We. The Bishop, the Bishop's wife, Mrs. Uju, Opara, Rev. S. O. Abada, Rev. Ozioma Iheanacho and others from the Diocese ministered also at the Conference.

We commend the host Church for a great work done to keep the entire Diocese for 5 days. May the Lord reward their labours. The Diocesan conference Planning Committee was headed by The Rev. Canon Kingsley Ohajianya. We appreciate their excellent performance.

The Conference was concluded with the 7<sup>th</sup> Diocesan Anniversary thanksgiving service on Sunday, 10<sup>th</sup> July at the same venue.

➤ **Annual Cathedral Lecture, 2016**

This was held on Wednesday, 13<sup>th</sup> July, at the All Saints' Cathedral, Rumuokwursi under the distinguished Chairmanship of Sir Chief Victor Dania, Chairman, Diocesan Education Board. This year's lecture was based on the topic "**Present Suffering and Future Glory: The Challenges of Christians in Contemporary Nigerian Society**" (Rom. 8:11) and was ably delivered by The Rt. Rev. David Onuoha, Bishop of Okigwe South, our guest lecturer.

The lecture which marked the exact 7<sup>th</sup> year anniversary of the Diocese attracted a cross-section of the Diocesan Community. We thank the Cathedral Church for sponsoring the annual thought-provoking lecture.

## **TRAININGS AND HUMAN CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT**

On Sunday, 17<sup>th</sup> January this year, We reconstituted the Diocesan Council for Clergy and Laity Continuing Education with The Ven. Chris Chukwumati, The Rev. Canon Joseph Ofoegbu and Sir Victor Dania as Directors of Study.

Training programmes organized by the Diocese through this unit within the synod year, August, 2015 – June, 2016 include the following:

- Quarterly Schools for Clergy
- Quarterly Schools for the Wives of the Clergy and Church Teachers
- Monthly Trainings for Ordinands, Church Teachers and Local Helpers

- Trainings for Drivers, Sextons and Yardmen.

**A 4-Day beginning of the year retreat** by the Bishop, Clergy, Church Teachers and their wives preparatory to the Diocesan Rededication Service took place from 13<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> January, 2016 at the Rose of Sharon (Ang.) Church, Atali. We, the Bishop, Apostle Onyechi Daniel and Rev. John Agu were the key speakers at the retreat.

- **Post Vestry Meeting All Leaders Training/Workshop:** This was held at The Chapel of Grace and Knowledge ACMGS, Elemenwo from Friday 11<sup>th</sup> – Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> March 2016. The theme was ‘Leadership: An Awesome Responsibility’. The attendance was very encouraging. The following were speakers at the training:
  - Rev. Dr. Basil Ibeh from Lagos
  - The Rt. Rev. Chidi Oparaojiaku, Bishop, Diocese of Ohaji/Egbema who spoke on investment, and We, the host Bishop, The Rt. Rev. Innocent U. Ordu, JP.

We have directed at the end of the training that Archdeacons and Vicars of Churches should organize similar training programmes at their administrative bloc/parish levels to domesticate the many lessons and gains from the training.

- **Clerks, Administrative Staff Training:** This was held for three days: Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> – Friday 13<sup>th</sup> May, 2016 at Holy Trinity (Ang.) Church, Elingbu. The theme was ‘Financial Management’. Some of the Auditors and Treasurers of our churches joined them on the last day, Friday 13<sup>th</sup> May, 2016. Invitation was actually extended to all of them. Regrettably, many in their usual manner failed to turn up. We appreciate the immense contributions of Mrs. Agnes Ezenta, Bishop’s Adviser on Budget/Finance, Sir Prince Udo Egege, Head of the Diocesan Team of auditors and Mr. Lawrence Chinda, the Financial Secretary of the Diocese, Mrs. Chinyere Ordu, The Bishop’s Wife and the three Directors of Studies, for their invaluable contributions at the training.
- **The Bishop, Archdeacons/Rectors and Wives Retreat:**  
We took the Archdeacons, Rectors and our wives out on a three-day high-level retreat for a three day retreat from Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> – Friday 20<sup>th</sup> May 2016 at the Adonai Centre, Iriebe. The retreat dwelt on the theme ‘Purposeful Church Leadership’ with the Rev. Dr. Basil Ibeh as the main speaker.

**Diocesan Women’s Training Programmes:** The women organized a number of training programmes for different categories of women particularly, the leaders, for empowerment unto greater effectiveness. They are:

- Residential retreat by the wife of the Bishop and wives of the other Clergy and Church Teachers was held from 17<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> February, 2016 at Adonai Centre, Iriebe. Theme was “Serving God with a pure conscience”. Dan 6:22; Acts 24:16.
- Diocesan Women’s Retreat/Leadership Seminar from 1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> June, 2016 at Bethel (Ang.) Church, Rumuibekwe Parish with the theme: “The Role of



Women in the Leadership of the Church”–Romans 16:1-15. Participants included Women leaders from all the various levels of administration and groups in the Diocese.

## **DIOCESAN ACTIVITY GROUPS/CHAPLAINCIES**

### **Diocesan Men’s Christian Association (DMCA)**

The Association held her 2015 Diocesan Conference/Harvest at the Church of the Holy Spirit, Elemenwo District from Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> – Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> September. The Conference elected a new Diocesan Executive Committee to run the affairs of the Association. It is headed by Mr. Bishop Anderson Nwanekwu as President. Other members are:

|                             |   |                         |
|-----------------------------|---|-------------------------|
| Mr. Gershon A. Amaewhule    | - | Vice President General  |
| Sir Vincent Iheanyi Osuahwu | - | Secretary General       |
| Mr. Madubuike Rowland       | - | Asst. Secretary General |
| Mr. Daniel Ekpoke           | - | Treasurer               |
| Sir Uzundu Abraham          | - | Financial Secretary     |
| Evang. Silas Ekezie         | - | PRO                     |
| Mr. John Ohai               | - | Prayer Secretary        |
| Mr. Faithful Chukwu         | - | Welfare Secretary       |
| Chief Okey Akparanta        | - | Evangelism Secretary    |

The new leaders of the DMCA were inaugurated by us at St. Andrew’s Church, Rumuobiokani Deanery during the thanksgiving service of the 2015 Diocesan Discipleship and Prayer Conference on Sunday, 4<sup>th</sup> October.

Also at the (DMCA) Conference Quiz Competition, Oroigwe/Eliogbolo Archdeaconry men took the first position with 16 points; second position went to Rumuobiokani Deanery with 14 points; the third position went to Woji Archdeaconry with 11 points while the Evo South-East and Trinity Missionary Archdeaconries tied to the fourth position.

On Sunday 27<sup>th</sup>, we inducted 23 men into the Diocesan Men’s Christian Association.

We have appointed a new chaplain for the DMCA in the person of Ven. Thompson Onyewuotu. The DMCA Executive has begun a monthly 2 hours of prayers with the chaplain. This programme is very effective though only a few members are participating. We call on all men of this Diocese as responsible spiritual heads of their families to embrace this godly programme by participating in it.

**The Provincial MCA Conference** was held at the Cathedral Church of St. Paul, Diocese of Ahoada from Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> to Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> February, 2016 with the theme: “Living a Christian Life Without Compromise” (Daniel 6:19). An inter-Diocesan Men’s singing competition for the Archbishop Kattay Cup was held as part of the Conference. Our Diocesan men came **second** in this and in the Conference quiz contest, they took the 4<sup>th</sup> position.

### **2016 DMCA Fathers’ Week Couples Night With The Bishop**

For the first time at the Diocesan level this year’s Fathers’ Day celebration was kicked off with a Couples’ Dinner at the Church Hall of the Cathedral on Tuesday, 14<sup>th</sup> June.

The evening’s outing was chaired by Sir Chief Mike Ejims-Enwukwe and had a large number of the men and clergy of our Diocese in attendance with their wives.

We delivered an address on “Jesus, Quickener of the man of the exploit...” an extraction from this year’s Fathers’ Day theme: “Men of Exploit” (Daniel 11:32<sup>b</sup>). The DMCA also used the occasion to raise funds to support the Diocese in the purchase of a property at Woji for the Ebenezer Anglican Church – the Mission Station of the Diocesan Men’s Christian Association (DMCA).

### **Change of Name: From MCA to CMF**

In his desire to streamline and ensure that all the Men’s groups in the various provinces and Dioceses of the Church of Nigeria which have hitherto been gathering under various names, come together under one umbrella, like the Women’s Mothers’ Union and Women’s Guild, the Primate of all Nigeria, The Most Rev. Nicholas D. Okoh, has approved a common name for all Diocesan Men’s umbrella groups. It is now the **CHRISTIAN MEN’S FELLOWSHIP (CMF)**.

Consequently, and for us here in Evo, the Men’s Christian Association (MCA) as we have all along had it, shall from henceforth be known and referred to as the **CHRISTIAN MEN’S FELLOWSHIP (CMF)** at the local Church levels and **DIOCESAN CHRISTIAN MEN’S FELLOWSHIP (DCMF)** at the Diocesan level. This change is to take immediate effect.

### **Diocesan Women and Girls’ Ministries**

**Conferences:** Conferences of all the women and girls groups – MU/WG, Ladies of the Knights, Widows, Prayer & Spirituality Unit, Sisters’ Forum and Girls Guild were held at different times during the Synod Year. They featured talks on spiritual, health, motivational, career, domestic and other contemporary issues as well as workshops on crafts and skills acquisition.

**Hosting of Niger Delta Provincial Girls’ Guild Conference:** Our Diocese hosted the Conference of the Provincial Girls’ Guild (G.G.) from Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> – Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> August, 2015 at the All Saints’ Cathedral, Rumuokwurusu and at the A.C.M.G.S. Elelenwo premises. The theme was “Let no man despise your youth” (1 Tim. 4:12). The Conference which had in attendance over 500 girls together

with the wife of the Archbishop, Mrs. Beatrice Kattey, JP who was the convener, Co-ordinators and Supervisors from the 13 Dioceses and some clergy wives featured talks, Bible studies, visitation to Motherless Babies' Homes, Match past, crafts, Quiz and singing competitions, etc.

We thank our Diocesan women and the Cathedral for jointly hosting the Conference on behalf of the Diocese and also all churches that supported with their buses and drivers. The Diocese of Eyo Girls' Guild Match Past team emerged the overall best team. They made us proud. At the quiz competition, our girls tied to the 3<sup>rd</sup> position with their Ahoada counterparts.

**The Mothers' Union/Women's Guild Conference** was held at St. Philip's Oroigwe District from Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> – Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> December, 2015. At the close of the Conference a new Diocesan Women Executive emerged following a successful election.

Elected Officers:

- a. Barr. (Mrs.) Chidinma Otuka – Secretary
- b. Barr. (Mrs.) Sonia Worlu – Asst. Secretary
- c. Mrs. Pauline Onyedinma – Treasurer
- d. Mrs. Celestine Idike – Financial Secretary
- e. Lady Edna Odum – P.R.O.

Ex-Officio Members:

- i. Lady Uzo Onweluzo – President, Association of Ladies of the Knights
- ii. Lady Evangeline Nlerum – Secretary, Association of the Ladies of the Knights
- iii. Lady Nkechi Ozuzu – Provincial Project Unit Co-ordinator
- iv. Mrs. Ibinabo Obuoforibo – Bishop's wife's nominee
- v. Dame Meg Orianwo – Bishop's wife's nominee
- vi. Lolo Agnes Ezenta – Bishop's wife's nominee

Unit Co-ordinators:

- a. Prayer and Spirituality: Lady Victoria Weli/ Nkeiruka Egege
- b. Action and Outreach: Dame Akudo Nnadozie/ Lady Stella Onyeji
- c. Finance and Central Services: Dr. (Mrs.) Blessing Onyegeme-Okerenta/ Treasurer – Mrs. Pauline Onyedinma/ Financial Secretary – Mrs. Celestine Idike
- d. Marketing: Lady Josephine Enwukwe/ Mrs. Chinyere Nwobodo
- e. Sisters' Forum: Lady Lale Aminobiren/ Ms. Grace Jaja
- f. Girls' Guild: Mrs. Njideka Nwankwo/ Mrs. Precious Emmanuel-Ekezie
- g. Widows: Mrs. Victoria Erhabor/Mrs. Angelina Orianwo
- h. Clergy Children: Mrs Oluwaseun Ijaware
- i. Training: Mrs. Bibian Nnoli/ Mrs. Ann Maduoma

- j. Project: Lady Patience Wokoma/ Lady Christy Onukem
- k. Editorial Board: Mrs. Uju Opara/ Barr. (Mrs.) Mercy Nweke
- l. Women Empowerment: Dame Priscilla Nosiri
- m. CCN Women's Work Board: Mrs. Doris Amadi/ Mrs. Akudo Osakwe

The Diocesan Women's Ministries embarked on a number of activities within the period under review.

**Mothering Sunday Week Outreach:** The Mothering Sunday Week of activities from 29<sup>th</sup> February to 6<sup>th</sup> March, 2016 held in all our Churches, the theme being: **“The godly woman upholds the sanctity of God's word”**. Titus 2:3-5. At the Diocesan level a two-day Outreach/Crusade was carried out in conjunction with the Church of the Holy Spirit, Elelenwo at a place called Garki at Oil Mill/Elem Junction-a site occupied mainly by Muslims, robbers, harlots – indeed a slum, featuring ministration of the Word, prayers and counselling; free medical attention and drugs dispensing, HIV screening; distribution of food items. Each day, the women attended to an average of a hundred persons. And as a follow-up, an Hausa Session of Church services/weekly fellowship meetings are now being organized by the Church of the Holy Spirit, Elelenwo District for some of the converts, in addition to the settlement/employment of some of the needy among them which exercise is still on-going.

**Induction/Admission:** We held a service of Induction/Admission of women into the Women's Guild and Mothers' Union respectively on 2<sup>nd</sup> December, 2015 at St-Philip's (Ang.) Church, Oro-Igwe during the annual MU/WG Conference. A total of 108 women were admitted to the Mothers' Union and 154 inducted into the Women's Guild.

**Rose of Sharon Anglican Church Project:**

(a) The Diocesan Women's Rose of Sharon (Ang.) Church, Atali building project has been completed and dedicated by us on Sunday, 17<sup>th</sup> July, 2016.

Our gratitude goes to all the women of this Diocese, the Bishop and wife, all wives of clergy and church teachers, Lady Patience Wokoma, Mrs. Sylvesterline Majebi and her supportive husband, Stephen, Lady Lilian Ndu, Sir and Lady Ama Hart as well as the men of our Diocese who sacrificially gave their financial resources in support of their wives towards the completion of this house of prayer and praise to God.

We appreciate and commend very specially The Venerables Alex Usifoh, Okey Owhonda, Chimaobi Nwachukwu, Chris Chukwumati, Chidi Worgu; Canons Ikechukwu Anene, Chuka Opara, Joseph Ofoegbu, Bright Okocha,; The Reverends Raymond Osakwe, Samuel Obialor, Reginald Chinweze, Ebenezer Owchor, Charles Ibeh, Moses Anyaefena, Ahamefula Otuka, Chukwuemeka Udeh, Anderson Owchor; Church Teachers Maduakona Paul Ezigbo, Joseph Asonye and Christian Gabriel and their wives who either fully or partly fulfilled the pledges they made to support the women; Mrs. Patricia Imo, Lady Ada Nnoka, other individuals and churches who donated chairs and handled various aspects of the internal finishing, furnishing and decoration of the new church building. We say 'Thank You'.

From the purchase of 5 plots of land for this Church Building up to its dedication, our Diocesan women have spent the sum of Forty Six Million, One

Hundred Seventy One Thousand, Eight Hundred and Eighty Two Naira (N46, 171, 882.00). This is excluding the cost of some materials such as cement, window panels, marble lectern, plastic chairs, buckets of paints, electrical fittings, survey plan, etc. donated by other individuals. May God bless them more abundantly for their sacrifices and labour of love for His Church.

We have since the first Sunday in May commenced Sunday worship services in this church under an arrangement in which all Deanery, Parish Churches and stronger stations are compulsorily required to send at least 2 members of their congregations on rotational basis every week to worship there from 9am to 11:30am. Those appointed by their priests and church teachers are required to converge on the Cathedral premises every Sunday morning for departure in buses provided at latest 8:30am. We appreciate all the priests and church teachers who have faithfully complied with this directive so far. We remind those who have not bothered to do so despite repeated reminders that they are simply living and serving in rebellion which will always attract its own retributions. To grow this Diocese we must all learn to walk circumspectly and together in unity.

Additionally, the women of the Diocese are to henceforth consider the Rose of Sharon as their **Mission Field** within the Diocese. Consequently, the Women's Work Office should in conjunction with the Diocesan Missions and Evangelism Board work out a roster by which some members of the Diocesan Women Executive and other women from the 10 Administrative Blocs and Diocesan Churches would go there to worship once every quarter.

In view of the positive quiet nature of the location of the church, we encourage individuals, churches and groups to freely go there for their periodic retreats and quiet moments.

We hereby remind the Archdeacon and Board members of the Trinity Missionary Archdeaconry that the new church station is now fully under their charge as an Archdeaconry station. The Archdeaconry is to nurture it unto full maturity. This would include the payment of the Salaries/allowances of the Church Teacher or Priest. The Diocesan women are however still free (if they so desire) to develop other facilities of their choice within the premises and specifically for the good of the Church.

1. **Investment:** There is notable improvement in our Evo Women Garment Industry especially with the engagement of a very good fashion designer – whose handwork is speaking for itself. Some apprentices are also being trained at the centre. Presently, the outfit is committed to the sewing of trendy traditional/English clothes for men and women, packet shirts, bed sheets/pillow cases, school uniforms, graduation gowns, choir robes, clerical wears etc. We encourage everyone in the Diocese to patronize the services of the Garment Industry. It is our investment.

## **Anglican Youth Fellowship**

The youths of our Diocese held and attended a number of Diocesan, Provincial and National programmes within the Synod year.

On Sunday, 20<sup>th</sup> September 2015, a Diocesan election was held at the All Saints' Cathedral, Rumuokwurusi to raise a new Executive Council. Those elected were:

- |                             |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| ➤ Mr Chika Amadi            | – retained as President                 |
| ➤ Mr. Michael Azuonwu       | – Vice President                        |
| ➤ Miss Joyce Adanne Orlu    | – Secretary                             |
| ➤ Miss Charity Unabunwa     | – Assistant Secretary                   |
| ➤ Miss. Evelyn Chile Ariolu | – Treasurer                             |
| ➤ Miss Hope Chiolu          | – Financial Secretary                   |
| ➤ Mr. Ernest Amadi          | – PRO                                   |
| ➤ Mr. Temple Elenwo         | – Evangelism/Prayer Secretary           |
| ➤ Miss Lilian Ihunwo        | – Assistant Evangelism/Prayer Secretary |
| ➤ Mrs. Pamela Paul Orife    | – Sisters' Forum Co-ordinator           |
| ➤ Miss Lois Adele           | – Assistant Sisters' Forum Co-ordinator |
| ➤ Mr. Bartholomew Nwokocha  | – Welfare Officer                       |
| ➤ Mr. Sunny Ogams           | – Assistant Welfare Officer             |
| ➤ Mr. Chima Okekem          | – Youth Star Co-ordinator               |
| ➤ Mr. ThankGod Akubiro      | – Assistant Youth Star Co-ordinator     |

We felicitate with some key officers (past and present) of the Diocesan Youth Fellowship for successfully tying the nuptial knot within the Synod year. They include:

- Mr. Michael Azuonwu (Diocesan AYF Vice President) who got married to former Miss Precious Leonard on Saturday, 5<sup>th</sup> December, 2015;
- Mr. Charles Webilor Chuku (immediate past Diocesan AYF Vice President) who wedded former Miss Elizabeth Obianko-Elechi on Saturday, 12<sup>th</sup> December, 2015;
- Former Miss Nkechi Doris Amadi (also a former Vice President) for her wedding with Mr. Wisdom Ogolo on Saturday, 19<sup>th</sup> December, 2015; and former Miss Pamela Celestine, Diocesan Sisters' Forum Coordinator who got married to Mr. Paul Orife, treasurer, Anglican Church of Pentecost, Rumuogba Parish on Saturday, 11<sup>th</sup> June, 2016.

We wish them all a successful and happy married life.

### **Anglican Children's Ministry**

A number of activities were organized within the last one year under the auspices of the Diocesan Children's Ministry. These include the Evo Children Rejoice – a praise and worship programme for the children of the Diocese, held on Saturday, 31<sup>st</sup> October, 2015 at St. Mark's Anglican Church, Elelenwo Deanery; Vicar's Christmas Party in churches in December last year, though not every priest in charge of

churches proved faithful and caring enough towards the children to organize this event; leaders retreat held at the Church of The Holy Spirit on Saturday, 28<sup>th</sup> November, 2015. Teen-Star Conference held in conjunction with the Anglican Youth Fellowship at BCMSS, Rumuobiokani from Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> to Sunday, 10<sup>th</sup> April, 2016, Diocesan teachers training at Church of Messiah, Irebe Parish from 15<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> April, 2016 and the annual Diocesan Children's Week from 23<sup>rd</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup> May, 2016 in all churches. The 2016 Diocesan Teachers Conference was held at St. Michael's, Rumuomasi Deanery from Thursday, 21<sup>st</sup> – Sunday, 24<sup>th</sup> July with the theme “**Let us rise and build**”.

The Diocesan ACM also took active part in all Provincial and National programmes of the Ministry.

**Provincial ACM Teachers' Conference** was hosted by our Diocese from Thursday 6<sup>th</sup>-Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> August, 2015 at St. Andrew's Anglican Church, Rumuobiokani Deanery. It featured Eucharistic service, Talks, Exposition, Quiz, Faith clinic, etc. Our ACM Quiz team tied with the Diocese of Niger Delta in the 3<sup>rd</sup> position.

We thank St. Andrew's Church, Rumuobiokani Deanery for largely supporting the Diocese to host this Conference.

In the Provincial elections conducted during the Conference our Diocesan Chaplain, The Rev. Canon Olufemi Igbamerun emerged the Provincial Vice President while our former Diocesan ACM leader, Engr. Justin Anunobi was elected the Provincial Secretary.

We commend the zeal and commitment of the Chaplain and all our teachers in the work of shepherding the children of our Diocese. If this ministry is not adequately supported and encouraged to grow now, we may not be having a future church to talk about. We therefore urge the clergy, church council leaders and even the teachers themselves to show greater interest and commitment to all matters affecting this ministry/arm of the church. The children in our homes and churches are the 'lambs' Jesus charged Peter to feed as a demonstration of his love for the Master (John 21:15). That charge is extended to us.

### **Council of Knights**

The Council of Knights of our Diocese made appreciable progress within the last one year in keeping with their mission statement which is to provide Christian service to the Diocese, the wider church of God and mankind in general.

1. **Empowerment of Widows:** The Council empowered Fifteen (15) widows with a generous cash gift of fifty thousand naira each to start or improve their petty trading and other small scale businesses at the close of last year's Synod.

2. **University Bursary Awards:** The Council awarded bursaries to the tune of N100,000 each to 25 students of our Diocese in some Nigerian Universities. The following students benefited from it:

Azonwu Henry  
Nwaigwe Elfreda Eziaku  
Okparaji Chioma Adaugo  
Emelogu Gift  
Amadi Precious Chioma  
Ibiasi Awaji Elijah  
Udochukwu Akachukwu  
Wilson Grace Barisuka  
Nwaedom Prince Onyekachi  
Osuagwu Joy  
Allen Kelly  
Ogbonna Evelyn Obunezi  
Nwankwo Blessing Ngozi  
Anyaelechi Godspower  
Njoku Jane Nneoma  
Njoku Ugochinyere Peace  
Nwogwu Dorcas  
Okekem Promise Sopuruchi  
Alexander Joshua  
Nwogbo Gift Ugoeze  
Brown Veronica  
Ariolu Bernice Chizoba  
Nwosu Chidiadi  
Achor Hanachor James  
Felix Daniel

Cheques for the award were presented to the recipients on Sunday, 17<sup>th</sup> January, 2016 during the Diocesan rededication service at the Cathedral. We thank the knights led by Sir Ike Chinwo for their consistent commitment to the future development of our youths through these investments in their education.

**Support for the training of Priests:** The Council also supported the training of four postulants from our Diocese currently training for ordination at Trinity College, Umuahia with the sum of One Hundred Thousand Naira to each of them.

**Evo Knights 2016 Retreat:** The Annual Revival Event was held on Friday 26<sup>th</sup> and Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> February, 2016 at St. Mark's Anglican Church Elenenwo Deanery. The Council adopted the Diocesan Theme for this year: **"Jesus, our All in All"** (Col. 1:17, 3:11) for the retreat. We, the Bishop, The retired Ven. Dr. Sunday Nwachukwu and others ministered at the retreat. While we commend the 77 Knights and 52 Ladies who turned up for this retreat, we hereby decry the glaring unserious attitude and lack of passion/zeal on the part of most of the knights in this Diocese particularly towards the activities of the Council and the Diocese in general. This is most



regrettable! And we are not careful here to say that those concerned have betrayed their calling to that sacred office of the Church.

**New Council Executive:** The Diocesan Council of Knights now has a new Executive Committee following the election successfully held on 27<sup>th</sup> February, 2016. The new officers are:

- a. President – Sir Chief Ike B. S. Chinwo (Re-elected)
- b. Vice President – Sir Chief Victor Dania
- c. Secretary – Sir Chidi Osuji
- d. Assistant Secretary – Sir Chief Friday Nwanwa
- e. Financial Secretary – Dame Akudo Nnadozie
- f. Treasurer – Sir Festus Adegbuji
- g. Protocol Officer 1 – Sir Enyioma Onuoha
- h. Protocol Officer 2 – Sir Clement I Ejiofor
- i. Public Relations Officer – Sir Ernest Chinwo

The Ladies wing of the Council is led by Lady Uzo Onweluzo.

We appointed a new chaplain in the person of The Venerable Charles Mordi early in the year.

**New Sick Bay Building Project at BCMSS, Rumuobiokani:** We are glad to report that the Ladies of the Knights led by Lady Uzo Onweluzo have completed the Sick Bay project which they undertook at the Bishop Crowther Memorial Secondary School, Rumuobiokani following our charge to groups in the Diocese to assist our Diocesan Schools with the development of capital projects. The sizable bungalow has two en-suite consulting rooms, spacious wards for about 10 beds, five toilets, a large reception area, nursing station, treatment/isolation room as well as a space for a laboratory. We commend the ladies for giving us what may soon turn to a unique model cottage hospital for the Diocese. The completed but yet to be equipped building was formally handed over to us by the ladies on Monday, 11<sup>th</sup> July, 2016. We now call on the Council of Knights (their husbands) and other good spirited individuals, organizations and companies within and outside our Diocese to assist the ladies in the provision of vital medical equipment to enable us put the facility into full use in the earliest possible time.

**Evo Knights Charity/Welfare Luncheon:** The fourth edition of the Luncheon took place on Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> June, 2016 at the Archbishop Peter Akinola Retreat Centre, St. Andrew’s Anglican Church, Rumuobiokani Deanery. It provided a robust platform for the knights of this Diocese and other invited guests to raise funds with which the Council could respond to the needs of some categories of persons in the society especially indigent students and widows.

Keynote speakers at the occasion were Dame Ngozi Amobi who spoke on the “Wisdom of Generosity” and the Venerable Dr. F. N. Akah on “Charity, a Christian Perspective”.

We thank the Council of Knights for being able to put up such a grand event again despite the seemingly bleeding economy of our country.

### **Lay Readers**

The Conference of the Diocesan Lay Readers Association was held at the Holy Ghost Anglican Church, Iriebe Housing Estate Parish from Friday, 11<sup>th</sup> to Sunday, 13<sup>th</sup> September, 2015. The Conference theme was “Vessel of Honour for Excellent Service” (2 Timothy 2:21). At the end of it, a new Diocesan Executive Committee was elected as follows:

- Sir Paul Chukwumatk – President
- Sir Alfred C. Ozuzu – Vice President
- Lady Maureem Osuagwu – Secretary
- Evangelist Emmanuel Vurabel – Assistant Secretary
- Lady Felicia Derek-Iyo – Treasurer
- Mrs. Chinyeru Emenike – Financial Secretary
- Evangelist Silas Ekezie – Public Relations Officer
- Mr. Sabinus Nwarie – Prayer Secretary
- Mrs. Chioma Umeohanna – Prayer Secretary 2
- Evangelist Joyce Churchill Anozie – Evangelism Officer
- Dame Akudo Nnadozie – Welfare Officer 1
- Mrs. Maureen Adolphus Chuku – Welfare Officer 2
- Mr. Charles Daniels – Provost 1
- Evangelist Samuel Odueley Provost 2

They were inaugurated by us on Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> October, 2015 during the Discipleship Conference Thanksgiving Service at St. Andrew’s Church, Rumuobiokani Deanery.

A 2-Day beginning of the year retreat and a service of renewal of vows of license as readers was held between Friday, 19<sup>th</sup> and Saturday, 20<sup>th</sup> February, 2016 at Christ Harvest Anglican Church, Faith Avenue, Woji Parish. At the retreat new officers were also elected for the various Administrative Blocs in the Diocese.

We commend the Lay Readers for waking up to the primary mission of the church, which is soul winning. The association carried out gospel crusades at Rumunduru in conjunction with Our Saviour, Christ Anglican Church from Thursday, 29<sup>th</sup> October to Sunday, 1<sup>st</sup> November, 2015 and also at the premises of St. James’ church, Iriebe Parish from Thursday, 28<sup>th</sup> April to Sunday, 1<sup>st</sup> May, 2016.

We charge the President and all members of the Association to sustain this fresh zeal with the help of the Holy Spirit as there are many more areas to cover.

On training, the Association held a Two-Day lay readers school from Friday, 13<sup>th</sup> to Sunday, 14<sup>th</sup> May, 2016 at St. Andrew’s Church, Rumuobiokani Deanery.

### **Diocesan Missions, Evangelism, Church Planting & Development Board**

The parting words of our Lord Jesus Christ before His ascension to His disciples were “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; in my name they shall cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover” (Mark 16:15-18).

St. Mark records that so soon as the Lord was received up into heaven, the disciples went forth and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word with signs following (vs 20). From this, we note that the disciples did not waste time carrying out the mandate of the Lord. It was the obedience and faithfulness of the early church followers of Christ particularly in the area of witnessing to the saving grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, that saw to the widespread growth of the church. We cannot, however, claim to be as obedient to the Lord in this regard as those who served Him before us. As a Diocesan community, we appear to have made progress in a number of areas (for so it seems), particularly in the eyes of the outside world, but in this most important area of missions and evangelism, which is key to God’s programme of redemption for mankind, we cannot beat our chest and claim to have fared well. Our response has rather been most dismal, lukewarm, and lacking in zeal and genuine interest. Other areas of church-life appear to excite us, but definitely not the issue of missions and evangelism. A church that does not evangelise should not expect to grow or increase. We have noted that most churches do not have clear cut evangelism plan of action and even the Diocesan road map that should assist churches that do not know what to do is not followed. The quarterly outreach programme “On The Highway And Hedges” has suffered miserably in the hands of most clergymen and church leaders. Consequently, the followers have not on their part seen reason to embrace it as they ought.

It is in a bid to inject some fresh fire into this area of our mission and ministry as a Diocese that we have decided to reconstitute the Diocesan Board of Missions under a new name “**Diocesan Missions, Evangelism, Church Planting and Development Board**” with the Venerable Alex Usifoh as the Chairman. The Board shall have as its functions, the following:

- To implement the vision and policies of the Bishop/Diocesan Board on Missions and Evangelism
- To create awareness, organise Diocesan crusades and outreaches, mobilize the entire Diocese from time to time for the purpose of winning and bringing more souls into the Kingdom of God through our churches.
- To map out and plant more churches in areas within the Diocese where none exists.
- To carry out routine training programmes, seminars for all in missions and evangelism across the Diocese
- To raise persons for short term mission work beyond the shores of the Diocese of Evo as the Bishop may direct

- To provide support to parishes and stations within the Diocese in their evangelical outreaches as the need arises
- To also produce printed materials like gospel tracts for purposes of evangelism in partnership with the chaplaincy for Sunday school, Discipleship, literature and publications
- To present quarterly reports to the Bishop and the Diocesan Board and an annual report to the Synod on missions and evangelism activities in the Diocese
- To carry out any other assigned role(s) by the Bishop.

We confess that these are weighty tasks that require optimum zeal and commitment on the part of those now appointed as Board members. We charge the Venerable Alex Usifoh led Board to go about these assignments prayerfully and diligently and everyone in the Diocese – clergy and laity to give them the maximum encouragement and support required to enable us all succeed in this area.

Our poor performance in this area notwithstanding, we put on record that the following seven (7) administrative blocs, churches and group out of fifteen (15) given mandate by us two years ago have endeavoured to plant new churches to mark the 7<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our Diocese this year. They are:

1. Christ Church, Federal Housing Estate Parish, Woji planted a new church at Nvugwe on Sunday, 5<sup>th</sup> July, 2015.
2. Trinity Missionary Archdeaconry planted a new church at Nzor Hotel Avenue, off Igbo Etche road, Ohia Owuru Elieli, Rumuokwurusu on Sunday, 19<sup>th</sup> July, 2015
3. St. Philip's planted a new church at Igbaa Estate, Rumunduru on Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> December, 2015
4. The Diocesan Women's Ministry has facilitated the take-off of the Rose of Sharon Anglican Church along Eneka-Igbo Etche road, Atali which is now to be run by the Trinity Missionary Archdeaconry.
5. Church of the Holy Spirit planted a new church at Boskel road (off Port Harcourt-Oyibo road) on Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> May, 2016.
6. St. Nicholas', Woji District in partnership with the local Anglican Youth Fellowship planted a new church at RSTV Estate, Iriebe on Sunday, 8<sup>th</sup> May, 2016.
7. All Saints' Cathedral also planted a new church at Rumuibekwe off the Port Harcourt – Aba Expressway on Sunday, 12<sup>th</sup> June, 2016.

We commend them and pray that God will increase and enlarge their coasts the more and grant them the resources and will to cater for these young congregations. The remaining 8 churches are to explain to us why they were not able to fulfil this directive up to this point in time.

Towards the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our Diocese in 2019, we had charged the Diocesan Missions, Evangelism, Church Planting and Development Board and thirteen other

churches to plant at least one new church each in any part of the Diocese. The Churches concerned already know themselves. However, for the avoidance of doubt, we advise everyone to consult our Synod Addresses of 2014 and 2015 as well as the report of the Missions, Evangelism, Church Planting and Development Board to this Synod. This directive is already two years old and it is our hope that those concerned will not come up with any excuses when the deadline expires.

Secondly, we commend the women of our Diocese led by Mrs. Chinyere Ordu, the Bishop's wife who as part of their Mothering Sunday celebration this year partnered with the Church of the Holy Spirit, Elelenwo and took the message of the gospel to a slum called Garki at Oil Mill/Elemo Junction, Rumuokwursi mainly inhabited by Muslims, robbers and harlots. They administered free medical treatments, clothes and food items.

### **Mission to Diocese On The Lake**

In obedience to the "Go Ye" injunction of our Lord, a 23 man missionary team made up of six clergymen, eight Church Teachers and nine others was sent by us to our Link Diocese – On The Lake at the invitation of the host Bishop from Thursday, 9<sup>th</sup> to Sunday, 12<sup>th</sup> June, 2016 to assist in the planting of new and reviving of some other existing churches within that Diocese. The Mission team led by the Venerable Alex Usifoh held outreaches and revival meetings at the Cathedral, Izombe, Agwa, Ejemekwuru, Akabo and Ndionyemaobi areas of the Diocese. The team planted two new churches and recorded a total of 165 souls that responded to the message of the gospel in the six areas covered. We commend their zeal and thank them for their efforts.

### **Adult Sunday School, Literature, Publications And Discipleship Ministry**

This ministry which is one of the most life imparting in our Diocese has remained meaningfully busy all through the year. We commend the Chaplain, The Rev. Sampson Okechukwu Abada and the members of the Diocesan Writers Board for their consistency in developing, publishing and distributing our yearly Adult Sunday School/Bible Study Manuals. The current year's Sunday School manual based on the theme "Standing Strong Through the Storms" is most relevant and apt as the studies contained therein address the numerous challenges confronting a good number of our parishioners and other Christians in this country. We pray for more inspiration and guidance of the Holy Spirit in their future publications.

We sponsored the Chaplains to this year's Church of Nigeria-organized Writers' Workshop preparatory to the 2017 National publications which was hosted at St. Paul's Cathedral, Diobu, Port Harcourt from Monday, 7<sup>th</sup> to Friday, 11<sup>th</sup> March, 2016.

With the assistance of some Lay readers in the Diocese our assigned portion of the 2017 Church of Nigeria Daily Fountain Devotional write-ups has since been completed and forwarded to the relevant national department.

The Ministry of the Sunday School has been so critical to the spiritual life of our congregations and will continue to remain so. We charge our clergy and leaders of our churches to faithfully accord the weekly Adult Sunday School/Bible study sessions its deserved place in the overall ministry/worship of the Church. Nothing short of **one hour** should be set aside every Sunday for the Adult Sunday School either before or within the services of the church. Let us follow the example of the early church disciples of Christ who gave themselves continually to prayer and to the **ministry of the word** (Acts 6:4) without giving room to distractions.

### **Diocesan Prayer Ministry**

We commend the Diocesan Prayer Ministry for the various activities carried out within the year in review, such as Diocesan Night Vigils; Prayer and fasting retreats for the Bishop, Clergy, church teachers and their wives; as well as for members of the Prayer Units of churches.

The effectiveness of our ministry as a Diocese will largely depend on the efficacy of our unceasing prayers at all levels. The Diocesan Prayer Ministry would need to do more to mobilise the entire Diocese unto more serious and regular culture of prayer.

We are encouraged by some wives of the clergy and church teachers who gather at 7:00am every Saturday in the Bishop's Court Chapel of Refuge with Mama Diocese- the Bishop's wife, Mrs. Chinyere Ordu to pray. We hope the clergy themselves would consider borrowing a leaf from these faithful women (their wives) and start meeting more regularly strictly for prayers. This is one of our primary tasks as ministers which we must not neglect for other non-basic essentials.

### **Diocesan Music Ministry**

**Evo Sing Aloud:** The annual praise programme of the Diocesan Band was hosted by St. Nicholas' Anglican Church, Woji District on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> November, 2015. The event which featured several artists from within and outside the Diocese was well attended.

**Diocesan Choir Singing Competition:** This was held at St. Nicholas' Church, Woji District on Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> November, 2015. One of the major highlights of the event was the performance par excellence of the guest choir from St. Gabriel's Anglican Church, Kpite Deanery, Diocese of Ogoni. We thank them for coming at our invitation. The following churches emerged winners at the end of the presentations by the finalists:

First position – St. Nicholas' Woji with 82.2 points

Second position – St. Mark's Elelenwo Deanery with 79.2 points and

Third position – Holy Ghost Anglican Church, Iriebe Housing Estate Parish with 68.7 points

The 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> positions went to New Covenant Eliminigwe (66.2 points), Daystar Youth Church (61.2 points) and Anglican Worship Centre, Apna Ogwu,

Okporo (48.7 points) respectively. The trophy for the best choir conductor was carted home by choirmaster of Daystar Church, Mr. Alozie Akparanta

It is worth mentioning that one of our sponsors, Engr. George Iwoh undertook the replacement of the old trophies and at the same time raised the cash prize from N50,000 to N100,000 for the overall winner, N30,000 to N70,000 and N20,000 to N50,000 for 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> runners up respectively. Also, Sir Alex Orakwe supported the staging of the competition with the sum of N250,000.

**We held a special meeting and interactive session** with over 400 choristers, choirmasters and organists in the Diocese on Sunday, 31<sup>st</sup> January 2016 to address a number of issues affecting the growth of the music ministry particularly at the Diocesan level.

**A Beginning of The Year Retreat** was held on Saturday, 30<sup>th</sup> January, 2016 at St. Philip's, Oroigwe District. The retreat was well attended.

By our directive, the Diocesan Choir Council recommended to us the following for **appointment** as follows:

- a. Mr, Abbey Wilcox – Diocesan Choirmaster and Music Director
- b. Mr. Idala Fila – Diocesan Chief Organist

We congratulate them and wish them more of God's grace.

**2016 Diocesan Children's Singing Competition:** The finals of this year's ACM singing competition held at Church of The Holy Spirit, Elelenwo District on Saturday, 28<sup>th</sup> May, 2016. The All Saints' Cathedral Children's Choir emerged winners, while the Joint Evo Diocesan Schools' Choir and St. Michael's Church, Rumuomasi Children's Choir emerged the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> runners up respectively. We congratulate both the winning choirs and others who took part in the competition.

There is need for the clergy and the lay leadership of our churches to encourage these children now if we intend for them to take over the church of tomorrow and sustain our Anglican Heritage. It is regrettable to note that a good number of churches did not expose their children to this healthy competition. We wonder what the pastors/church teachers of such churches will have as their explanation. It is equally sad that some clergymen whose choirs come for Diocesan competitions are not even there to cheer them up. This definitely betrays the spirit of The Good Shepherd and we pray that it does not continue.

### **Family Life & Home Fellowship Ministry**

We established this ministry in the Diocese to handle issues relating to the families of members of our various churches, monitor the operations and from time to time expose members of the various church marriage and Family Life Committees to helpful trainings for improved performance. Additionally, the unit ensures that the policy of the Diocese on the mandatory establishment of Home Fellowship groups by

every church is enforced, as well as provide trainings for leaders, teachers and hosts of Home fellowship centres.

This ministry has so far done a lot in pursuance of its Diocesan mandate, especially the hosting of retreats/trainings for those involved in this ministry in the Diocese.

The Diocesan team led by Mrs Ijeoma Anagbogu as Coordinator has not hidden its desire to succeed in their assignments. Consequently, we charge the clergy to support this ministry by always mobilising members of their Marriage Committees and Home Fellowship group leaders to participate actively in programmes organised at the Diocesan level.

As part of our programmes for this year, the unit is to organise a family conference to capture all classes of persons within the family. The Conference will hold from Wednesday, 28<sup>th</sup> to Friday, 30<sup>th</sup> September this year at the Cathedral. It will serve as prelude to the 2016 Independence Day Evo Praise and Prays programme on October 1<sup>st</sup> and Diocesan Harvest Thanksgiving Service on Sunday, 2<sup>nd</sup> October.

We call on everyone to prepare to participate in these family events.

### **Guild of Stewards**

The strategic role played members of the Diocesan Guild of Stewards in all Diocesan programmes and activities is hereby appreciated. We commend the efforts of the unit under past and present chaplains for the series of trainings and retreat programmes packaged for members in order to equip them for greater performance. We charge them to continue faithfully in their task of maintaining order and decorum in all our gatherings.

### **Industrial Chaplaincy**

We thank God for the steady progress being recorded by this ministry. The Ministry team is now made up of 20 evangelists with the Reverends Ugochukwu L. Nwaghai and Chukwudi Theophilus as Chaplains.

The activities of the Chaplaincy took the team to new places such as FirstBank, Rumuomasi, Debone photo Industry, Elemenwo and the Diocesan Women Garment Factory. Market Evangelism were held at Railway Market, Elemenwo, Oil Mill Market, Rumuokwursi, Rumuokwursi Market at Tank and Rumuomasi evening Market.

We, the Bishop visited two business establishments with the Chaplains and some other industrial evangelists to minister the Word and also pray for the workers. They were the Givers Phone at Rumuogba and Unity Bank, Rumuomasi Branch on the 30<sup>th</sup> November, 2015.



We charge all our members who have business establishments to create room for members of the Chaplaincy to bring the gospel of Christ to their employees and also pray for such establishments. This is at **no costs whatsoever**. More volunteer evangelists are needed by the Chaplaincy to assist in its tasks. Those led to join should please see the Chaplains.

### **Public/Private Secondary Schools Ministry (PPSSM)**

This ministry exists to take the good news of Christ to staff and students of all government and privately owned secondary schools within our Diocese. This Chaplaincy presently visits 29 schools every week following the increase in the number of 'schools evangelists' and the involvement of some of our church teachers and Ordinands. However, despite the progress so far made, we strongly feel that our aim in establishing this ministry is far from being actualized. We pray that the new Chaplains who have already mapped out fresh operational strategies for this ministry will do more to actualize them. We look forward to the implementation of our annual Bible/Academic Quiz Competitions among the secondary schools within this Diocese as well as the annual students' holiday camp for the purpose of imparting spiritually on all participating students.

As part of our readiness to promote the activities of this ministry, provision has been made to provide annually, daily Christian devotional materials for students under our coverage.

This ministry which targets our young persons is critical in God's redemption plan for mankind. We welcome volunteers to team up with the Chaplains in their outreaches to the schools. We equally call for sponsors to assist us carry out some of the programmes already outlined.

### **Anglican Christian Corpers Fellowship**

This is one of the several youth ministry groups in our Diocese. The Ministry exists to provide spiritual and material support to members of the National Youth Service Corps Programme who are posted to serve in Rivers State and are worshipping in our Evo Churches.

The Chaplaincy previously headed by The Rev. Gospel Onuchukwu and now under the The Rev. Collins Daniel as Chaplain has organized a number of activities in order to actualize its mission. These include seminars, retreats for Bible studies and Prayers; interactive sessions with the Bishop and wife as well as send-forth for those who have successfully completed their service year and those arriving to commence.

It is our duty as clergy, church teachers and members of congregations to look out for corps members who come to our churches for worship and encourage them to feel at home and integrate fully into the life and ministry of the Church. It is the view of our Primate that the service year for Corps members should be the best time to equip them to play key roles in the lay and ordained ministries of the church. We agree

wholly with His Grace. And so, let us encourage the Ministry to succeed in her set out programmes.

### **Anglican Communion Brigade**

The Anglican Communion Brigade which is made up of male and female children and youths seeks primarily to train up her members to boldly stand up for Jesus as soldiers of the cross, lifting high the royal banner of Christ and ensuring that it does not suffer any loss.

Members of the group in the Diocese were exposed to a number of spiritual activities in the year by the chaplain, Rev. Moses Anyaefena and the leaders to enable them develop greater faith in and commitment to Christ.

The Founders Week thanksgiving was held in all churches on Sunday, 4<sup>th</sup> October, 2015 while the Boys Brigade (BB) Week was observed from 9<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> May, 2016.

**New ACB Diocesan Officers:** On Sunday, 8<sup>th</sup> November, 2015 the Diocesan ACB conducted fresh elections for a new Diocesan Executive Committee. The following emerged as its leaders:

- |                           |   |                             |
|---------------------------|---|-----------------------------|
| 1. Onyebuchi Otti (Capt.) | - | Diocesan Coordinator        |
| 2. Mike Onyeocha (Capt.)  | - | Assistant Coordinator       |
| 3. Kingsley Ekpeberechi   | - | General Secretary           |
| 4. Kingsley Ukaegbu       | - | Assistant General Secretary |
| 5. Simon Ndamati (Capt.)  | - | Public Relations Officer    |
| 6. Charles Amadi          | - | Financial Secretary         |
| 7. Oluchi Uba             | - | Treasurer                   |
| 8. Chibueze Ucheaga       | - | Training Officer I          |
| 9. Uchechi Uzuokwu        | - | Training Officer II         |
| 10. Elizabeth Monyasha    | - | Welfare Officer I           |
| 11. Iheanyi Ihetu         | - | Welfare Officer II          |
| 12. Sunny Okoli           | - | Prayer Secretary I          |
| 13. Destiny Amadi         | - | Prayer Secretary II         |
| 14. Chimzi Eleto (Capt.)  | - | Provost                     |
| 15. Chimka Emenike        | - | Chief Security Officer I    |
| 16. Okechukwu Ukachukwu   | - | Chief Security Officer II   |

Some of these officers were inaugurated by us on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of December, 2015 during the One-Day Synod of the Diocese held at Bishop Crowther Memorial Secondary School, Rumuobiokani. Others not commissioned were absent.

Induction and Enrolment Services were held in some churches within the the year and at Bishop Crowther Memorial Secondary School, Rumuobiokani.

We are not comfortable with the policy of the Diocesan ACB leadership that members of the Boys Brigade of yet to be inaugurated church companies should not perform their roles when the Bishop visits such churches for Episcopal Services. We

consider such services good occasions for the Boys to put into practice what they have learnt over time while awaiting for the day of inauguration. Leaders of groups in this Diocese should please desist from coming up with policies that they have not cleared with us to avoid causing unnecessary embarrassment. Let it be known to all concerned that it is mandatory for Church Brigade groups to feature and play their statutory roles when the Bishop visits their parishes/stations whether the group is already inaugurated or is waiting to be inaugurated. We shall not tolerate any further confusion from any overzealous leader of the Boys Brigade on this matter.

We have since directed that a functional and well equipped Brigade Unit be established in every church for the primary aim of creating a platform for service and ministry for our young people who readily fit into that arm. This should be regarded as one of the many priority issues to be addressed by churches to the glory of God.

Parents/guardians should encourage their boys and girls to enrol in this and all other youth related groups in the church.

Our families, church nation of tomorrow will stand to gain from this when the time comes.

### **Clergy and Church Workers' Children**

The 2015 Annual Conference of the Clergy and Church Workers Children's Ministry took place at ACMGS, Elelenwo from 18<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> August. The theme was "**Living a Life of Integrity and Excellence**". About 154 children of church workers ranging from 7 years and above were in attendance. It featured Bible studies, talk on the theme, presentations from the ten administrative blocs, workshop, interactive sessions with the teenagers, sports, and election of a new Diocesan executive.

The elected officers are:

1. Miss Prayer Bright Okocha- Leader
2. Miss Precious Miracle Odum-Assistant Leader
3. Miss Chineye Alexander Okonkwo-Secretary
4. Master Dapo Igbamerun-Assistant Secretary
5. Master Great Chinda-Public Relations Officer
6. Master Gods time Festus Owhor- Provost 1
7. Master Chukwubuikem Daniel Abada-Provost 2

The Conference was hosted with contributions (in cash and kind) from Churches in the Diocese.

Other programmes organized by this Unit included:

- The end of the year/Christmas party held on the 19<sup>th</sup> of December, 2015 at Anglican Church of Pentecost, Rumuogba.
- The Easter Retreat held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> April, 2016 at Holy Ghost (Ang.) Church Iriebe Housing Estate Parish. The theme was "**He has risen**".

A retreat for the clergy and their families is billed to hold from Thursday, 25<sup>th</sup> to Sunday, 28<sup>th</sup> August, 2016 at Ibru Centre, Agbarha-Otor, Delta State.

We commend the Coordinator, Mrs. Oluwaseun Ijaware and the Chaplain, The Rev. Samuel Fedigha for all the preparations already put in place for a fruitful outing. We hereby remind the clergy, church teachers, other workers and their wives whose children are mandatorily a part of this ministry (because of their positions in the Diocese) that this retreat is not optional. Consequently, they are expected to be fully in attendance with their children. The Vice Chancellor of Ajayi Crowther University, Oyo, The Rt. Rev. Prof. Dapo Asaju will be the main Guest Minister at the retreat.

We have through the Diocesan Coordinator and Chaplain made appeals to some members of our Diocese for financial assistance towards the staging of this retreat. We use this medium to renew that appeal and request everyone else to support the clergy family in this regard.

### **Chaplaincy for Lay Workers of the Diocese**

We have appointed the Rev. Canon Godfrey Onyemelukwe as Chaplain to provide Spiritual cure and care to all the lay workers in the Diocese. Those to be served by this chaplaincy include the Clerks/Administrative staff at all levels; Drivers, Sextons, Yardmen as well as others considered to be church workers.

The chaplain is to aim at developing these categories of workers spiritually using every available platform. The Chaplain has since commenced his contacts with these workers. We call on all those to be served by this ministry to please cooperate with him.

### **Directorate for Civic and Political Affairs**

The directorate organized a Church Hall Meeting on Saturday, 25<sup>th</sup> June, 2016 at St. Michael's Church, Rumuomasi Deanery and discussions by participants centred on the question, "Renewal of Militancy in the Niger Delta: What Does It Portend for The Nigerian State?".

At the end of the meeting, participants resolved as follows:

1. The Church must continue to play out its role as a neutral umpire in the civic and political affairs of the Nigerian nation.
2. Commended the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) for its foresight in establishing the Directorate of Civic and Political Affairs (DCPA), especially at the grass root levels.
3. Church leadership should endeavour to combat the evil phenomenon of "Religion without depth".

4. That a large chunk of the dividends of oil prosperity should be used to grow citizens who will become vanguards of intellectual advocacy as against the current trend of militancy.
5. That militancy in the Niger Delta is an evil wind and all hands should be on deck to eradicate every form of militarization of the region.
6. That Government should be sincere and firm in enforcing International Best Practices in matters of oil exploration and exploitation in the Niger Delta.
7. That Citizenship Education and Youth Empowerment should be given an urgent priority.
8. That the Church should partner with conflict resolution and peace advocacy groups to hold ***Town Hall Meetings*** to address issues of suppression and oppression among oil-producing Communities and their traditional rulers.

We thank the guest speakers, Barr. C. A. J. Chinwo (Senior Lecturer in Law, RSUST, Port Harcourt), Mr. Oliver Wolugbom (Director, National Orientation Agency, Rivers State), Mr. Ignatius Chuku, JP (Regional Editor/General Manager-Business Day); the Chairman of the occasion, Chief Barrister Godwin O. Amadi and the participants drawn from across the Diocese for their outstanding performances at the meeting.

We specially commend the Chairman of the Directorate for Civic and Political Affairs, The Rev. Canon Chuka Opara for packaging such an intellectually rewarding meeting in the name of the Diocese.

### **Directorate of Social Welfare**

The Directorate of Social Welfare had a seemingly quiet year. They were however able to carry out three major visits to:

- The Cottage Hospital at Rumuobiokani on Tuesday, 8<sup>th</sup> December, 2015;
- The Rehabilitation Home, Iriebe on Wednesday, 9<sup>th</sup> of March, 2016, and
- Our Saviour's Orphanage Home, Rumuokwursi on Sunday, 22<sup>nd</sup> May, 2016.

We commend them while also urging members of the Directorate to increase their activities as provided for in the Diocesan Constitution. Membership of the Directorate shall be reconstituted by us shortly following the provisions of the Constitution.

### **Diocesan Sports Ministry**

The Diocesan Sports Ministry in conjunction with the Diocesan Men's Christian Association (DMCA) organized a football competition among the various Administrative Blocs MCA to mark this year's Fathers' Day. In the final match played on Saturday, 18<sup>th</sup> June, 2016, the Cathedral MCA team defeated the team from the Diocesan Churches by 2 goals to 1 to emerge winners.

Members of the Diocesan Sports Council assisted the 3 Diocesan Schools in their respective inter-house-sports meetings and also in the joint celebration of this year's National Children's Day activities by the three schools.

We are still waiting to see the promised Diocesan Football team pick up very well. Right now, we only hear of its existence. We would rather love to see the team in action. This is a task the Diocesan Sports Chaplains and the members of the Sports Council have to accomplish to the admiration and satisfaction of all. This should also apply to the issue of raising a Diocesan Children's Football team.

Sporting activities, apart from being avenues for recreation and competition now serve as open doors for the advancement of the gospel message of the church particularly among the youths. The Chaplains, The Reverends Chukwuma Anukem and Samuel Ejekwu and all those who serve with them in this ministry should therefore do everything possible and speedily to take advantage of this outlet for evangelism.

### **EVO DIOCESAN SCHOOLS**

By the grace of God, after an almost 2-year interregnum, a new 17-member Education Board, headed by Sir Victor Dania, was formally inaugurated by us on Sunday, 7<sup>th</sup> February 2016. The Board was mandated to provide governance and leadership for the three existing Diocesan Schools; Archdeacon Crowther Memorial Girls' School (ACMGS), Elelenwo, Bishop Crowther Memorial Secondary School (BCMSS) Rumuobiokani and The Word of Faith Group of Schools (WOFGS), Woji; and to also supervise all Parish Schools in the Diocese.

More specifically, the Board was charged with the task of:

- improving the standards of the existing Diocesan schools, making them centres of excellence and a benchmark for other schools and schools of first choice for parents and students within and outside the state,
- initiating the process and working towards obtaining external accreditation by the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI) and others, and
- exploring the possibility of establishing more Schools for the Diocese.

We are quite pleased with the level of zeal and commitment so far demonstrated by the Chairman and members of the new Board and pray for God's grace and guidance as they discharge the onerous assignment of taking our schools to greater heights.

### **Students' Academic, Spiritual and Extra-Curricular Activities**

We are equally pleased with the steady growth of the three schools which now have a combined population of 1,434 Secondary, Primary and Nursery students/pupils and a staff population of over 230. We commend the work of the Principals, Head

teachers, other academic and non-academic staff of these schools and the support of all parents.

- West African Examination Council (WAEC) results from the three schools have been good, although performance of ACMGS SSCE students in Mathematics and English gave cause for concern. Consequently a mentorship programme in Mathematics was initiated by a member of the Education Board, Dr Azubuike Weli with a lady Professor , Olabisi Ugbebor of the University of Ibadan as resource person and role model for the girls in both ACMGS and Word of Faith Schools. We pray that this will help to encourage the learning of mathematics by students of both schools.
- Our students again participated at the Einstein Science Challenge and by the grace of God, emerged among the best 50 in Rivers State, with three BCMSS Rumuobiokani students; Azorom Princewill, Emmanuel Bassey and Tamunoemi Dappa making it to the final stage. Similarly, another Word of Faith student, Master Williamson Sopakirite Amachree won a cash prize as well as other assorted items and books in the state-wide Spelling Bee Competition.
- From the Schools' Chaplaincies, regular devotions, revival programmes and other spiritual activities were carried out by the Chaplains. We commend the improved culture of singing hymns and canticles in the three schools through the efforts of the Music Chaplains of the Diocese and schools. The Joint Schools' Choir participated in the second edition of the Diocesan Children's Singing Competition and emerged overall second. They were unable to retain the first position they won at the maiden edition.
- The 2016 National Children's Day Celebration was jointly held by the three Diocesan schools at the Bishop Crowther Memorial Secondary School field, Rumuobiokani on Friday, 27<sup>th</sup> May, 2016. It featured march-past, drama, dance and choral renditions, etc. and the presentation of trophies to outstanding performers.

## **Staff Development**

Training and retraining of all staff remains a priority for the Diocesan Schools. This is evidenced by the scope and participation in the various continuous training programs:

- Principal officers of the three Schools and the Education Board Chairman attended the Association of Christian Schools International-organized "Train the Trainers" Workshop held in South Africa, with the theme "**Effective Leadership**". We are ensuring that several of the ideas and successes picked up by the attendees are being

categorized for implementation at both the individual, schools and Diocesan levels.

- Staff of the schools also attended various other training programmes for greater effectiveness and efficiency. One of these is a 2-Day ACSI Seminar held here in Port Harcourt with the theme "10 times better".

### **Infrastructural Developments**

- At ACMGS, and to the glory of God, a two storey 21 classroom/library/computer laboratory/offices/assembly hall building for the Nursery/Primary school started 2 years ago by the school has been successfully completed and formally unveiled by the Executive Governor of Rivers State, His Excellency, Chief Barr. Ezebunwo Nyesom Wike, CON represented by the Commissioner for Education, Professor Kaniye Ebeku and dedicated by us on Friday, 15<sup>th</sup> July, 2016. It is heart-warming to note that this massive project cost a total of Sixty Three Million, One Hundred and Eighty Seven Thousand, Seven Hundred and Fourteen naira, Twenty Five Kobo (N63, 187, 714, 25. 00) only mainly through direct labour. We commend the Principal of ACMGS and her management team for their frugal management of available funds.

On the same day, 15<sup>th</sup> July, we laid the foundation for a new eighteen classroom block with offices for the Secondary section.

- For BCMSS, we thank God for the completion and dedication of the multi-purpose building of 16 classroom blocks/Chapel and offices by the Diocese last year. Plans are also at an advanced stage for the construction of a multi-purpose block to accommodate an examination hall, laboratories, library and offices.
- At WoFGS, space constraint has posed a serious challenge to the growth of the schools. To address this problem, Town Planners and the Diocesan Surveyors and Architects have been engaged to produce a new infrastructural plan that optimizes land use, and allows growth, while presenting a more appealing environment. In the meantime, the Secondary School section has been given a facelift, while additional Boys and Girls bathrooms/toilets have been completed by the school and dedicated by us.

We thank God for the continued support of the co-proprietors of this school, the Woji Town Word of Faith Schools Limited, through the person of Mrs Ngozi Oyewole, (nee Eke), which has seen them donating several items of furniture, equipment and books to the Schools. May God continue to grant the Evo Diocese and the Eke family the unity of purpose and the resources to make the schools the dream of both parties.



- The National Old Girls Association of ACMGS has resumed work on the multi-purpose hall/chapel project, while the Chapel project embarked upon by the Old Boys of BCMSS is still in progress, We pray that God will enable both groups to finish their projects this time.

Evo schools need a lot of support, and we appeal to well-spirited individuals, groups and organisations to help in any of the following areas:

- Buses, including 30-seater Toyota Coaster to cope with the increasing number of pupils needing transportation.
- New Dormitory buildings to replace dilapidated ones at ACMGS
- New staff quarters to replace old and dilapidated ones at both ACMGS and BCMSS
- Construction of internal roads
- Appropriately-sized diesel generators – for full lighting of entire compounds to avoid dark spots at night in the 3 schools

The Almighty God will bless as many as will hearken to this clarion appeal aimed at making the Evo Diocesan Schools the place where students attain academic, spiritual and moral excellence in readiness to become leaders of tomorrow.

## **PILGRIMAGES TO THE HOLY LAND**

The Diocese sponsored seven of her youths to take part in the maiden edition of the Youth Pilgrimage to the Holy Land, Israel from Wednesday, 25<sup>th</sup> July to Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> August, 2015. The trip was organized by the Nigerian Christian Pilgrims Commission in collaboration with the Institute of National Transformation International (INTI).

The youths were taken on a tour of several Holy sites such as the Church of the Beatitudes, Mount Olives, Temple Mount, Yadvashem, Jericho and the Dead Sea. Additionally, they were taken through a 3-Day basic training course on transformational leadership and on agricultural excursion.

Our youths led by Mr. Chika Amadi were adjudged the OVERALL BEST team at the end of their training sessions and workshop.

To God be the glory!

We have since charged the youths to domesticate all the lessons drawn from the pilgrimage especially on Agriculture with the guidance of our Advisory Committee on Economic Empowerment.

One year after their return, we are yet to reap from the gains of their ‘Overall Best’ performance. We are waiting!

Similarly, we sponsored three other adult members of our Diocese to the 2015 regular 10-Day Pilgrimage exercise also to Israel. It lasted from Tuesday, 20<sup>th</sup> to Friday, 30<sup>th</sup> October, 2015.

Those sponsored were The Venerable Godwin B. Chinda – who was as at then just fresh from emerging as the Clerical Synod Secretary of our Diocese, Sir Godspwer Ebenezer, the immediate past Lay Synod Secretary and Sir Collins N. Amadi.

As with the youths, they too were taken on a tour of the various holy sites in Israel – about 30 in all and also slept in five of the best hotels in Israel.

From their own report, some of the lessons learnt from the pilgrimage exercise included:

- There can be water and food in the desert
- Faith can increase and Bible stories become more real at the sight of the Holy sites
- A Christian should hold the things of the world loosely.

We have since received them back home. We pray that the gains made and lessons they learnt from the trip will continue to help them in their journey of faith.

## **SPECIAL DIOCESAN PROJECTS/INVESTMENTS**

### **Ebenezer Anglican Church**

We have successfully acquired a property to serve as the permanent site for the Ebenezer Anglican Church planted by the Diocesan Men's Christian Association (now Christian Men's Fellowship, CMF). The new site is situated along the Trans-Woji Slaughter Road, Woji directly opposite the present place of worship. A total of N43million is being spent on the property. Payments towards the purchase of this property based on levied amounts with congregational offerings have so far been made by the following churches:

- St. Michael's Church, Rumuomasi Deanery – N524, 645. 00
- St. Andrew's Church, Rumuobiokani Deanery – N3, 147, 200.00
- St. Mark's Church, Elemenwo Deanery – N2, 034, 435. 00
- St. Nicholas' Church, Woji District – N2, 068, 050. 00
- Bethel Anglican Church, Rumuibekwe – N263, 000.00
- Church of The Holy Spirit, Elemenwo District – N1, 011, 220.00
- New Covenant Church, Eliminigwe Parish – N308, 340.00
- Anglican Church of Pentecost, Rumuogba – N300, 000. 00
- New Wine Anglican Church, Ease/West Road, Okporo – N529, 410.00
- Ebenezer Anglican Church, Trans-Woji – N203, 800. 00

We thank them and pray the Lord to replenish their accounts. Outstanding payments are still being expected from All Saints' Cathedral, Rumuokwursi, St. Philip's Church, Oroigwe District, Holy Ghost Anglican Church, Iriebe Housing Estate, Chapel of Grace & Knowledge, ACMGS, Elemenwo, Daystar Youth Church, Rumuokwursi and several other Parishes and Stations. The sum of N7million is required by the Diocesan Board from ALL THE MEN of Evo Diocese through the DMCA (now DCMF) as their contribution towards the payment for this property. It is our hope that the men of this Diocese will quit themselves indeed as men and pay this money before the end of this year. All donations so far received by the DCMF in respect of this project should be immediately paid to the Diocese as initial part-payment of the N7m expected from the men without further delay.

### **Home For The Family Late Rev. Canon Emeka Ogu**

The Diocese has almost completed the building of a new 3 bedroom home for the widow and children of our late priest, The Rev. Canon Chukwuemeka Ogu at Eneka. Funds for this project came from the levies and contributions of some churches and activity groups in the Diocese. We are grateful to them for the huge support. Those whose payments are still outstanding are hereby directed to offset them without further delay. The house would still need to be furnished for the comfort of its occupants.

### **New Bishop and Diocesan Central Offices**

The Diocese is almost completing work at the second office section at the Southern Wing of the Cathedral for use by the Bishop and other Diocesan office workers who shall very soon move over there. The cost of this as at the moment has been earlier captured in this address.

### **Media/Communication Department: Procurement of Media Hardware**

We have purchased the following items for the Diocesan Media/Communication Department at a cost of over Four Million Naira. They include:

- 1 unit of Panasonic Pro video camera
- 2 units of Sony Pro video camera
- 1 unit of Gigabyte of internal memory space with int. flash light
- 1 unit of Canon EOS 7000D, with camera with collapsible screen
- 2 units of Pro Tripod stand 717 & dully (1)
- 2 units of extra Sony batteries (heavy duty)
- 1 unit of over-head microphone
- Rechargeable batteries, charger and holder
- Editing software, etc.
- 1 unit of Camera cables

- 1 unit of powerbank
- 2 units of Sun Gun light
- 1 unit of LED light
- 1 unit of 4 inputs channel mixer
- 5 units of communication radios

In addition to the above, the Diocese has also commenced the training of personnel to man these equipment.

### **Purchase of 60 Plots of Land**

For the purposes of future development in the areas of new churches, schools and a retreat centre and commercial housing estate, we have acquired a total of 60 plots of land at Atali at a total value of over One Hundred Million Naira. 85% of the total amount has so far been paid with a balance (representing 10 plots) to be paid in due course. We thank the Diocesan Investment Board for facilitating this latest acquisition by the Diocese.

### **Diocesan Youths Development (ICT) Centre**

The Diocesan ICT Centre for Youth development/empowerment will very shortly commence operations at the present location of the Diocesan Central office as soon as the Bishop and the entire staff of the Central office move to their new offices within the new Cathedral building. The Co-ordinators of the Centre, The Rev. Canon Joseph Ofoegbu, Mr. Emmanuel Legborsi and Mr. Godspower Ozomeyor have done quite a lot of underground preparations for the opening of the Centre. At the moment we have in place 26 computers, 30 customized computer desks with seats, one photocopier, one projector, 3 printers and 20 UPS. Much of these were donated last year by the 2014 batch of our Diocesan Knights. We invite youths who wish to be trained in Information and Communication Technology to apply for admission at the Centre through the Co-ordinators.

### **Diocesan Printing Press**

The Press began the year with a lot of challenges. Some key printing equipment suffered major breakdown which threw the Press temporarily out of business. All these issues have now been sorted out and the Press back to full work. Churches, groups and individuals should now resume their patronage of the Printing outfit. The Diocesan Board has equally resolved that all payments for jobs at the Press should now be made through its First Bank account and tellers presented to its Accounts Section before such jobs are executed. We urge everyone to please cooperate. It is our investment!

### **PREFERMENT/ORDINATION**

**New Archdeacon:** We preferred The Rev. Canon Chimaobi Nwachukwu, the Supervisor of Rumuomasi Deanery as Archdeacon on Tuesday, 15<sup>th</sup> and collated him on Sunday, 27<sup>th</sup> December, 2015 at New Wine Anglican Church, East/West Road

Parish, Okporo. He has since assumed full responsibilities as the **Rector** of St. Michael's Rumuomasi Deanery.

**1. Ordinations:**

- ❖ The Rev, Tukabari Poni was ordained Priest, while Ordinand John Eze was ordained Deacon on Sunday, 27<sup>th</sup> December, 2015 at New Wine Anglican Church, East/West Road Parish, Okporo.

We congratulate the new Archdeacon, the Priest and Deacon with their wives on their new offices.

**2. New Clergy**

We welcome The Venerable Thompson Onyewuotu and The Rev. Uzoma Isaac Ezeokpo both non-stipendiary priests who joined us from the Diocese of Uyo. We have since assigned them to St. Jude's Church, Oginigba Deanery as Curate and The Rose of Sharon Church, Atali as Supervising Priest respectively. We wish them and their families a happy stay and fruitful ministry in Evo Diocese.

**BAPTISMS/CONFIRMATIONS BY THE BISHOP**

The following baptisms and confirmations were carried out by us within the Synod Year.

- **Baptism of:** Baby Soulwinner Chioganirum of Rev. & Mrs. Raymond Osakwe on 14<sup>th</sup> August, 2015
- Baby Tehila Chinaza of Mr. & Mrs. Chimaobi Iheanacho on 16<sup>th</sup> August, 2015.
- Baby Akpenuchi Gift Chukwumati on 17<sup>th</sup> October, 2015 at Our Saviour, Christ Anglican Church, Rumunduru
- Baby Nickel Jessy Manuchinso of Rev. & Mrs. Bright Welekwe on Sunday, 18<sup>th</sup> October, 2015 at Emmanuel Church, Okporo, Iriebe
- Baby Sogidechi Stanley Orji on Sunday, 29<sup>th</sup> November, 2015 at St. Michael's Church, Rumuomasi Deanery
- Baby Peace Daberechi of Rev. Canon & Mrs. Leo Nwachukwu on Saturday, 11<sup>th</sup> June, 2016 in the Bishop's Court Chapel of Refuge
- Baby Benen Munanchimso Ernest on Sunday, 26<sup>th</sup> June, 2016 in the Bishop's Court Chapel of Refuge
- Baby David Chukwunedum Onyeme of Mr. & Mrs. Anointed Onyeme on Sunday, 17<sup>th</sup> July, 2016 at the Anglican Church of the Beatitudes, Rumuokwurusi
- **Confirmation of:** 20 candidates at St. Nicholas' Church, Woji District on Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> October, 2015.
- 36 candidates at the All Saints' Cathedral and fellowship with those confirmed since 2009 on Sunday, 1<sup>st</sup> November, 2015 (All Saints' Day).
- 74 candidates at St. Andrew's Anglican Church, Rumuobiokani Deanery on Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> April, 2016
- 27 candidates at Anglican Church of Pentecost, Ahia Woji on the occasion of the Church's 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary on Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> May, 2016

- 20 candidates at New Wine Church, East-West Road Parish, Okporo on Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> May, 2016
- 12 candidates at Mount Zion Church, Eliogbolo Parish on Sunday, 12<sup>th</sup> June, 2016. This was the first ever confirmation service in the 16 year history of the church.
- 43 Candidates at St. Jude's Church, Oginigba Deanery on Sunday, 3<sup>rd</sup> July, 2016.
- 22 Candidates at New Covenant Anglican Church, Eliminigwe Parish Elelenwo on Sunday, 31<sup>st</sup> July, 2016.

### **DIOCESAN APPOINTMENTS (2016 – 2018)**

The following appointments were made by Us at the beginning of the year and are hereby confirmed before this synod with some other new ones. All things being equal, it is expected that they will serve in their various capacities from the time of their appointments this year till the end of this Third Synod in 2018.

### **DIOCESAN OFFICIALS**

**1. Legal Officers** *\*(Members of all [3 major] Boards of the Diocese and Local Archdeaconry Board, Deanery/Church Councils)*

**(Appointed by the Bishop)**

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

**2. Diocesan Financial Secretary** – Mr. Lawrence Chinda

**3.** *(Automatic member Synod, Diocesan/Finance Boards and Local Church Council)*

**4. Bishop's Administrative Assistant and Coordinating Chaplain of Chaplaincies**

Ven. Chris Chike Chukwumati

*(Automatic member Synod and All [3 major] Boards of the Diocese)*

**5. Bishop's Chaplains** – Rev. Canon Chieme Chimaobi  
Rev. Samuel Fedigha

**6. Bishop's Chief Press Secretary/Diocesan Protocol Officer – 1**

Mr. Innocent Kasarachi *(Member, Diocesan Board & Synod)*

➤ **Other Diocesan Protocol Officers**

Mr. Michael Azonwu – 2

} *Members Synod, Diocesan Board and Local Church Councils*

Mr. Isaac Adiele – 3

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

*\*(Member Synod, Diocesan & Finance Boards, Local Archdeaconry Board & PCC)*

**8. Diocesan Mission, Evangelism, Church Planting/Development Board**

Ven. Alex Usifoh – Chairman – *(Automatic member Synod, Diocesan and Finance Boards).*

*Other members include:*

- Sir Godfrey Ohuabunwa
- Sir Ama Hart
- Mrs. Stella Ogbonna
- Engr. Kelvin Ovuomarie
- Mr. Chibuzo Chukwuemeka
- Mr. Samuel Adiele
- Mr. Boniface Onu
- Lady Victoria Agbajogu
- Mr. Chukwuemeka Obani
- Mrs. Joyce Churchill
- Rev. Gospel Onuchukwu
- Rev. Ugochukwu Nwaghai
- Rev. Isaac Uzoma Ezeokpo
- Rev. Collins Daniel
- Brother Chinedu Ogbonna
- Mr. Emmanuel Legborsi – Secretary

**9. Council for Clergy/Laity Continuing Education**

***Directors of Studies***

- Ven. Chris Chukwumati *(Member, Diocesan Synod and Boards)*
- Rev. Canon Joseph Ofoegbu
- Sir Victor Dania

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

Diocesan Coordinator – Mrs. Ijeoma Anagbogu  
*(Member, Diocesan Synod and Local Deanery Council)*

Assistants { Mr. Godwin Chinda  
Mrs. Mercy Dienye

**11. Diocesan Department of Justice, Equity and Peace Commission (JEPC)**

Desk Officer – Sir Chief (Barr.) G. O. Dike

*\*(Automatic member Synod, Diocesan Board, Church of Nigeria, Niger Delta Prov. Departments and Local Deanery Council)*

**12. Directorate of Civic & Political Affairs (DCPA)**

Chairman – Rev. Canon Chuka Opara  
*(Member, Diocesan Board and Synod)*

**13. Diocesan Co-ordinators of DIVCCON**

Rev. Canon Olufemi Igbamerun

Rev. Samuel Fedigha

**14. Directorate of Ecumenism, Interfaith and inter-diocesan Relations**

**Director** – Rev. Gospel Onuchukwu

*(Member, Diocesan Board and Synod)*

**15. Directorate of Social Welfare** (Responsible for visitations to hospitals, orphanages, prisons, homes for the elderly, widows, destitute, HIV/AIDS, etc)

**Diocesan Co-ordinator** – Mrs. Sylverline Majebi

*(Automatic member Synod, Diocesan/Finance Boards*

*& Local Deanery Council).*

Other members are:

- Sir G. C. Orianwo
- Lady Margret Poloamina
- Mrs. Joy Madume
- Mr. Promise Minimah
- Mr. Marcillanus Ukachukwu
- Miss Sonia Ariolu
- Ord. Henry Odu
- Barr. Miss Christiana Utchay
- Mr. Paul Orife

**16. Diocesan Youths Development (ICT) Centre**

**Co-ordinators:**

Rev. Canon Joseph Ofoegbu

Mr. Emmanuel Legborsi

Mr. Godspower Ozomeyo

**17. Diocesan Logistics**

**Director** – Mr. John Okene

*(Member Synod, Diocesan Board*

*and Local Archdeaconry Board/Church Council)*

**18. Diocesan Architects**

Sir O. C. Chukwu

Arch. Chiedozie Okoroafor

*(Members Synod, Diocesan Board*

*and Local Deanery Council and CSC)*

**19. Diocesan Engineers**

Sir Engr. Ben Uduh

Engr. Achemie Oba

*(Members Synod, Diocesan Board*

*and Local Deanery and Parish Church Councils)*

**20. Diocesan Surveyor** – Surveyor Gaius Assor



*(Member Synod, Diocesan Board,  
Local Archdeaconry Board/Church Council)*

**21. Diocesan Printing Press.**

Rev. Canon Hosanna Naenwi – Superintendent  
*(Member, Synod, Diocesan & Finance Boards)*

**22. Diocesan Harvest Committee**

Ven. Alex Usifoh – Chairman  
*(Member Synod, Diocesan & Finance Boards)*

**Other Members:**

- Lady Maureen Osuagwu – Cathedral
- Mr. Charles Amadi – Rumuomasi Deanery
- Sir Tobias Nzerem } Rumuobiokani
- Dame Akudo Nnadozie }
- Lady Prisca Weli – Elelenwo Deanery
- Lady Sharon Chinwo – Woji Archdeaconry
- Rev. Chukwuma Anukem } Evo South-East
- Rev. Anderson Owbor }
- Mr. Franklin Dike – Oginigba Deanery
- Miss Faith U. Osuji – Okporo Deanery
- Mrs. Chioma Chukwuemeka – Oroigwe/Eliogbolo
- Mrs. Onyinyechi Nna – Trinity Archdeaconry
- Mr. Uche Emenayom – Chapel of Grace & Knowledge, Elelenwo
- Mrs. Stella Mokuro – New Wine Church, East/West Road Parish, Okporo
- Barr. Mrs. Mercy Nweke – Diocesan Women
- Vice President, Diocesan MCA
- Vice President, Diocesan AYP

**23. Diocesan Projects Committee**

Sir Archt. Charles Chuku – Chairman  
*(Member Synod, Diocesan & Finance Boards)*

**Other Members:**

- Archt. Chiedozi Okorafor – Diocesan Architect-2/Cathedral
- Mr. Austin Chinda – Rumuomasi Deanery
- Engr. Kennedy Uzuegbunam – Rumuobiokani Deanery
- Sir Ben Uduh – Diocesan Engineer/Elelenwo Deanery
- Engr. Achemie Oba } Woji Archdeaconry
- Engr. Kasim Chiedu }
- Mr. Kingsley Chinda – Evo South-East Archdeaconry
- Engr. Ikenga Geoffrey – Oginigba Deanery
- Engr. Innocent Amadi – Okporo Deanery

- Chief Engr. Timothy Amaewhule – Oroigwe/Eliogbolo
- Chief Samuel Anunobi – Trinity Archdeaconry
- Mr. Eugene Okujagu – Chapel of Grace & Knowledge, Elelenwo
- Engr. Peter Ogbunu – New Wine Church, East/West Road Parish, Okporo
- Sir Promise Owbor – Diocesan Treasurer

**24. Diocesan Investment Board**

Sir Chief Gilbert Chuku – Chairman (*Member Synod, Diocesan & Finance Boards & Local Parish Church Council*)

**Other Members:**

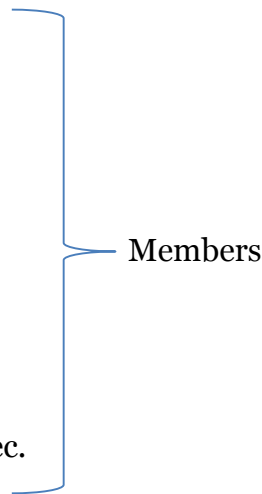
- Sir O. J. Kamalu – Secretary
- Mr. Lawrence Chinda
- Sir Prince Udo Egege
- Sir Prince Tony Orji
- Lady Patience Wokoma
- Lady Gloria Uhuegbulem
- Lady Felicia Derek-Iyo`

**25. Diocesan Education Board**

Sir Victor O. Dania – Chairman (*Member Synod, Diocesan & Finance Boards and Cathedral Standing Committee*)

**Other Members:**

- Dr. Ephraim Elenwo – Secretary
- Dr. Mrs. Joy Ugwu
- Lady Bibian Nnoli
- Dr. Azubuikwe Weli
- Mrs. Blessing O. Okerenta
- Mr. Emmanuel Chidiebere
- Mrs. Mildred Braide
- Mrs. Ebi Nwibani
- Dr. Nnamdi Ekeocha
- Sir. Captain Clement Ejiofor
- Rev. Gospel Onuchukwu
- Lady Dr. Njideka Ebisi
- Mr. Lawrence Chinda – Diocesan Financial Sec.
- Principals of All Diocesan Secondary Schools



***(Principals of Diocesan Secondary Schools are members of the Diocesan Board & Synod)***

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

- Mr. Paul Chukwumati \*(*Also member – Diocesan Board & Synod*)
- Capt. Clement Ejiofor
- Mr. John Okene
- Mrs. Augusta Wihioaka

- Sgt. Clement Amadi

**27. Diocesan Synod Planning Committee**

- The Bishop
- The Registrar
- The Deputy Registrar -2
- The Clerical Synod Secretary
- The Lay Synod Secretary
- The Assistant Lay Synod Secretary
- The Diocesan Treasurer
- The Diocesan Financial Secretary
- Bishop's Administrative Assistant
- Diocesan Protocol Officer
- Director of Diocesan Logistics
- Diocesan Communicator
- Bishop's Press Secretary
- Bishop's Security Adviser
- The Chairman, Clergy Association
- The Chairman, Diocesan Council of Knights
- The Chairman, Diocesan Lay Readers' Association
- The President, Diocesan AYF
- The Secretaries of: DMCA, MU/WG,
- Lay Secretaries of: The Cathedral, Archdeaconry Boards & Deanery Councils
- Head, Diocesan Guild of Stewards (Ushers)

**Bishop's Advisers**

**28. Adviser to the Bishop on Governmental Affairs –**

Sir Hon. Barr. Mike Ejims Enwukwe  
*(Member–Synod, Diocesan Board & Local Deanery Council)*

**29. Adviser to the Bishop on Missions & Evangelism**

Sir G. N. Ohuabunwa  
*(Member Synod, Diocesan Board & Local Deanery Council)*

**30. Adviser to the Bishop on Finance & Budget Matters**

Mrs. Agnes Ezenta  
*(Member Synod, Diocesan & Finance Boards,  
 & Local Deanery Council)*

**31. Adviser to the Bishop on Community Relations**

Sir Chief G. I. Ebenezer  
*(Member Synod, Diocesan Board & Local Deanery Council)*

**Advisers to the Bishop on Economic Empowerment**

**32.** i) Dame Priscilla Nosiri (Diocesan Representative at the Provincial  
 Committee on Economic Empowerment)  
*Member Synod, Diocesan & Finance Boards & Local CSC*

ii) Sir Chidi Osuji

(Member Synod, Diocesan & Finance Boards, Local Archdeaconry Board & PCC)

**33. Adviser to the Bishop on Security Matters –**

Sir Captain Clement Ejiofor  
(Member Synod, Diocesan & Finance Boards,  
Local Archdeaconry Board & PCC)

**34. Adviser to The Bishop on Diocesan Music Matters**

Sir Silas Nnodi  
(Member Synod, Diocesan Board,  
Local Archdeaconry Board & Church Council)

**35. Diocesan Medical Advisers**

- Lady Ndidi Utchay
- Dr. Bright Amadi  
(Members Synod, Diocesan Board,  
Local Archdeaconry Board/Deanery Council/PCC)

**36. Bishop's Commissaries**

- **Abuja** – Sir Enyindah Owabie } Members, Diocesan  
Rev. Future (Nweke) Jonathan }
- **Lagos** – Okechukwu Nyeche } Members, Diocesan Synod  
Mr. Seye Alabi }
- **United Kingdom** – Rev. Emeka Ejinkonye Member, Diocesan Synod

| S/<br>N | CHAPLAINCIES   | CHAPLAIN  | REMARKS                     |
|---------|--|---|-----------------------------|
| 1       | Coordinating Chaplain of All Chaplains of Diocesan Ministry/Activity Groups.<br>*Assistant | Ven. Chris C. Chukwumati<br>Rev. Reginald Chinweze                                    |                             |
| 2       | Men's Christian Association (DMCA)   | Ven. Thompson O.<br>Onyewuotu   |                             |
| 3       | Diocesan Women & Girls' Ministries   | Ven. C. D. Nwachukwu  |                             |
| 4       | Anglican Youth Fellowship (AYF)  | Rev. Canon Hosanna<br>Naenwi  |                             |
| 5       | Anglican Children's Ministry (ACM)<br>*Assistant   | **Rev. Canon O. Igbamerun<br>Rev. Chukwujekwu Umenna                                  | **Member,<br>Diocesan Board |
| 6       | Diocesan Council of Knights & Ladies   | Ven. Charles Mordi  |                             |
| 7       | Lay Readers Association  | Rev. Ahamefule Olluor   |                             |
| 8       | Adult Sunday School, Literature, Discipleship & Publications                               | Rev. Sampson O. Abada<br>Ord. Maduakona Paul<br>Ezigbo<br>Mrs. Barinem Collins Daniel |                             |
| 9       | Diocesan Prayer Ministry<br>*Assistant   | Rev. Canon Kingsley<br>Ohajianya<br>Rev. Chukwuemeka Udeh                             |                             |

|    |   |   |  |
|----|---|---|--|
| 10 | Family Life & Home Fellowship   | Ven. Okechukwu Ow'honda   |  |
| 11 | Public & Private Secondary Schools<br>*Assistant  | Rev. Ozioma Iheanetu<br>Rev. John V. C. Eze                         |  |
| 12 | Clergy & Church Workers Children  | Rev. Samuel Fedigha   |  |
| 13 | Diocesan & Schools Music Ministry   | Rev. Canon Dr. I.G. Anene<br>Rev. Samuel Obialor<br>Mr. Amoson Ijah |  |
| 14 | Ministry to Anglican Youth Corps Members<br>(ACF)   | Rev. Collins Daniel   |  |
| 15 | Industrial, Business/Work Place Chaplaincy<br>*Assistant  | Rev. Ugochukwu L Nwaghai<br>Rev. Chukwudi Theophilus                |  |
| 16 | Royal Fathers, Retired Clergy & the Elderly   | Vacant  |  |
| 17 | Directorate of Social Welfare   | Rev. Dr. Ebenezer Ow'hor  |  |
| 18 | Anglican Communion/Boys Brigade   | Rev. Moses Anyaefena  |  |
| 19 | Bishop's Stand-in Chaplain to Obio/Akpor<br>Battalion Council of Boys Brigade                       | Rev. Samuel Ejekwu  |  |
| 20 | Ministry to All Church Workers (Clerks, Admin<br>Secretaries, Drivers, Sextons, Yardmen, etc.       | Rev. Canon Godfrey<br>Onyemelukwe                                   |  |
| 21 | Guild of Stewards   | Rev. Anderson Ow'hor  |  |
| 22 | Diocesan Sports Ministry<br>*Assistant  | Rev. Chukwuma Anukem<br>Rev. Samuel Ejekwu                          |  |
| 23 | Diocesan Schools' Chaplaincy<br>- BCMSS, Rumuobiokani<br>- ACMGs, Elemenwo<br>- Word of Faith, Woji | - Rev. John Nkuene<br>- Rev. Samuel Obialor<br>- Rev. John Eze      |  |

### **FOUNDATION STONE LAYING OF NEW INFRASTRUCTURE:**

1. Friday, 7<sup>th</sup> August, 2015: Daystar Anglican Youth Church, Rumuokwursi New 2-storey Church auditorium with Children's hall, offices and parsonage combined. Decking of the first floor already completed as at date.
2. Saturday, 19<sup>th</sup> September, 2015: Christ Harvest Anglican Church, Faith Avenue Parish, Woji Children's Chapel project being undertaken by Elder Solomon Nwachukwu to mark his 70<sup>th</sup> birthday.
3. Saturday, 17<sup>th</sup> October, 2015: New church building of Our Saviour Christ, Anglican Church, Rumundururoigwe
4. Sunday, 6<sup>th</sup> December- New parsonage building project of Christ, The Redeemer Anglican Church, Eliogbolo.
5. Friday, 27<sup>th</sup> May 2016 – New Woji Archdeaconry House Project
6. Monday, 30<sup>th</sup> May 2016 – Cathedral Multi-purpose building for parsonages, guest house, gymnasium, etc. by the Men's Christian Association.
7. Sunday, 12<sup>th</sup> June, 2016 – New Church Building of Mount Zion Anglican Church, Eliogbolo Parish.

### **DEDICATIONS:**

- New Church Bus by the women of St. Simon's Okporo Deanery.

- Coaster Bus by St. Michael's Rumuomasi Deanery on 2<sup>nd</sup> August, 2015
- Set of Musical instruments for the Choir/Band of St. Nicholas' Woji District on Wednesday, 14<sup>th</sup> October 2015.
- New parsonage building, security post and church fence/gate at New Covenant Church, Eliminigwe Parish on Saturday, 31<sup>st</sup> October, 2015.
- New church building of Church of the Holy Spirit, Eliozi Parish on Sunday, 20<sup>th</sup> December, 2015
- New church building of Holy Trinity Anglican Church, Elingbu Parish on Sunday, 14<sup>th</sup> February, 2016
- Electricity Transformer donated by Sir Clement Ejiofor at Anglican Church of Messiah, Iriebe on Sunday, 21<sup>st</sup> February, 2016
- The family residence of Engr. And Mrs. Enwuzurike Nnah of Anglican Church of Pentecost, Rumuogba on Sunday, 24<sup>th</sup> April, 2016
- The new palace building, throne guest rooms and security post of HRH, Eze Sir Dr Emeka Ihunwo, JP, the paramount ruler and Nyenwe-Eli Woji on Thursday, 3<sup>rd</sup> March, 2016.
- Male and female students' toilet buildings at Word of Faith Woji Town Group of Schools on Sunday, 15<sup>th</sup> May, 2016
- Refurbished Pipe Organ by Eze Sir Emeka Ihunwo at St. Nicholas', Woji District on 19<sup>th</sup> June, 2016 (Fathers' Day)
- New entrance gate to the parsonage building complex of St. Simon's Church, Okporo Deanery on Saturday, 25<sup>th</sup> June, 2016.
- Marble Pulpit, Bishop's Seat donated by Eze Sir Emeka Ihunwo and marble lectern donated by Mr. & Mrs Stanley Echebima at Anglican Church of Pentecost, Ahia Woji on Sunday, 26<sup>th</sup> June, 2016.
- Multipurpose Nursery/Primary School Building at ACMGS, Eledenwo on Friday, 15<sup>th</sup> July, 2015.
- New Rose of Sharon, Atali church building by the women of the Diocese on Sunday, 17<sup>th</sup> July, 2016.

### **Award to Churches for Higher Remittance**

We have continued to encourage churches with their priests and groups that excel above others in their respective weekly remittance categories with little cash rewards and plaque in appreciation of their faithful stewardship. The following churches/group won our award for the year 2015:

1. Category A. (For the Cathedral & Deaneries)  
The winner – St. Andrew's, Rumuobiokani Deanery  
**Total amount remitted=N19, 194, 248.10**  
*\*(Performance below the N21, 336, 718.86 of 2014)*  
**\*Cash reward from the Diocese – N150, 000**
2. Category B. (For Archdeaconry Headquarter Churches)  
The winner – Church of The Holy Spirit, Eledenwo  
**Total amount remitted=N4, 894, 235.96**

*\*(Performance below the N4, 958, 108.05 of 2014)*

**\*Cash reward from the Diocese – N100, 000**

3. Category C. (For Parishes)

The winner – New Wine Anglican Church, East/West Road Parish, Okporo

**Total amount remitted=N4, 730, 44.00**

*\*(Performance below the N6, 908, 536.50 of 2014)*

**\*Cash reward from the Diocese – N80,000**

4. Category D. (For Stations)

The winner – Daystar Ang. Youth Church, Rumuokwurusi

**Total amount remitted =N2, 057, 505.00**

*\*(Performance **above** the N1, 566, 790.00 of 2014)*

**\*Cash reward from the Diocese – N50, 000**

5. Category E. (For Worship Centres – New Church Plants)

The winner – Anglican Worship Centre, Apna-Ogwnu, Okporo

**Total amount remitted =N234, 100.00**

*\*(Performance **above** the N124, 555.00 of 2014)*

**\*Cash reward from the Diocese – N40, 000**

6. Category F. (For Activity Groups)

The winner – Women’s Ministry (MU/WG)

**Total amount remitted=N3, 372, 423.73**

*\*(Performance **above** the N2, 000, 000 of 2014)*

**\*Reward from the Diocese – A Plaque**

7. Category G. (For Archdeaconries)

The winner – Oroigwe/Eliogbolo Archdeaconry

**Total amount remitted=N113, 691.00**

*\*(Performance below the N166, 064.00 of 2014)*

**\*Cash reward from the Diocese – N30, 000**

While we congratulate these and all other churches and the women for their efforts, we however note that majority of them are increasingly dwindling in their remittances and other obligations to the Diocese. While they may be quick to cite the poor performance of our nation’s economy as being responsible for their declining performance, we however urge all clergy/church teachers, treasurers, accounts officers, council members and leaders of all churches and groups to seriously search their consciences so as to be sure that they are not in any way negatively influencing what their churches and groups remit to the Diocese.

## **PROGRESS REPORTS FROM THE ADMINISTRATIVE BLOCS**

**The All Saints’ Cathedral** Men’s Christian Association has embarked upon the building of a 2-storey staff quarters with offices, guest rooms and gymnasium. We laid the foundation for this edifice on Monday, 30<sup>th</sup> May, 2016.

We commend the men of the Cathedral under the leadership of Sir Engr. Sunny Worlu for this bold step.

Work on the new Cathedral building is at an advanced stage. The installation of the windows and stained glass in the altar has been completed. The installation of the customised doors from Spain is about to begin. In addition to these, the office section with conference room at the Northern Wing of the building has been completed. The priests and other workers have since moved in. We appreciate and commend the untiring efforts of the Archdeacon, Ven. Chris Chukwumati, members of the Cathedral Standing and Works Committees as well as the parishioners for the steady progress. It will be our joy to see the new Cathedral building fully completed and dedicated by the Primate and all the Bishops when they come to our Province next year September for the Church of Nigeria General Synod. This is achievable if everyone commits himself to it.

The Diocese has generously undertaken (for 2016) to complete work at the second office section at the Southern Wing for use by the Bishop and other Diocesan office workers. As at the time of writing this address we have spent **over Five Million Naira** on this.

For the avoidance of doubt and for the information of those who have ignorantly and maliciously accused the Diocese of not supporting but rather bent on 'milking the Cathedral dry', the Diocese has invested in the Cathedral more than it has done in any other church or Administrative Bloc. No other church, apart from the Cathedral has been consciously provided for by the Diocese every year since 2009. The records speak for themselves. As at December 2015, the Diocese has spent a total of **Twenty One Million Naira** (N21, 000, 000.00) from the Diocesan annual budgets on the new Cathedral building. This is excluding individual donations and supports from members of other churches within the Diocese following our appeals at various Diocesan services as well as other friends of the Bishop outside the Diocese who have made some donations towards the same project.

The Diocese is not in any way bound to do this. But we chose to do so because we consider that the Cathedral Church belongs to all of us. Consequently, the Diocese is not in any way indebted to the Cathedral. Rather, it is embarrassingly the other way round. Without a Diocese there will be no Cathedral Church. While we have always appreciated all the provisions made by the All Saints' Church, Rumuokwursi for the smooth take-off of the Diocese, we wish to remind all those engaged in the current mischief, who fan the embers of dissension between the Cathedral and Diocese, in the self-deceit that the Bishop is not aware of their campaign, that both the Cathedral and the Diocese are one and the same. They are not two separate institutions. The Diocesan Bishop is actually in charge and his welfare/comfort should be the responsibility of the Cathedral church. Other churches are also there to support. This Bishop and the Diocese have not in any way been a burden to the Cathedral Church or any other and this is evident to all. And so, we would not be particularly pleased with anyone or group of persons alluding to or insinuating that we have been a yoke



to the Cathedral. We advise those involved in this subtle campaign to stay quiet and stop fouling the air of love and peaceful fellowship which this Diocese has so far enjoyed since inception.

*“Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them”* (Rom. 16:17).

### **Rumuomasi Deanery.**

The family of the late Nyenwe-eli of Oropotoma and the Pioneer President of our Diocesan Council of Knights, HRH Sir Eze Wobo Weli Onunwor, JP held a memorial service in his honour on Tuesday, 26<sup>th</sup> July, 2016 at St. Michael’s Anglican Church, Rumuomasi Deanery. A major highpoint of the memorial service was the official handing over of the **ground and first floors** of a newly completed 2-storey building at #7 Elelenwo Street, Rumuomasi by the family of the late Monarch to the Diocese for use as a worship centre and parsonage by the Youth Church of St. Michael’s Rumuomasi Deanery in keeping with the dying wish of their late father. This gift, according to the children (donor), is for an initial period of five years.

We use the occasion of this annual convocation of the Diocese to thank once again the family of our late father and Royal Highness, Eze Sir W. W. Onunwor through his first son, HRH Eze Nyema Onunwor. May the Lord bless, preserve and keep them and grant them the grace to serve Him and humanity with greater zeal, faith and passion more than their parents did when they were alive.

We rejoice with members of the Youth Church of St. Michael’s and charge them to work harder for the speedy growth of the young congregation which we shall very shortly christen.

### **Rumuobiokani Deanery**

The Deanery has completed the restructuring of the first and second floors of The Most Rev. Peter Akinola Retreat Centre. The place now wears a new look and is ready to offer improved services to prospective customers.

Last year, we handed over to the Deanery the 3 plots of land bought by the Diocese at the Atali section of the Shell Pipeline for a new church in that area. To the glory of God, the Deanery is at the verge of concluding work on the construction of a befitting church building on the land. A new congregation will take off there shortly.

We commend them for this and pray for greater grace for ministry for the priest and congregation.

We had a most refreshing Easter Day service at St. Andrew’s on March 27, 2016 with the family of the late Ven. I. W. Wopara coming for a memorial thanksgiving service. The graveside statue of the late Archdeacon was unveiled by us after the service.

At King of Glory, Anglican Church, Mini-Ewa Station, the construction of a parsonage will soon commence. Blocks for the project have already been moulded.

A full day leadership retreat was organized by the Deanery on Saturday, 7<sup>th</sup> May, 2016. We spoke on the challenges of effective Christian leadership.

### **Elelenwo Deanery**

St. Mark's, Elelenwo women have in line with our past synods directive opened a Crèche, Pre-Nursery, Nursery and Primary school within the Church compound. We commend the women of the Deanery for this bold step in advancing the Educational Policy of the Diocese.

- The Deanery has also opened a fish farm within the Church premises in pursuance of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Mark of Mission, which is **“To respond to human need by loving service”** as well as the investment policy of the Diocese. May the Lord who caused Peter to record a large haul of fishes at His words, give an increase and harvest for this venture and the Deanery.

At the Church of the Passion, Rumuodani, 11,000 units of 9 inches blocks have been moulded in preparation for the building of a new Church Auditorium and parsonage/workers residence. This is commendable!

### **Woji Archdeaconry**

We have appointed the Ven. S. C. Opara as the Supervising Archdeacon of Woji since February this year.

Work on the new Archdeaconry House project has commenced with our laying of the Foundation Stone on Friday, 27<sup>th</sup> May 2016.

The Archdeaconry organized a Two-Day leadership training programme for all categories of leaders in the Archdeaconry on Friday, 27<sup>th</sup> and Saturday, 28<sup>th</sup> May, 2016. We spoke for the two days on the theme “Leadership in Times Like These”

We commend the priests, leaders and members of St. Nicholas', Woji for the return of peace to that church, the improved standard of worship and for the soon-to-commence water factory project being embarked upon by the Church.

We hereby thank the Men's Christian Association of the District led by Sir Ernest Chinwo for conferring the award of Father of the Year on us during this year's Fathers' Day, 19<sup>th</sup> June, 2016. It came as a big surprise to us and we heartily appreciate the men for the honour.

The Nyenwe-eli Woji, His Highness, Eze Sir Emeka Ihunwo marked his One Year Anniversary as the Paramount Ruler of Woji Community. We thank the Eze for the huge financial support given to the church with the installation of pipes on the church's organ, the assistance to the local MCA towards the completion of the multipurpose complex project, the donation of a marble pulpit and Bishop's Seat at Anglican Church of Pentecost, Ahia-Woji, and the proposed plan with the Council of Chiefs to plant a new Anglican church within Woji Town in the next five years.

May God reward the visionary and dynamic Eze Woji and bless him and all Woji people with the blessing of life and godliness in Jesus name. Amen.

We applaud the purchase of Air-conditioners by the Christ Harvest Anglican Church, Faith Avenue Parish, Woji for the cooling of the church auditorium, and also the near completion of a junior staff quarters at Immanuel Anglican Church, Ogbatai Parish, Woji.

### **Evo South-East Archdeaconry**

We are pleased with the rapid progress made and seen by us on the Church building projects of Anglican Church of Messiah, New Haven parish, Iriebe and Emmanuel Anglican Church, Okporo, Iriebe.

Our many thanks go to the priests and leaders of these churches for their giant strides. We must not forget to specially thank the Holy Ghost Anglican Church, Iriebe Housing Estate Parish under The Rev. Samuel Obialor before his transfer, for endeavouring at last to roof the True Vine Anglican Church, their baby church. We are grateful and pray the Lord to bless and reward this sacrifice. We are informed that the True Vine church has been German floored.

We congratulate the new Priest, Rev. Umenna and his Steering Committee for their doggedness. A very beautiful church edifice is in place there at True Vine waiting to be fully completed. We appeal to all within the Diocese and others so touched to assist us quickly complete that modest temple to the glory of God.

### **Oginigba Deanery**

We are quite happy to be at Oginigba for this Synod which has largely influenced the speed and quality of work on this new church building. The efforts of the priests (past and present) and the entire congregation in getting this edifice to this stage is highly appreciated by us.

May the Lord continue to provide for this Deanery to finish this project and grant the members greater zeal and the heart to do more to draw in more souls for the greater growth of the church.

### **Okporo Deanery**

The Mothers' Union and Women's Guild of St. Simon's Church, Okporo Deanery purchased a brand new 18-Seater Toyota Hiace Bus which we dedicated shortly after the Synod of last year. We commend them.

A new entrance gate to the parsonage complex of St. Simon's has been completed by the church authorities and dedicated by us on Saturday, 25<sup>th</sup> June, 2016.

We hear of the various levels of projects being recorded at Faith Community, Eliowhani church and the Anglican Worship Centre, Apna-Ogwnu. We thank Mrs. Esther Esedesa and Engr. Peter Ezeh for their individual donations to AWC, Apna-

Ogwnu; as well as the Daniel Men's group of St. Andrew's, Rumuobiokani Deanery for their support to the women of Faith Community, Eliowhani in their six-room public convenience project.

The Lord bless these generous persons and group. The Diocese recently paid over N350, 000 to cater for the one year rent for the AWC Apna-Ogwnu.

### **Oroigwe/Eliobolo Archdeaconry**

We commend the women of St. Philip's Anglican Church, Oroigwe District for renovating the Children's Church Hall and also initiating the mothering Sunday project of fencing of the church compound with gates which was undertaken in their honour by Hon. O.K. Chinda, Member Representing Obio/Akpor Federal Constituency.

Two Parishes of the Archdeaconry, Church The Holy Spirit, Elioizu and Holy Trinity, Elingbu have completed and dedicated their new church buildings. The two buildings are architecturally beautiful and we hereby charge the leadership of the two parishes to ensure regular maintenance and updating of those edifices.

The MCA of the Church of the Holy Spirit, Elioizu Parish purchased a 65KVA power generating set for the church's use while the women bought and donated musical instruments worth One Million, Four Hundred Thousand Naira. The Knights also were not left out. They donated 3 units of 43" television sets for the church's ICT unit.

Mount Zion Church, Eliobolo Parish has commenced work on their new church building with the laying of the foundation stone on Sunday, June 12, 2016. The women of the church have supported the project with 200 bags of cement as well as other members.

We commend the developmental efforts of the various churches within the Archdeaconry and particularly, the efforts of the different activity and ministry groups.

### **Trinity Missionary Archdeaconry**

St. Matthias' Church, Atali District is developing a new parsonage building to cater for all the priests and church workers on completion. They are making steady progress. We commend the young District Church.

At new Covenant Church, Eliminigwe Parish, Elelenwo, the men built a security post while the women undertook the church fence and gate projects. These projects along with the newly completed parsonage duplex of the Parish were dedicated by us on Saturday, 31<sup>st</sup> October, 2015. Just last Sunday, 31<sup>st</sup> July, the church celebrated her tenth year anniversary with a confirmation service and thanksgiving. We commend the Parish for the acquisition of four plots of land for her baby church and Parish

investment. May the Lord continue to strengthen the hands of the Vicar, workers and members at work.

### **Diocesan Churches**

The Chapel of Grace and Knowledge (ACMGS Elelenwo) which came into existence in October, 2009 has continued to make progress. The young parish successfully hosted the third session of our second Diocesan Synod last year 2015.

The Parish also hosted satisfactorily this year's 2-Day Diocesan Post Vestry Meeting All leaders training on Friday 11<sup>th</sup> and Saturday, 12 of March.

We remain grateful to the entire congregation for these excellent services rendered to the Diocese.

Since after the synod, the Parish has carried out the total reinforcement of the vicarage fence and thereby ending the menace of flooding witnessed each raining season.

We commend the MCA of the Church for the construction and installation of new Choir Stalls within the Church auditorium. In the same vein, we commend the MU/WG for furnishing the Parish Women's Office.

### **New Wine Anglican Church, East-West Road Parish, Okporo**

We thank the New Wine Church, East-West Road Parish for hosting last December's ordination retreat and service. Having completed their new church building and the Parish inaugurated, New Wine Church is about to flag off their parsonage building project. We encourage them to work hard at accomplishing this and also remember our charge to them to develop a new congregation in any part of the Diocese, particularly in their new capacity as a **mission oriented church**. This, they should be able to accomplish by next year's synod.

## **FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO OTHER DIOCESES/INSTITUTIONS**

The Diocese of Evo gave financial assistance to some Dioceses and institutions across the country to support their respective missionary/developmental endeavours. Those that received our support were:

1. St. Francis of Assisi Theological Seminary, Wusasa, Zaria, Kaduna State – N3, 000, 000 (For College Hall project)
2. Trinity Theological College, Umuahia – N16, 369, 600 (Building and Furnishing of a 3 bedroom staff quarters.
3. Paul University, Awka – N5, 000, 000 (Towards development of University infrastructure)
4. Institute of Theology, Paul University, Awka – N259, 515 (Offering in support) in addition to payment of our subvention for 2016.

5. Diocese of **Kubwa** – N200, 000 (Assistance towards the hosting of the February 2016 meeting of the Church of Nigeria Standing Committee).
6. Diocese of **Mbamili** – N500, 000 (Assistance towards their Bishop Crowther College students dormitory building project).
7. Diocese of **Eha-Amufu** – N200, 000 (Assistance towards the building of a 60-bed Diocesan hospital).
8. Diocese of Kebbi, Zamfara State – N300,000 (Towards the rehabilitation of the Diocesan Bishop's Court).
9. Diocese of Isuikwuato/Umunneochi – N100, 000 (Support at the meeting of the Joint Council, East).

As in the past years, we funded these supports from the churches' remittance of 50% of their total offerings during this year's Diocesan and Bishop's consecration anniversary Sunday thanksgiving as approved by the Diocesan Board.

## APPRECIATIONS

1. **Sir Godfrey Ohuabunwa**: For his award of scholarship for the training of a missionary in any theological institution of our choice. The sum of N250,000 was received for this and has been channelled towards the training of a postulant.
  - We appreciate him and the wife, Lady Angela once again for their N2,500, 000 naira Educational Scholarship grant to 25 Senior Secondary Students of our Diocese at last year's Synod Sunday Service and their readiness to repeat this act of goodwill to yet another set of 25 students. They had promised to do this every year for five years beginning from 2014. May the Lord continue to make them abound in all spheres of their spiritual and physical endeavours in life.
2. **Mr. Eberechi Owhonda** for his generous donation of quality ceramic tiles for our new office within the new Cathedral building.
3. We thank **St. Andrew's Church, Rumuobiokani Deanery and Chapel of Grace & Knowledge (ACMGS) Elelenwo** for their donation of chairs at different times for use in the Bishop's Court Chapel of Refuge.
4. We thank the Chairmen of Obio/Akpor Local Government Area and Port Harcourt City Council, Prince (Hon.) Collins Onunwo and Sir (Hon.) Soni Ejekwu respectively for their financial assistance to our Diocese specifically in support of our preparation for this synod.
5. We thank Sir Henry and Lady Ahunna Imoni for the generous donation of One Hundred Crates of their recently NAFDAC approved Henas Food Company Zobo Drinks.

## CONGRATULATIONS

- The Venerable Sunday C. Opara on his appointment as the Vice Chairman of the Rivers State Christian Pilgrims' Board.
- Sir Hon. Justice Iche W. Ndu on his appointment by the Governor of Rivers State as the Pro Chancellor and Chairman of the governing council of the Rivers State University of Science and Technology, Nkpolu, Port Harcourt.
- Hon. Mrs. Ibim Semenitari on her Federal appointment as the Acting Managing Director of the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC).
- Honourable Isaac Kamalu on his appointment as the Commissioner for Budget matters/Economic Planning, Rivers State.
- The Venerable Dr. Fynface Akah, JP on his appointment by the Governor of Rivers State as the Chairman, State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB)
- Hon. O. K. Chinda and Hon. Martins Amaewhule on their victories at the March 19, 2016 rerun elections into the Federal House of Representatives, Abuja and the Rivers State House of Assembly respectively and also at the tribunal.

### **Childbirths**

- **We rejoice with:** The Rev. & Mrs. Nelson Okocha on the birth of their baby girl.
- Church Teacher Pthyias Anointed Onyeme on the birth of their baby
- Rev. Canon and Mrs. Leo Nwachukwu on the arrival of their adopted baby
- Dr. & Mrs. Bright Amadi on the safe delivery of their new baby girl.
- Mr. & Mrs. Charles Daniel on the arrival of their new baby girl.
- Postulant and Mrs. Moses Anyatonwu on the birth of their baby girl.

### **Birthdays**

- Rev. Chukwuemeka Okonkwo and his twin brother on their 50<sup>th</sup> (Golden Jubilee) birthday celebration on May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2015
- Mr. Femi Ogundele of St. Andrew's Rumuobiokani Deanery on his 70<sup>th</sup> Birthday/Thanksgiving in June this year.
- Lady Mary Clement Ejiofor on her 50<sup>th</sup> (Golden Jubilee) anniversary celebration.

### **Weddings**

- Mr. Ndunaka Chukwu (Kaka) and former Miss Adaeze Chinenye Ogbonna on their successful wedding on Saturday, 10<sup>th</sup> October, 2015.
- Sir & Lady Mike Ejims Enwukwe on the successful wedding of their daughter, Oyoburoma on Saturday, 7<sup>th</sup> May, 2016.
- Church Teacher, Amason Ijah and former Miss Happiness Obidi, daughter of Sir C. B. Obidi on their successful wedding on Saturday, 25<sup>th</sup> June, 2016.
- Former Miss Elizabeth Nwokie, a staff of Bishop Crowther on her successful wedding with Mr. Chimaroke Ibeakanma on Saturday, 23<sup>rd</sup> July, 2016.

- Our Primate, The Most Rev. Nicholas D. Okoh and wife, mama Nkasiobi on the wedding of their daughter, former Miss Ijeoma Okoh with Mr. Ernest Aziagba on Saturday, 30<sup>th</sup> July, 2016.

### **Marriage Anniversaries**

- Congratulations to Most Rev. & Mrs. I.C.O. Kattey on their 40<sup>th</sup> Marriage Anniversary on Wednesday, 30<sup>th</sup> December, 2015
- Sir Chief Dr. G.T.G. & Dame Dr. Christy Toby on their 50<sup>th</sup> Marriage Anniversary on Saturday, 30<sup>th</sup> January 2016.
- Ven. & Mrs. Sunday C. Opara on their 25<sup>th</sup> Marriage Anniversary on Wednesday, 27<sup>th</sup> July, 2016.

### **Academic Achievements**

- Sir O. J. Kamalu on his successful completion of studies and award of a Doctoral Degree in Pedo Environmental Management (Soil and Environment) by the Rivers State University of Science and Technology, Nkpolu, Port Harcourt.
- The Venerable Alex Usifoh on the unveiling of his book *In The Arena of Greatness* on Sunday 5th June, 2016.

## **DEATHS/CONDOLENCES**

We lost the following and hereby condole with their families:

1. Mrs. Benedicta Anene, wife of The Rev. Canon Dr. I.G. Anene
2. Sir Eze Godwin Bekwele Wodi, the Paramount Ruler of Elemenwo
3. Mrs. Georgina Nyeche, mother of Lady Felicia Derek-Iyo
4. Sir Chief Barr. J.O. Nwachukwu of All Saints' Cathedral, Rumuokwurusi
5. Lady Dorathy Chiadikobi – St. Andrew's Rumuobiokani
6. Sir Emmanuel Ozoya Edeghere, a foremost knight of our Diocese
7. Mrs. Rose Elewa, wife of The Rev. Canon J.A. Elewa (rtd) on Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> January, 2016
8. Mrs. Margaret Worgu, mother of The Ven. Chidi Worgu
9. Dame Rose Ordu, Bishop's sister-in-law
10. His Grace, Most Rev. E.E. Nglass, retired Bishops of Uyo and First Archbishop of Niger Delta Province
11. Chief Paul Amadi Chinda of Rumuodikirike, Rumuodani Elemenwo and St. Mark's Church Elemenwo Deanery

We also condole with the following:

12. Senator Bennett Birabi on the death of his wife and our sister, Lady Dr. Bridget Birabi.
13. Church Teacher & Mrs. Gift Chukwumati, Mr. & Mrs. John Okene on the painful death of their new born baby girls.



14. Mrs. Achugaonye Eze, wife of Rt. Rev. Sosthenes Eze of Enugu North on the death of her mother.
15. Rt. Rev. & Mrs. Clement Ekpeye, Bishop of Ahoada Diocese on the death of their son.
16. The Rev. Raymond Osakwe on the death of his immediate elder brother, Mr. Leonard Osakwe.
17. Venerable Akuro Omubor (our former priest) on the death of his wife, Mrs. Irene Omubor.
18. Mrs. Chinyere and Rev. Moses Anyaefena on the death of their father/father-in-law.

On the national level, our condolences go to the families and all lovers and followers of football in Nigeria on the death of two former coaches of the National football team, the Super Eagles, Mr. Stephen Keshi and Mr. Shuaibu Amodu on the 8<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> of June, 2016 respectively – an interval of 72 hours between both of them.

May the Lord grant unto the families of all the deceased the comfort of the Holy Spirit and fortitude to bear these losses.

### **COMING SYNOD VENUES AND DIOCESAN CHIEF LAUNCHERS OF BISHOP'S ADDRESSES**

The annual synod meetings of our Diocese for the next 5 years will be hosted in the order listed below. Additionally, we have decided that with effect from next year, a major activity group of the Diocese will annually be required to serve as Chief Diocesan Launcher during the fund raising exercise following the presentation of the Bishop's Presidential Address/Charge. The host Administrative Bloc or Church will still be expected to raise her local Chief launcher and supporters as the tradition has always been. It is expected that the leaders of any Diocesan Activity Group assigned the task of being the Chief Launcher for a particular year, will adequately mobilize the entire members of that group for the purpose of generating adequate funds for the Diocese. Consequently, future hosting and launching would be as follows:

| Year | Host                            | Chief Diocesan Launcher Group         | Host Chief Launcher                  |
|------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 2017 | St. Mark's, Elelenwo Deanery    | Diocesan Clergy Association and wives | To be determined by host Bloc/Church |
| 2018 | Evo South East Archdeaconry     | Diocesan Council of Knights           | “                                    |
| 2019 | Woji Archdeaconry               | Diocesan MU/WG (All Women)            | “                                    |
| 2020 | Trinity Missionary Archdeaconry | Diocesan CMF (All Men)                | “                                    |
| 2021 | All Saints' Cathedral           | Diocesan AYF (All Youths)             | “                                    |

### **NIGER DELTA PROVINCE:**

**Provincial Council Meetings.** The last Council Meeting for 2015 was held at the All Saints' Cathedral, Bori, Diocese of Ogoni from Friday, 11<sup>th</sup> – Sunday, 13<sup>th</sup> September with the theme: **‘With men, it is impossible, but not with God; for**

**with God all things are possible'** (Matthew 10:27). Bishops worshipped in selected churches on Sunday, 13<sup>th</sup> September. We were assigned to worship and preach at St. Gabriel's Church, Kpitem Deanery where we were given an honorary life membership of the Church. Many thanks to the Bishop of Ogoni, The Rt. Rev. Solomon Gberegbara, the Rector of Kpitem Deanery, The Ven. R. Nwako and the entire congregation for the honour.

The first meeting for 2016 was held from Monday, 18<sup>th</sup> to Tuesday, 19<sup>th</sup> January at St. John's Anglican Church, Abuloma, Diocese of Okrika with the theme: **'The Lord's Prayer'** (Matthew 6:9-13).

**National Christian Leadership Conference, 2016:** The maiden edition of the National Christian Leadership Conference organized by the Evangelism, Leadership and Missions International Institute (ELMI) under the auspices of the Great Anglican Revival Team (GART) with the approval of the Primate of All Nigeria, The Most Rev. Nicholas D. Okoh and with the support and encouragement of the Archbishop and Bishops of the Niger Delta Province, took place at St. Paul's Cathedral, Diobu from Monday, 4<sup>th</sup> to Friday, 7<sup>th</sup> April, 2016. It had as theme: **'In times like these: the Christian Leader and His Ministry'** – Romans 13:1-14; Esther 4:13-14

The main objective of the Conference which attracted participants from across the country especially from the Niger Delta Province was given as: 'To Raise Evangelism and Mission-minded Christian Leaders who will influence their Churches and Society'.

In his opening/keynote address, the Primate of All Nigeria, The Most Rev. Nicholas D. Okoh decried the bastardization of the Christian Ministry in our time. According to him, "Many people (both called and uncalled) have 'trooped' into the ordained ministry which was once hallowed and revered by men and women throughout the world. As the saying goes, "Too many cooks spoil the soup". He regretted that ministers of God who should be correcting the politicians and other lay people are now being corrected by these same people. He observed that instead of correcting the politicians and members of their congregations, ministers are now competing with them thereby abandoning their main task which is evangelism and missions which are very vital ingredients for church growth and expansion. He therefore charged us all to rediscover and embrace the task of evangelism; adding that "any church leader who does not embrace, and be actively involved in the work of evangelism and missions has no business occupying church leadership position. Our preaching in the church does not take the place of evangelism. We must go out to meet sinners where they are. On their own they cannot come to church except for ulterior motives. We must present exemplary leadership to God's people. Our level of knowledge must be above that of the people we are leading otherwise they will look down on us. The blind cannot lead the blind".

Our Diocese recorded an impressive turn out of mainly our clergy, church teachers and some lay leaders at the Conference. We thank the various Administrative Blocs, Churches and groups, e.g. the DMCA for sponsoring their members to the Conference.

**Provincial Prayer Conference:** The Provincial Prayer Conference was hosted by the Diocese of Okrika at St. Luke's Abam-Ama from Thursday, 26<sup>th</sup> – Sunday, 29<sup>th</sup> May, 2016. Our Diocese was represented by some members of our Diocesan Prayer Ministry.

### **Provincial Seminar/Refresher Course for Account Officers and Clerks**

This is scheduled to hold from Tuesday, 9<sup>th</sup> to Wednesday, 10<sup>th</sup> August, 2016 at our Bishop Crowther Memorial Secondary School, Rumuobiokani. Account officers and clerks from the 13 dioceses of the Niger Delta Province will be attending the course which will attract a registration fee of N5,000 only per participant. This course is being facilitated by the Superannuation office of the Joint Provincial Council, East of the Niger. We encourage all churches in our Diocese to facilitate the participation of their account clerks.

### **Hosting of 2017 Church of Nigeria General Synod**

Our Niger Delta Province has been slated to host next year's September General Synod of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) at St. Pauls' Cathedral, Diobu, Port Harcourt. Towards a successful hosting, the Archbishop has constituted a Provincial Local Organizing Committee which he has graciously asked us to chair. We are grateful to him and to the other Bishops of the Province for the confidence reposed in us for this enormous assignment. The Committee has already gone far in its planning. Please pray for us and for the entire Province.

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

The **meeting** of this Council was held from Wednesday, 17<sup>th</sup> - Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> February, 2016 at St. Peter's Church, Leru, Diocese of Isuikwuato/Umunneochi with the theme: **'Prepare for action'**.

### **Trinity Theological College, Umuahia Legacy Projects Dedications**

History was made at the Trinity Theological College, Umuahia on Thursday, 17<sup>th</sup> March, 2016 when a number of landmark projects initiated by the Primate of All Nigeria, The Most Rev. Nicholas D. Okoh at the institution and executed by various Dioceses East of the Niger were formally dedicated by him. The projects executed and donated to the College included: an ultra-modern Rector's lodge by the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion); three befitting staff quarters built respectively by the Dioceses of Niger Delta North, Ewo and Amichi; an administrative block by the Diocese On The Niger; a 112 room students Hall of Residence sponsored by the

Bishops and Clergy East of the Niger (named after the Primate) and the Gate House built by the sandwich students of the college. At the time of dedication, work was still in progress at two other staff houses being handled by other Dioceses.

These 'legacy dedications' were made possible following the visit of the Primate to the College on 22<sup>nd</sup> November, 2014 during which he saw for himself the deplorable and pitiable condition under which our future clergymen were being trained. These projects have hence transformed the college, thus making it stand shoulder high with other theological colleges within and outside Nigeria in terms of the quality of its present leadership, under Prof. Udobata, academic staff as well as physical infrastructure. We appreciate the Primate for steering us to take up our own part of these projects and for his words of encouragement and commendation at the dedication.

A high-powered delegation of the Diocese which included the Registrar, Archdeacons, and other Diocesan officials accompanied the Bishop and wife to the event. Other dignitaries in attendance included the Governor of Abia State, His Excellency, Dr. Okezie Ikpeazu who pledged to rebuild the road to the school and the former Governor of Anambra State, Sir Peter Obi.

Our hearty thanks go to you, members of the Diocesan Board of Evo Diocese and Synod for supporting and giving your blessings to our accepting to take up the Umuahia project. We also appreciate the college authorities, especially the Rt. Rev. David Onuoha, Chairman of the College Council, the Rector, the Ven. Prof. Udobata Onunwa and the students union for the award of excellence given to us on that occasion.

### **College Mission Week 2016**

25 postulants were sent to us from the Trinity Theological College, Umuahia in observance of the 2016 College Mission Week from Friday, 12<sup>th</sup> to Monday, 22<sup>nd</sup> February, 2016. They were assigned to some of our churches during the period.

### **Paul University, Awka**

- **NUC Accreditation Visit**

Paul University, Awka which is jointly owned by all the Dioceses of the five provinces, East of the Niger has continued to make progress despite the numerous challenges confronting the institution. Information reaching us from the Vice Chancellor, The Venerable Uche C. Isiugo-Abanihe, PhD, indicates that the accreditation visit to the university by the National Universities Commission took place in January this year with the result showing the full accreditation of seven of the eight departments presented. One department received interim accreditation. With this development, eleven of the twelve departments of the university now have full accreditation.

Furthermore, plans by the institution to start new departments by the 2016/2017 academic session recently received the approval of the NUC. The new courses starting in September this year include Biochemistry, Microbiology, English and Literature in English, Mass Communication, Banking and Finance, Business Administration, Political Science and Public Administration. The NUC also promised to approve the take-off of the Faculty of Law after a facility assessment visit by the Commission and the National Legal Council and the payment of inspection fee of one million naira by the university to the NUC.

The greatest challenge confronting the University today is funding. Most of the Dioceses in the Joint Provincial Council, owners of the institution have not been quite forth coming in fulfilling their financial obligations to the university and this has continued to affect the smooth running of this church-owned centre of learning. It is therefore a thing of surprise and joy that most of the request of the institution for accreditation and approval made to the NUC were granted by the regulatory body.

We commend our Primate, The Most Rev. N.D. Okoh, who has once again as in the case of Trinity College, Umuahia stepped in to mobilise the Bishops and their Dioceses in the Joint Council to act urgently in order to save the institution from collapse.

In response to the appeal of the Primate, our Diocese, after careful deliberation by the Diocesan Board has resolved to join the group of regular stakeholder Dioceses to INVEST in the development of the university with the payment of the sum of **Five Million Naira (N5, 000, 000)** annually for the next four years. The Diocese hopes to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the leadership of the University in order to guarantee the future of this investment by us.

We commend the great work being done by the Vice Chancellor and his team and pray that God will graciously provide for the university through all faithful Anglicans and others for the much needed growth and physical development to be achieved.

We encourage all parents whose children are seeking University admission to please send them to Paul University, Awka.

### **Superannuation Fund**

The superannuation Fund, Onitsha, organized a three-day Seminar/Training/Workshop for all Financial Secretaries/Accountants and one other person from each of the 55 Dioceses of the Joint Council East of the Niger from 8<sup>th</sup> through 10<sup>th</sup> February, 2016 at the Ibru Centre, Agbarha-Otor, Delta State.

The training focused on finance, investment and other related issues. The Financial Secretary of our Diocese, Mr. Lawrence Chinda and the Treasurer, Sir Promise Owbor were in attendance.

## **CHURCH OF NIGERIA:**

### **Senior Clergy Advanced Management Course**

This bi-annual Management Course of the Church of Nigeria took place from July 27 – August 7, 2015 at the Ibru Centre, Agbarha-Otor. We delivered a lecture there on Wednesday, 5<sup>th</sup> August on ‘Leadership: An awesome responsibility’. Our Diocese was not able to send participants for the January 2016 course. The second edition for this year is presently on-going.

### **Meetings of the Standing Committee and Mothers Union Executive**

The meetings of Church of Nigeria Standing Committee and the Mothers’ Union Executive took place at the Cathedral Church of St. David, Ijomu, Diocese of Akure, Ondo Province from Monday, 21<sup>st</sup> – Friday, 25<sup>th</sup> September. The Theme was ‘**Look and Live**’ (Numbers 21:8).

The first of the same National Meetings for this year took place at St. Andrew’s Anglican Church, Kubwa with the Province of Abuja hosting from Monday, 1<sup>st</sup> to Friday, 5<sup>th</sup> February, 2016. The theme was ‘**Maranatha, come Lord Jesus**’ (1Cor. 16:22).

Our Diocese was well represented at these meetings.

### **2015 Divine Commonwealth Conference (DIVCCON)**

The 5<sup>th</sup> edition of this Conference usually organized by the Church of Nigeria successfully took place at the National Christian Centre, Abuja from Monday, 9<sup>th</sup> – Friday, 13<sup>th</sup> November with the theme: ‘**Dare to be a Daniel**’ (Daniel 6:19).

DIVCCON remains the annual gathering of all Anglican faithful – Bishops, Clergy and laity-(men, women, youths and children). We continue to encourage members of this Diocese to create time to participate in this holy convocation for spiritual renewal and fellowship with others from across the country and beyond.

We commend those Clergy and laity of our Diocese who made out time to be in Abuja last November. We are sure they can testify that it was a great moment in God’s presence. We thank the Primate for the privilege given to us to lead one of the group seminars on ‘Christian Stewardship’.

At the end of the Conference, a new Coordinator (of DIVCCON) in the person of The Rt. Rev. Tunde Adeleye, Bishop of Calabar was appointed/announced by the Primate, His Grace, The Most Rev. Nicholas D. Okoh. Bishop Adeleye succeeded the Pioneer Coordinator, The Rt. Rev. Oluranti Odubogun, Bishop of Ife, who has now retired. May the Lord grant Bishop Adeleye the grace to succeed in this new assignment.

The 2016 edition of DIVCCON is holding from Monday, 7<sup>th</sup> through Friday, 11<sup>th</sup> November at the same venue. The theme is ‘**FEAR NOT**’ (2Kings 6:16). We have

appointed the Rev. Canon Olufemi Igbamerun and Rev. Samuel Fedigha as Evo Diocesan Coordinators of DIVCCON matters. Matters of further sensitization of our members towards participation in the Conference, registration, travel arrangements, hotel accommodation, etc. for those going will be handled by them.

### **National Secretariat Building Project/Funding**

The Standing Committee has approved the building of a permanent and befitting National Secretariat for the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion). The Foundation Stone laying service took place on Friday, 13<sup>th</sup> November, 2015 at its Gudu, Abuja Site with the Primate, the Most Rev. Nicholas D. Okoh presiding.

The Standing Committee has equally resolved that for the next 3 years Diocese/Churches in Nigeria are to remit ALL their offerings raised on every Advent Sunday to support the speedy completion of this huge project.

Our Diocese faithfully complied with this decision on the Advent Sunday of last year, 2015 being the first edition of this special collection and remitted to the Church of Nigeria a total sum of Five Million, Seven Hundred and Seventy Thousand, Seven Hundred and Ninety Five Naira (**N5, 770, 795. 00**) only as paid in by all our churches. We commend the faithfulness of our priests, church teachers and treasurers in this matter.

The second Advent Sunday collection/remittance will take place on Sunday, 27<sup>th</sup> November this year. We appeal for everyone's support.

### **St. Matthias Day Collection/Remittance**

This year's Church of Nigeria St. Matthias' Day collection was observed in all Dioceses on Sunday, 28<sup>th</sup> February. Churches in Evo raised and paid to the Church of Nigeria through our Office a total sum of Six Million, Two Hundred and Eighty One Thousand, One Hundred and Thirty One Naira (**N6, 281, 131.00**) only. Once again, we commend all our churches for this performance, even though it was far short of what we had expected to raise.

St. Matthias' Day offerings are used to support missionary and weak Dioceses, national emergencies and groups in adverse conditions, Ph.D scholarships for clergy in special areas of study and other critical areas of need. We use this medium to very specially thank His Grace, The Most Rev. Nicholas D. Okoh, Archbishop, Metropolitan and Primate of All Nigeria for his promise of One Million Naira (N1,000,000) to our Diocese from the 2016 St. Matthias' Day Offerings for the provision of medical equipment at the Sick Bay built by the ladies of our knights at Bishop Crowther Memorial Secondary School, Rumuobiokani.

## **Church Of Nigeria All Anglican Clergy Conference 2016**

The Conference of all Anglican Clergymen in Nigeria has been scheduled to hold from Monday, 12<sup>th</sup> to Friday, 16<sup>th</sup> September this year at the Benue State University, Makurdi. The Conference theme is “**Breaking Ministerial Limit**”.

Each participant is to register with the sum of Five Thousand Naira (N5, 000) only. The Bishop of Ogbia, The Rt. Rev. James Oruworì and The Ven. C. J. Nwachukwu of Ikwerre Diocese are representing our Province in the National Conference Planning Committee while The Ven. Chris Chukwumati is coordinating the registration of all clergy from the Niger Delta Province for the conference.

We appeal to all churches to graciously sponsor their clergy for the conference only within the limits of what is approved by us.

**The Annual Bishops’ Retreat** was held at the Ibru International Ecumenical Centre, Agbarha-otor from January 2<sup>nd</sup> -6<sup>th</sup>, 2016 with the theme: ‘**Essential Issues of Episcopal Concerns**’.

### **New Bishops, Archbishop and Dean:**

The following servants of God were elected and consecrated Bishops in our communion during the period under review. They are:

1. The Rt. Rev. Timothy Olajide Abimbola; Bishop of Diocese of Igbomina West, consecrated at the Cathedral Church of Christ, Marina, Lagos on Tuesday, 24<sup>th</sup> November, 2015.
2. The Rt. Rev. Nedison Foreman - Diocese of Jalingo
3. The Rt. Rev. Adeyinka Akinlade - Diocese of Ife
4. The Rt. Rev. Prof. Andrew Olu Igenozá – Rector, Crowther Graduate Theological Seminary, Abeokuta. These were all consecrated on Sunday, 2<sup>nd</sup> January, 2016 at All Saints’ Cathedral Church, Ughelli, Delta State.
5. The Rt. Rev. Marcus D. Yohana – Diocese of Dutse, consecrated on Tuesday, 26<sup>th</sup> April, 2016 at St. Michael’s Cathedral, Kaduna
6. The Rt. Rev. Prof. Israel Kelue Okoye – Diocese of Ihiala, consecrated on Sunday, 24<sup>th</sup> July, 2016 at Archbishop Vining Memorial Cathedral, Ikeja, Lagos
7. The Rt. Rev. Babatunde Johnson – Diocese of Lagos Mainland, consecrated on Sunday, 24<sup>th</sup> July, 2016 at Archbishop Vining Memorial Cathedral, Ikeja, Lagos
8. The Rt. Rev. Abel Ajibodu – Diocese of Ile-Oluji, consecrated on Sunday, 24<sup>th</sup> July, 2016 at Archbishop Vining Memorial Cathedral, Ikeja, Lagos
9. The Most Rev. Dr. Olusina Michael Fape – **New Archbishop of Lagos Province**, presented on Sunday, 24<sup>th</sup> July, 2016 at Archbishop Vining Memorial Cathedral, Ikeja, Lagos



10. The Most Rev. Dr. Ikechi Nwosu (Archbishop of Aba Province) – now the **new the Dean, Church of Nigeria**, presented on Sunday, 24<sup>th</sup> July, 2016 at Archbishop Vining Memorial Cathedral, Ikeja, Lagos

### **Translation of Bishops:**

1. The Rt. Rev. Timothy Yahaya – translated from Jalingo Diocese to Kaduna Diocese
2. The Rt. Rev. Prof. Dapo Asaju, Bishop Theologian was released from the Crowther Graduate Theological Seminary, Abeokuta to serve as the Vice Chancellor of Ajayi Crowther University, Oyo.

### **Retirement of Bishops:**

1. The Most Rev. Josiah Idowu Fearon – Kaduna (Voluntary retirement)
2. The Rt. Rev. J. O. Akinola – Igbomina West
3. The Rt. Rev. Titus Fajemirokun – Ijesha North
4. The Rt. Rev. Oluronte Odubogun – Ife
5. The Rt. Rev. Yusuf Lumu – Dutse
6. The Rt. Rev. Anga Fred Nyanabo – Northern Izon
7. The Rt. Rev. Ralph Okafor – Ihiala
8. The Rt. Rev. Samson Adekunle – Ile-Oluji
9. The Most Rev. Prof. Adebayo D. Akinde – Lagos Mainland/Lagos Province.

## **GLOBAL ANGLICAN COMMUNION**

### **Anglican Communion Primates' Meeting**

A meeting of the Primates of the Anglican Communion was held from Monday, 11<sup>th</sup> through Friday, 15<sup>th</sup> January, 2016 at Canterbury, England. The Primates gathered for prayer and to consider issues affecting the Communion. The Most Rev. Nicholas D. Okoh (DD), Primate of All Nigeria attended the meeting which was presided over by the Archbishop of Canterbury, The Most Rev. and Rt. Hon. Justin Welby.

### **GAFCON Primates' Meeting and Election of a New Chairman**

The meeting of the Primates' Council of the Global Anglican Future Conference (GAFCON) took place from 18<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> April, 2016 at The All Saints' Cathedral, Nairobi, Kenya. It had in attendance, representatives from Congo, Kenya, Myanmar, Nigeria, North America, Rwanda, South America, Sudan, South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda and two branches – Australia and the United Kingdom.

During the meeting, our Primate, The Most Rev. Nicholas D. Okoh, (DD), was elected the New Chairman of the Primates' Council of GAFCON. Archbishop Okoh succeeds The Most Rev. Eliud Wabukala, The Primate of the Church of Kenya. The Most Rev. Stanley Ntagali, Primate of the Anglican Church of Uganda emerged the new Vice-Chairman.

The next meeting of GAFCON has been scheduled for 2018.

## **CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION OF NIGERIA (CAN)**

### **Rivers State:**

The Rivers State Chapter of the Christian Association of Nigeria now has a new State Executive Committee following the elections that took place on Sunday, 6<sup>th</sup> December, 2015. The new state officers are:

- |                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| ➤ The Most Rev. Isaac Anyanasikike | – Chairman                               |
| ➤ Rev. Msgnr Cyprian Onwuli        | – Vice Chairman                          |
| ➤ Dame Dr. Sotonye Donbraye        | – Secretary                              |
| ➤ Mrs. Jamila Danladi              | – Assistant Secretary                    |
| ➤ Rev. Dr. Bethel Jaja             | – Treasurer                              |
| ➤ Bridget Peemi                    | – Financial Secretary                    |
| ➤ Rev. Fr. Mike Akere              | – Director of Publicity                  |
| ➤ Rev. Chibuikwe A Kpokorokpo      | – Director of Planning                   |
| ➤ Sp, Senior Apostle E. A. Wugo    | – Director of Education,<br>Women/Youths |
| ➤ Barr. Dan Obinna                 | – Director, Legal Matters                |
| ➤ Sir Dele Wickliffe               | – Director, Research and Strategy        |
| ➤ Rev. Chris E. Edward             | – Director, Ecumenism                    |

We wish the new State CAN Executive well in their new assignments and advice that as much as possible every sector of the Christian Community in the State should be equally mobilized and carried along in all its activities.

### **National:**

#### ***New President***

The president of the Nigeria Baptist Convention (NBC) and a member of the Christian Council of Nigeria, CCN, **The Reverend Samson Olasupo Adeniyi Ayokunle** is now the **New National President** of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN). Rev. Ayokunle replaced the former President, Pastor Ayo Oritsejafor whose tenure had ended. The election of the new national President was held on Tuesday, 14<sup>th</sup> June at the National Christian Centre, Abuja by delegates of the National Executive Council drawn from the five confederating blocks.

We thank God for a successful conduct of the election and pray for His wisdom, grace, guidance and strength for the new leader of Christians in Nigeria.

May his tenure facilitate an atmosphere of effective fellowship and dialogue among Christians of the various denominations and people of other faiths and beliefs.

## **RIVERS STATE**

On May 29, 2015, a new government was inaugurated in Rivers State. It is headed by Chief (Barr.) Ezenwo Nyesom Wike, on the platform of the People's Democratic Party (PDP). From inauguration till now, the government has recorded milestones across different sectors of life in the State. We must commend the government on the rehabilitation of terribly impassable roads within our Diocese and other areas of the state. Such roads include Oroigwe road, Eliowhani-Rumunduru road, Rumuibekwe road, Woji road and many more. While we pray God to give the governor and his cabinet more energy to do more, we must say that it would be very important for the government to ensure that quality and durability remain benchmarks for all contractors. No contractor should see the contract to build Rivers roads as political compensation for party loyalty. The roads must be built to last and by so doing, the scarce resources at our disposal will not be wasted on reconstructing roads yearly. And to make matters worse, before such reconstructions, the people would have been made to suffer unimaginable hardship.

In the same vein, we commend the governor for initiating the Christian Ecumenical Centre Project which foundation-stone was laid Wednesday, 25<sup>th</sup> May, 2016 by the Primate of All Nigeria (Anglican Communion), The Most Rev. Nicholas D. Okoh. This shows that issues of the church will remain on the front burner for this government.

In the area of policy direction, we urge the present administration in the state to choose and make a particular sector of infrastructural development its focal point. For instance, the last administration of Governor Rotimi Chibuike Amaechi focussed on educational infrastructure both in the rural and urban areas of the state. We must confess that that administration did a good job in this area. Consequent upon this, we will advise the present administration to build on that policy thrust by recruiting and developing quality manpower for the good of our children in these schools. We believe that government is a continuum. In addition to this, we will suggest to the present government to consider investing its time and resources in the field of agriculture. In the era of lean Federal Allocations, dwindling internally generated revenue and skyrocketing food prices in the country, we believe investment in agriculture will affect the state and its people positively in terms of employment generation, surplus food and income into the state coffers.

We also want to urge the governor and all security personnel in the state to double their efforts and confront the security climate in the state headlong. To say that the spate of killings, kidnappings and beheadings in the state is alarming, is to put it mildly. We are fast sliding into the climate of fear, insecurity and uncertainty which we thought had gone for good. And this does not allow for progress or development of any sort. We therefore call on the governor and all security chiefs to do more for the return of peace in the state and commit to trial those who in any way are found to be culpable. Peace is the bedrock of development. We also call on the leaders of the two main political parties in the state, the PDP and the APC to watch their actions and utterances in the secret and in the open as well as examine their consciences to

be sure that they are not contributing to the insecurity and tension being witnessed presently in the state.

## **NATIONAL ISSUES**

### **THE FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION**

At a time when our beloved country should be running, it is still learning to crawl. At a time it should be lending to others, it is a chronic beggar. At a time our savings till should be full and overflowing, we are scrubbing for remnants. What exactly has stunted our collective development? The answer is one word: **CORRUPTION**, which Professor Wole Soyinka has described as the only uniting factor which one can find across the fabric and labyrinths of our dear nation. Against this backdrop, one can imagine our joy, ecstasy, excitement and expectations when the current national government, then in opposition, made the fight against corruption a major plank for its campaign in the run up to the last general elections. We just couldn't wait to extricate our bleeding and dying nation from the angry and deadly fangs and claws of this age-long old monster.

Within his one year in office, the new government of President Muhammadu Buhari has tried to redeem the image of Nigeria in the International Community through his vigorous fight against corruption. We commend him for this and pray that God will use him to expose all those outside and within his government who have stolen dry the treasury of this country particularly against the backdrop of our being described as a "Fantastically Corrupt" Nation by the immediate past British Prime Minister, Mr. David Cameron. We however advise Mr. President to ensure that he is not guilty of the accusation in some quarters that his war against corruption is selective particularly against politicians of the opposing camps. He should avoid the error of determining the corrupt status of a person simply by his/her political affiliation.

Those who have issues bothering on corruption against them should like all others, be made to face the process of investigation or probe to ascertain their culpability or innocence even if they are part of the ruling party.

The issue of corruption has so badly affected this country that no one engaged in it should anymore be allowed to live comfortably or have a voice in the running of the affairs of this country without being made to answer for his/her crime against the state.

However, as the talk and campaign against corruption persists, the government should endeavour to address the root causes of it, which are poverty and hunger arising from unemployment; poor/delayed wages and even outright non-payment of workers as is the case presently in most states across the country. Even though the present problems have not been created by this administration but inherited from previous ones, Nigerians will continue to hold the government they see liable moreso as the President and his political party campaign team promised to address these issues and many others squarely when voted into power. We therefore plead with the

President and all Governors and Council Chairmen to pay all civil servants their salaries as and at when due and put food on the tables of hungry Nigerians.

While we stand with our leaders in their quest to execute this war, we must state that the modus operandi for this war is non-descript, undefined, nebulous, highly suspicious, confusing and at best fuzzy. For a start, we think that the president and all those who are in the vanguard of this fight must at once, define what they are fighting. Is corruption all about monies looted from the Central Bank of Nigeria? Is it only about misappropriated national funds used by a particular political party for elections? Is it about monies stolen at the national level? What about the states and local government levels? Is corruption limited to politicians alone: what of the admission cabals in our universities, what about civil servants who can falsify virtually anything on earth as long as you can pay, what of teachers and school managements who have put in place a systematic apparatus for aiding students to cheat in examinations? Where exactly does the definition stop? The extent of rot is quite intimidating, but the president must let the searchlight go right down so we don't have a situation where he is fixing the roof while the foundation has collapsed.

Again, in this fight, our institutions must sit up, else, the fight will fail. For instance, the Judiciary has not covered itself in glory, to say the least. The barrage of conflicting pronouncements is sickening. The granting of frivolous injunctions to the EFCC to continue holding an accused even after another court has granted such bail, smacks of complicity and compromise. This ought not to be. The church must also remain non-partisan, no matter whose ox is gored. In fact, the church should point the way in this fight. Ethnic-based organisations should for once see the bigger picture of the country and desist from taking positions in the fight from the angle of who is involved. If a man is proven to have committed a crime and he is being defended by a cultural or ethnic group, such a group is implying that they are complicit in the stealing. If a thief discovers his kinsmen are the first to hand him over to the law, he will think twice before stealing the next time.

As a church, we support the president in this fight and hope that it outlives his government. However, for the corruption monster to be tamed, equity must prevail. The same rules must apply, no matter what ethnic, religious or political divide one has his tent on. Every vestige of partisanship must be removed and the enforcement agencies must remain apolitical at all times. Our country needs cleansing.

### **From May 29, 2015 to date: How far, Nigeria?**

The administration at the national level came into office a little above one year ago. And after one year, we think it is time to take stock because to make progress is to take stock: how far have we gone, what are the milestones and what constitutes the benchmarks? For a start, we recall how some allies of the President in the build up to last year's presidential election promised Nigerians that the President would be addressing the problem of unemployment from his second day in office. They had ridiculed the past government and blamed it for the poor performance of the Naira

which was then at N195 to a dollar. They promised that the Naira would be restored to its years of strength and parity with other foreign currencies.

None of these promises has been fulfilled. The rate of unemployment today has grown worse than what it used to be. The exchange rate of the naira today is N375 to a dollar. The promised change is far from coming. Nigerians should continue to look up to God Almighty whose promises do not fail.

We advise the advisers and spokespersons of the President to help him and Nigeria by not shielding him away from the reality on ground. For the more they present a picture of “all is well” to him, the more they are likely to make Nigerians become disenchanted with his administration.

Previous governments in this country were ridiculed for their inability to provide electricity for the masses. Before coming to power, members of the now ruling political party felt strongly that lighting up the nation was a very simple task for them to execute. It is now clear that the problem of electricity generation and distribution in Nigeria is something beyond the political soapbox. Notwithstanding, officials of the present government should not allow the challenges in the power sector to defeat them. They should do everything possible to deliver us from darkness by providing electricity for all Nigerians as promised. Additionally, Nigerians are entitled to potable water, in their homes and at public places, quality education for their children and other basic needs of life. If we have electricity in regular supply, the several millions of naira we spend, for instance, here in the Diocese of Evo, on generators, diesel and PMS would be channelled to address needs in other critical areas in support of government.

In his first year in office, President Muhammadu Buhari has not sufficiently proved himself a father to all and a defender of the weak. Otherwise, how can we explain the inaction of this government in the face of several incidents of religious intolerance mainly against Christians in a supposedly secular country; the jungle justice/criminal act being committed by some ignorant Muslim fanatics who are bent on imposing the tenets of their faith on others resulting in several cases of their killing of innocent Christians in the guise of fighting blasphemy against the Prophet Mohammed; their forceful abduction of young Christian girls, converting them to Islam and imposing husbands on them; the subtle attempt at introducing the vexatious sharia legal system in the Constitution of Nigeria and the on-going moves aimed at scrapping Christian Religious Knowledge from the curriculum of our schools at a time the Islamic Religion and its study is being promoted by this same government across the country.

According to an article published in the Vanguard Newspaper of Friday, July 1, 2016, the writer accused the President of abuse of power, based majorly on his preferential appointments and other lacklustre attitude to issues of collective national interest. According to him, “the leader of our nation is showing us a very bad example in how to lead a multilingual, multicultural and multi-ethnic country like Nigeria. Right

now, the dominance of the North in the appointment to key positions in the Executive, the Legislature and the Judiciary is overwhelming and unmistakable. Also, appointments into sensitive and critical security, safety, intelligence and election sectors are all skewed in favour of the North”.

According to Femi Orebe, (The Nation newspaper of July 3, 2016, page 16), “the President’s appointments make nonsense of the Federal Character Commission which has not been deleted from the Nigerian Constitution”. Take a look at the following appointments:

1. Inspector General of Police – **North**
2. Director General of the Directorate State Security Service (DSS) – **North**
3. Chief of Army Staff – **North**
4. Chief of Naval Staff – **North**
5. National Security Adviser – **North**
6. Chairman of The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) – **North**
7. Head of Immigration Service – **North**
8. Head of Customs Service – **North**
9. Head of Civil Defence Corps – **North**
10. Minister of Defence – **North**
11. Comptroller of Prisons – **North**
12. Chairman of Independence National Electoral Commission (INEC) – **North**

Hitherto, even under military rule, the positions listed above were spread amongst people from the 250 ethnic nationalities and particularly amongst the 3 major groups, Hausa/Fulani, Yoruba and Igbo.”

From the above analysis which is just a few among many, how can the President justify his famous 2015 inaugural speech? ...*“Having just a few minutes ago sworn on the Holy Book, I intend to keep my oath and serve as President to all Nigerians. I belong to everybody and I belong to nobody. A few people have privately voiced fears that on coming back to office I shall go after them. These fears are groundless. There will be no paying off old scores. The past is prologue....”*.

This country belongs to all Nigerians and every section must be given a due sense of belonging and equal opportunity to participate in the governance of the nation irrespective of their regional, ethnic, religious, social or political affiliation. It is a promise the President made to Nigerians which we urge him to endeavour to keep.

It has been one year of nonstop campaign and propaganda by politicians and people in elected offices and we humbly advise governments at all levels to face the business of governance. In saner climes, the moment the elections are over and the winners installed to their new offices, they immediately settle down to the business of service delivery to the entire nation including areas that did not support them. They tell the nation what they plan to do and how. They do not continue with political campaigns as those seeking the people’s votes. For us sadly, in Nigeria it is a season of telling us

about what the old governments did and did not do as if there will not be issues again after those in power now shall have left office.

The APC/PDP governments at the national and various state levels should leave members of the opposition alone and concentrate on the business of governance. Those in opposition should be well cultured in their opposition and stop attacking and distracting those in power just for the pleasure of doing so. We are tired of the abuses, tirade, blame game, childish animosity, jealousy and “pull-him-down and destroy attitude” which we see in most of our political office holders, *particularly here in Rivers State*.

The President and all elected officers should learn to listen to both friends and foes. They do not stand any chance of succeeding if they only listen and flow with those who agree with them. These so-called friends will lead them to destruction unintentionally.

The truth is that most of the people condemning one past or present government or the other had at some point in the past shared together with their new found enemies in the governance of the country or state as fellow party men/women within the past 17 years.

They looted our treasury together; had fun at home and abroad together; denied us basic amenities of life together, only to turn around to want to use us to settle their political differences. We urge citizens of this country to be wise and discerning, and not allow anyone to deceive them. Anyone or government that is doing what is right should be supported by all and those who by their actions appear bent on destroying this country should not be celebrated.

On our part as Christians what we owe the government at all levels irrespective of the political party that is forming such government is our earnest prayers and support. And so, we call on the Body of Christ in Nigeria to uphold all those in authority regularly in prayer so that they would be guided properly in all their actions.

### **Fulani Herdsmen, The National Grazing Reserves Bill: A Fresh Threat to Nigeria’s Unity and Co-Existence.**

Since 2010, our country has been suffering from a number of serious political/civil crises which have threatened our peace, security and even our continued existence as a united political entity. Chief among these many sore issues are the activities of the Boko Haram Islamic sect, one of the three most blood-thirsty and deadly terrorist groups in the world. The other two being ISIS and Al-Qaeda according to the United Nations reports.

At a time when through the commendable combined efforts of our armed forces with the backing of the Federal Government and the support of other concerned nations, the nefarious onslaught of Boko Haram against innocent Nigerians, particularly in the North East region has been drastically checkmated, the nation is now having to contend with attacks from the fourth most heartless, brutal and deadly group in the



world- the now armed Fulani cattle rearers who have for many decades been in our midst carrying out their grazing business from one part of the country to another. One wonders what the future of Nigeria will be with two of the world's four deadly terrorist groups now based and operating in Nigeria. Only God will help and deliver us!

In their desperation to provide pasture and water for their now sacred cows, these free moving herdsmen plunder farmlands and crops and neighbourhood green areas of communities especially in the Middle Belt, South East and South South zones of the country. Some natives of these communities and owners of farmlands who tried to call them to order have suffered brutal attacks, abduction, rape of the women and outright murder. The most recent examples are the attacks on the communities of Agatu in Benue State and Ukpabi Nimbo in Enugu State.

These deadly attacks, if not checked will seriously threaten the much talked about tolerance and peaceful coexistence of people of the various tribes within the country. We urge the Federal Government to frontally and immediately mobilize the Nigerian armed forces to arrest the menace of these 'hackmen'. Security agencies in the country should be proactive and utilise maximally intelligence reports in order to nip in the bud possible planned attacks on communities. The huge resources spent by Government on the training and equipping of members of these security agencies should be justified by the professional manner in which they respond to cases of attacks on citizens of this country by criminally minded persons hiding under the guise of cattle rearing.

At this point, we would like to join other concerned Nigerians to draw the attention of the Federal Government and members of the National Assembly to an even more serious threat and possible outbreak of anarchy which the nation may be exposed to through the proposed National Grazing Reserves Bill seen by its proponents as the solution to the increasing rancour and bloodletting activities of the Fulani herdsmen. We are expressing our concern notwithstanding the recent statement by the Minister of Agriculture, Chief Audu Ogbeh that there is no such bill anywhere. We wouldn't get carried away by the assurance of the Minister. This is Nigeria and it is said usually that there is no smoke without fire. And so we share 100% in the opinion of Professor Anya O. Anya (OFR, NNOM), President General, Ndigbo Lagos expressed in the press release of April 27 this year on behalf of the group that "the idea of introducing the Bill on grazing reserves as a solution is discriminating, extremely provocative, combustible and draconian with a potential to foist demographic distortion on the Nation".

We urge our national legislators who sincerely love the peace, unity and security of this country not to welcome that Bill if and whenever it is presented. We can already see the grave danger its passage and possible signing into law will portend for the people of this country as we are sure it would be abused and exploited by these desperate, arms carrying, expansionist herdsmen and their Islamist jihadists' sponsors to the detriment of the land donor communities.

*We commend the recent decision of the members of the South East/South-South States Houses of Assembly rejecting the passage into law of the controversial Grazing Reserves Bill before the Senate.*

Fulani herdsmen are private business persons. It is unethical, immoral and unjust for the Federal Government to acquire other people's God-given land for these Fulani's and their cattle. And now, we hear that they are to be specially protected by soldiers assigned by the Federal Government to guard them as they move about. Like every other business venture, Fulani herdsmen sell their cattle for profit and therefore should be responsible for their own investment cost. Private ranching arrangements for cattle rearing are the known best practices in modern agriculture all over the world. Nigerian businessmen, irrespective of who they are and where they come from, should be encouraged to invest in ranching as a business.

The Federal Government should provide meaningful succour, relief, refuge and rehabilitation for the many persons and communities that have been displaced from their home lands on account of these clashes across the country. The President, Muhammadu Buhari is the leader of all Nigerians as well as the Grand Patron of the Miyetti Allah – the umbrella Association of all Cattle Breeders and rearers in Nigeria. We call on him to set aside every hidden agenda of members of this group and their sponsors and use his good offices to call them to order. The government should begin immediately to enforce the law prohibiting the illegal possession of unlicensed firearms which everybody in this country is strictly bound to observe. No group of persons should any longer be allowed to freely go about threatening, inflicting injuries, killing and displacing others from their communities and occupy same in a fashion reminiscent of medieval conquests.

On our part as Christians particularly here in the South, the unfolding events in Nigeria call for prayer, more prayer, vigilance and physical alertness. It is not a time to be at ease or make compromises here and there. Let us take to heart the charge by Charlotte Elliott in the hymn A&M 308:

Christian, seek not yet repose,  
Hear thy guardian angel say,  
Thou art in the midst of foes,  
Watch and pray!

Gird thy heavenly armour on,  
Wear it ever night and day;  
Ambushed lurks the evil one:  
Watch and pray!

## OUR SYNOD THEME

Our chosen theme for this year's synod is **“ATTITUDES AND ROLE RELATIONSHIPS IN GOD’S EARTHLY FAMILY, THE CHURCH”**.

In addressing this theme, we are making a deliberate attempt at looking inwards at ourselves as members of the Christian church.

More often, we Christians have been known to focus more on the activities of those outside the church – noticing and freely commenting on what they are either doing right or are not while keeping a blind eye at what is happening within our folds. In His sermon on the Mount, the Lord sees this attitude as being uncharitable. Consequently, He counsels us on the need for self-examination first before addressing the many short comings of others.

*“And why beholdest thou the mote that is in they brother’s eye,  
But considereth not the beam that is in thine own eye?  
Or how wilt thou say to they brother,  
let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and,  
behold, a beam is in thine own eye?  
Thou hypocrite,  
first cast out the beam out of thine own eye;  
and then shall thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother’s eye.  
(Matthew 7:3-5)*

This theme therefore is aimed at putting our ‘house’ as Christians in order so we can effectively serve as salt and light to those in our immediate world and set the expected example they can readily copy (Matthew 5:13-16).

Our scripture texts are drawn from two of Apostle Paul’s letters. The first is from his **FIRST EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY, CHAPTER 3, verse 15:**

*“But if I tarry long,  
**that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself  
in the house of God,**  
which is the church of the living God,  
the pillar and ground of the truth”.*

The second text is from his **SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS, CHAPTER 3, verse 7:**

*“For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us:  
**for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you”.***

The **FIRST EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY** is one of the three New Testament books written especially to the pastors of local churches. The other two were 2 Timothy and Titus.

This letter is the first New Testament book to discuss in detail those conditions which should prevail in a local church. The letter was written by Paul to Timothy, his son in the Lord, who was pasturing the local church in Ephesus. Paul composed the letter

around AD 62-63 between his first and second imprisonment. It contained counsels and exhortations to a young pastor with respect to his personal conduct and ministerial work.

The key text of the epistle is Chapter 3, verse 15 from where we chose our theme.

SECOND THESSALONIANS from where we took our supporting text to the main (1 Tim. 3:15) was equally written by Paul. Strong internal and external evidence (2 Thess. 1:1; 3:17) and the testimony of the early church favour this. Paul probably wrote this epistle a few months after his first to the believers in Thessalonica (AD 51-52). Among other themes contained in this epistle is his warning to his audience about the dangers of idleness and his exhortation to a life of self-control (2 Thess. 3:6-15).

From the first and main text of our theme, it is clear that Paul was declaring his purpose for writing, which was on how Timothy, a young church minister, was expected to conduct himself in the course of carrying out his duties in the church of God. By extension, the epistle is equally to serve as a counsel to all present day church ministers and shepherds of God's flock on how they are expected to behave in the church.

However, beyond talking to the ministers of the church, it is our strong conviction that Apostle Paul was also reminding us that whether it concerns the minister or the church member, there is an approved or acceptable attitude or pattern of behaviour expected of every serious-minded member of the Church particularly in relation to other members of that same church of God, which is His family here on earth.

In the second text, Paul reminded his audience which included the "God-fearing" Greeks and those Jews who had believed in Christ of his personal attitude and example of not behaving disorderly while with them.

In both texts, we note Paul's use of the term 'ought'. This is a strong word in the Greek language often translated "must". In the light of this, Paul was admonishing Timothy on how he **MUST CONDUCT** himself while going about his tasks. In the second text, Paul was reminding the Thessalonians that their attitude of idleness was against the example that had been set before them. Once again, Paul used the word "follow" (Greek mimeomai, literally translated "imitate") as believers are exhorted to mimic the example that Paul set before them!

### *Definition of Terms*

At this point we shall attempt to define or examine the key words or terms embodied in this theme. They are:

#### **1. Attitudes**

Attitude is simply defined as an inward feeling (that is, the way you think) expressed by outward behaviour. Attitude can be seen without the speaking of

a word. It can produce a “merry”, i.e. “joyful” or “cheerful” face (Prov. 15:13). Attitudes also colour a person’s whole experience (v.15).

## **2. Role Relationships**

A role is a set of connected behaviours, rights, obligations, beliefs and norms as conceptualized by people in a social situation. It is an expected or free or continuously changing behaviour and may have a given individual social status or social position.

In English, role relationship is defined as “the aspects of a relationship consisting of the reciprocal role expectations of each person towards the other.

## **3. God’s Earthly Family**

When we place our faith in Christ, God becomes our Father (2Cor. 6:18; Gal. 4:5,6; 3:39; John 1:12); we become His children, other believers become our brothers and sisters, and the church becomes our spiritual family. The family of God includes all believers in the past, the present and the future.

Every human being was created by God, but not all are God’s children. It is only through the new birth (Born again) experience that one becomes a child of God and a member of His family, the church. We become part of the human family by our first birth but become a member of God’s family by our second birth:

God “has given us the privilege of being  
born again, so that we are now members of  
God’s own family” (1Pet. 1:3b, NLT) (See  
also Romans 8:15-17)

Every day, God invites everyone to be part of His family; but there is one condition: faith in His Son, Jesus. The Bible says:

“You are all children of God through faith in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:26” NLT).

The very moment one is spiritually born into God’s family, he is welcomed with some astounding birthday gifts. These include the family name, the family likeness, family privileges, family intimate access, and the rich family inheritance (1 John 3:1; Romans 8:17,29; Gal. 4:6-7; Rom. 5:2; 1Cor. 3:23; Eph. 3:12; 1Pet. 1:3-5).

## **4. The Church**

Apostle Paul, in our text defines church as “the house of God; the pillar and ground of the truth”. The word church in English came via the German and Latin from the Greek *Kyriakon*, meaning, ‘that which belongs to the Lord’. Originally, it was an adjective modifying *doma* or *oikia*, signifying ‘ the Lord’s house or a place of Christian worship hence our use of church for a building in

which Christians gather to worship their Lord. Thus our word 'church' derives from a post biblical usage.

The word *ekklesia* in the New Testament normally translated by 'church' is never used to indicate a building, rather, it always refers to people.

To the ordinary reader of the English Bible, 'church' is exclusively a New Testament word. To the early Christians, who read both the Old and New Testaments in Greek, this was not so. In fact, *ekklesia* occurs nearly a hundred times in the Septuagint-just a few times less than in the New Testament. It is the translation of the Hebrew word *qahal*, a term used most often in the Old Testament to signify the people of God gathered together in assembly before the LORD (Deut. 4:10; 9:10; 18:16; Ps. 22:22 [quoted in Heb. 2:12]; 2Chron. 30: 13; cf. Acts 7:38). Thus it seems unlikely that an early Christian would consider the church as a totally New Testament phenomenon, though he would recognize that a new and fuller meaning was poured into the term by the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ and the subsequent gift of the Holy Spirit. Rather, he would see in the use of the term *ekklesia* one of many links between the Old Testament and the New indicating an essential continuity between the Old Israel and the new.

In secular Greek of New Testament times the word *ekklesia* meant simply a gathering or meeting of any kind. It could refer to a regularly constituted political assembly (as it does in Acts 19:39) or to an ordinary meeting (as in the case of the mob who surged into the theatre in Ephesus (Acts 19:32, 40). In view of the root meaning of the term (from a verb meaning 'to call out') it has been often suggested that the basic meaning in the New Testament of *ekkelesia* is to signify a 'called out people' with a strong emphasis upon separation from the surrounding world. This seems to carry with it the connotation of its Old Testament association with *qahal*, God's people assembled to worship and serve Him.

And so, the Church in the New Testament is the assembly of believers in the Lord Jesus Christ who have been drawn together through Him for the purpose of fellowshiping, worshipping, serving and obeying God in the world in the power of the Holy Spirit.

It is the members of this body or community of believers who have embraced the NEW LIFE IN CHRIST (Romans 6:4) who constitute the earthly family and children of God – the church. *"But as many as received him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name"* (John 1:12). (See also Rom. 8:15, 17; 2 Cor. 6:18; Gal. 4:5,6; 3:29).

In this family, we share in strong spiritual relationships. Our obedience to Christ secures the benefits of this relationship (Matthew 12:50). Secondly, heirship with Christ is entailed in it (Romans 8:17). Thirdly, all barriers are broken down (Eph. 2:19). Fourthly, here on earth, we are regarded as saints just as those in heaven and are united with them in a spiritual relationship

(Eph. 3:15; Rom. 1:7). Finally, we are to each other ‘brethren’ (Matthew 23:8), and our ‘brotherhood’ is recognized by Christ (Heb. 2:11).

Charles R. Swindoll, pastor and best-selling author of many books defines a family as “a place where principles are hammered and honed on the anvil of everyday living”.

This Synod theme therefore, seeks to focus on the principles that should guide members of this closely knit family of faith (Eph. 2:21) in their individual living and in their attitudes to and relationships with each other.

### **God and Relationships**

Before we go further on this, let us examine the nature of the Almighty God who is also the Father of this earthly family in regards to relationships. God is by nature a relational God; and He identifies Himself in family terms: Father, Son, and Spirit. The Trinity is God’s relationship to Himself. It is the perfect pattern for relational harmony, and we should study its implications. He related with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:8); with Abraham (2 Chron. 20:7), with Isaac (Gen. 26:1-6); with Jacob (Gen. 28:10-end); Samuel (1 Sam. 3:1-18); Moses (Exodus 33:11); Job (Job 38:39) and other patriarchs. He enjoys relating with His creation (Psalm 8:1), particularly man, whom He has created in His image and after His likeness (Gen. 1:26). Jesus called the twelve apostles from diverse educational preparations and vocational backgrounds “*that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach.....*” (Mark 3:14). We can understand here that the Lord called out these men **firstly to be with Him** before sending them out to preach, heal the sick and cast out demons. This means that God longs for a relationship with us before He will use us for His service.

As those who bear the nature of God, we are to relate with others instead of living in isolation. In His earthly family – the church, God has not only ushered us into a community of faith, but that of love; thus calling us to share our lives and His blessings upon us with others.

### **Christianity is Relationships**

What separates Christianity and Christians from all the religions in the world is the centrality of relationship. Our faith is built on and around relationships, not creeds or disciplines alone.

Consider this! When Jesus was asked about the greatest commandment, He said, we’re to “love the Lord with all our heart, mind, soul and strength” (a vertical relationship) and “to love our neighbour as ourselves” (a horizontal relationship). Jesus did not say: by this will all men know that you are my disciples – that you have memorized fifty verses of scripture. Instead, He said that the way the world would

know we are His disciples is how we handle our relationships. In our relationships with God and the each other however, there are biblically established attitudes or patterns of behaviour that we must necessarily conform to. Some of these we shall now examine.

### **Attitudes and role relationships of Church leaders to the members**

In our two texts, we note that in the first, Paul wrote to Timothy, a church leader on what his behaviour and role should be as a minister. And in the second text, he wrote concerning his own conduct also as a church leader.

Consequently, we deduce that whatever spiritual heights church members will attain will be largely engineered by their leadership. And so, in matters of right attitudes and reciprocal roles expectations, the leadership of the church beginning with the ministers will have to take the lead.

Leadership in the house of God is noble, and whoever occupies that position must have a good reputation, uphold godly values, have a loving heart, a healthy home, a mature faith, a teachable attitude, discipline and self-control.

He should be a shining example to all knowing that whatever he does from his position will affect the community of faith either positively or negatively.

Every congregation wants for instance, a priest who by his teachings and personal example meets the standard set forth in Titus 1:6-9 and is able to guide them to greater maturity in their personal relationship with Christ (Luke 12:48).

Our Priests and other leaders MUST see themselves and act as messengers (2Cor. 8:23) and accountable servants of Christ and His Church (Phil. 1:1; 2Cor. 4:5) for God to use them. They are to serve in attitude and action, embracing the same “mind” that drove Jesus to lead.

*“And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all. For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many” (Mark 10:44-45).*

*“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 2:5).*

Church leaders lead the best as servants.

Rumblings and crises within a local church MUST not be traced to the attitude, lifestyle or actions of the leaders. To this end, church leadership must, like Paul, avoid disorderly conduct, but should with a good conscience and sincerity, engage themselves in ventures that are spiritually beneficial both to themselves and also to the congregation.



The ordained leader of the Church should have the attitude of a team player. He should relate with others as one member in a team ministry, striving to build a fellowship of people who work together to carry out God's plan.

Everyone in the Church has an important part to play. The ordained priest/pastor/leader should identify what each person can do and assign them such roles. The ordained leader therefore has the special role of "equipping the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ" (Eph. 4:12).

In addition to his sacramental, disciplinary/administrative/teaching/evangelistic functions, the church priest is called to a ministry of pastoral care to the congregation.

As pastor, he must move among his members and preside (be happily and sacrificially present) at all the great moments of their lives so as to bring the resources of the Christian faith to them. This he has to do regardless of whether he feels like they like him or not, or whether the people meet up with his expectations or not:

*"And the servant of the Lord must not strive;  
but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach,  
patient; in meekness instructing those that  
oppose themselves; if God peradventure will  
give them repentance to the acknowledging of  
the truth" (2 Tim. 2:24, 25)*

At this point, we would like to remind every clergyman (Archdeacon, Rector, Vicar, Curate, Priest and Deacon) and church teacher in our Diocese that it is tantamount to a breach of ministerial ethics and an act of gross irresponsibility and uncharitableness for them to stay away (be absent) from church at the great moments in the life of members of the congregation such as the celebration of Fathers' Week/Day, Mothering Sunday Week of activities/Service proper, Youth/Children's Week/Sunday, Conferences of these and other activity groups. The same applies to the special seasons/days in the Christian church calendar, e.g. Christmas, Watch-night service, Circumcision and Naming of Christ, First Sunday of the year, Holy Week/Easter, Church harvest thanksgivings, Diocesan Synods, Conferences and services, etc. without the approval of the Diocesan Bishop.

Take for instance, the case of children. We have noted with dismay the attitude of indifference towards them and the youths by the pastors. We should as leaders draw inspiration from the attitude of Christ towards children. He received and blessed them and warned against despising them (Matthew 18:10). Christ also commands reception of them and to be given spiritual food (Mark 9:37; 10:14; John 21:15). They are the future of the church and today's church leaders should be sufficiently committed to developing them spiritually.

It is equally most discourteous, for a serving minister or church worker, whether in charge or not, to be absent when the Bishop, his wife, an Archdeacon or wife are visiting the Administrative Bloc, Parish or station where he and the wife are serving. It is not only disrespectful but equally malicious.

From time to time activity groups of the Diocese are programmed to hold their activities in one church or the other. The clergy and wives of such hosting churches are morally and ethically bound to be there to welcome those visiting until such a time the group Chaplain chooses to release them.

Hitherto, many have acted in ways that caused pains to either the parishioners, their superiors in ministry, colleagues and even our visitors. And so, we charge everyone to consciously work at doing things the right and Christian way for the health of our fellowship.

### **Attitudes and roles of church members towards the spiritual leadership of the church**

Pastors are ordained and sent to local churches primarily to do the work of ministry and enlarge God's family on earth in collaboration with other leaders and members of the church.

On their arrival with their family, church members are to receive them gladly and hospitably. Their calling is to "rule well" (1Tim. 5:17), i.e. labour hard in teaching the word and doctrine as well as set good example in their faith.

As they strive daily to excel in their offices, members are enjoined to treat them with honour, reverence (Phil. 2:29) and loyalty (Heb. 13:17); esteeming them highly in love because of the work they do among the brethren (1Thess. 5:13).

Priestly benediction can turn to a curse unto a parishioner who disrespects or despises his/her priest. The people of Nazareth could not be blessed by the presence of Jesus because of their disregard for Him (Mark 6:2-6<sup>a</sup>). And so, we must learn to respect our leaders who tell us the truth (Gal. 4:16).

We are equally enjoined to always encourage and support them prayerfully, and materially (where we can). They with their wives are the fathers and mothers we know in a typical earthly family. They do all in their power to build up the members of the family who are in turn expected to show appreciation, love and affection to these 'parents' as they (the children) become established.

They should not be abandoned to suffer and groan under the weight of their adversities.

### **Attitude of church members to the church family**

The Early Church Example

From the Book of Acts of the Apostles, we learn that what we have today as the worldwide Body of believers in Christ, denominations, local churches or fellowship groups started on the note of a united assembly until the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came and filled all who were present in the Upper Room (Acts 2:1-4).

From her early days therefore, the church has always been a united community of faith in God with every member maintaining the positive attitude of cherishing and sharing in the fellowship (company) of other believers.

The Scriptures enjoin love for and attendance upon the house of God – the church, the place of worship for a number of reasons:

*“One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after;  
that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life,  
to behold the beauty of the LORD,  
and to inquire in his temple” (Psalm 27:4)*

*“For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand.  
I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God,  
than to dwell in the tents of wickedness” (Psalm 84:10)*

*“I was glad when they said unto me,  
Let us go into the house of the LORD” (Psalm 122:1)*

David, a worthy example of the many Old Testament saints had an acceptable, exemplary attitude towards God’s earthly family and His dwelling place. He saw the house of God as the dwelling place of His honour, which by implication means that God Himself bestows this same honour on those who come there to worship Him.

David saw the house of God as a place of beauty and so, he longed to go there to behold it. It was to him, the place of inquiry and so he preferred to be there, rather than go to other tents of wickedness. The first stanza of the Hymns Ancient and Modern 242

*“We love the place, O God,  
Wherein thine honour dwells;  
The joy of thine abode  
All earthly joy excels*

by W. Bullock and Sir H. W. Baker captures King David’s description of the house of God, the church more clearly.

We also learn from the examples of Jesus and the apostles who loved and regularly attended upon the sanctuary.

*“And he came to Nazareth, where he had been  
brought up: and, **as his custom was, he went  
into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and  
stood up for to read” (Luke 4:16)***

“And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy: And were **continually in the temple**, praising and blessing God. Amen” (Luke 24:52, 53).

After we have turned our backs against this world, through repentance from our sins, we naturally face a new direction – the direction of God’s earthly family where His other children are eagerly waiting as ministers and fellow brethren to embrace us and share the love of Jesus regularly with us. If after our claim to the new birth and life we are not excited to be in this place of beauty except occasionally, but prefer other tents of vanity and wickedness or even to just remain at home; it means that we may have to re-examine ourselves and be sure that we have truly accepted Christ. You cannot claim to be one with Christ and yet hate His company and that of His other children.

What do you do and where do you usually go to on the various fellowship (family meeting) days of your local church?

He longs for our holy gatherings in His name and identifies with us where and when ever we meet (Matthew 18:20).

Blessings are pronounced upon those who have the right attitude of always attending:

*“Blessed are they that dwell in thy house: they will be still praising thee” (Psalm 84:4).*

The house of God, the Church, the family of God’s people on earth is a refuge for members in their times of trouble:

*“And it came to pass, when king Hezekiah heard it, that he rent his clothes, and covered himself with sackcloth, **and went into the house of the LORD**” (Isaiah 37:1)*

It is a place of instruction in righteousness:

*“And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, and to the house of the God of Jacob; **and He will teach us of His ways**, and we will walk in His paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem” (Micah 4:2);*

and comfort in old age:

*“And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser: she*

*was of a great age, and had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity; And she was a widow of about fourscore and four years, **which departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day** (Luke 2:36, 37).*

We charge all ministers – the priests and church teachers of this Diocese to rise from this Synod resolving to follow in the footsteps of our Master and perfect example, Jesus, the apostles and the Old Testament saints, and be customarily available in the church for regular counselling, prayers for and with the parishioners and also for instruction (Bible studies/teachings) of the people. It is unto these that we have been called and ordained by God; not for the many vain things some of us chase after at the expense of our charge:

*“For the priest’s lips should keep knowledge, And they should seek the law at his mouth; For he (the priest) is the messenger of the Lord of hosts” (Mal. 2:7).*

May our absence or inability to teach no longer be the reason/excuse for which some parishioners (family members) shun the fellowship (family meeting) of the church (Mal. 2:17).

We charge every other synod delegate, members of the various churches in our Diocese and indeed all Christians to copy the example of the believers in the early church, whose first priority was always to minister to the Lord in worship, thanksgiving and praise.

*“Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved” (Acts 2:41, 46, 47)*

For the sake of our growth in the faith of Christ; for the sake of our professed love for Him and His other children who constitute God’s church on earth; and for the sake of His uncertain time, yet imminent return, we should all heed the admonition of the writer to the Hebrews in the 25<sup>th</sup> verse of the 10<sup>th</sup> Chapter of the epistle:

*“Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together,  
as the manner of some is; but exhorting one  
another: and so much the more, as ye see the day  
approaching”*

and begin forthwith to **regularly** and **punctually** honour all activities of our churches which are in effect appointments with God and the father of this great family.

This charge, if adhered to in the true spirit of Christ and His kingdom will help us build particularly, here in Evo, a Diocese with a strong Christian family fellowship

*“And they worshipped him, and returned to  
Jerusalem with great joy: And were continually  
in the temple, praising and blessing God. Amen”  
(Luke 24:52, 53).*

### **Attitude of care, comfort and mutual support**

In God’s earthly family, the Church, members relate to each other **with an attitude of care and support** for one another. It is a ministry to which everyone is called—helping, loving and taking care of each other emotionally and spiritually; being involved in supplying practical support to our brothers and sisters in Christ in their times of need.

The clergy and other leaders of every local church **MUST** establish “biblical support-systems” as in the early church through which members can minister to one another.

*“And all that believed were together, and had all  
things common; And sold their possessions and  
goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had  
need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in  
the temple, and breaking bread from house to house,  
did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of  
heart” (Acts 2:44-46).*

*“Neither was there any among them that lacked: for  
as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold  
them, and brought the prices of the things that were  
sold, And laid them down at the apostles' feet: and  
distribution was made unto every man according as  
he had need” (4:34, 35)*

In the newly founded church, in Jerusalem, members shared meals together in their homes and nobody went hungry or was left homeless. Each one gave what he could to those who were in need. And this was done with “great joy”.

The attitude we have about our possessions often reveals what is in our hearts – whether good or evil.

God delivered the Jerusalem Church from the evil of covetousness and deception (lying) in a most convincing way. This is what happened:

*“Joseph, whom the apostles called Barnabas (Son of comfort), Was a Levite from the country of Cyprus. He sold some land and brought the money to the apostles to be given to the needy. There was a man and his wife by the name of Ananias and Sapphira who also sold some land. However, they kept back a part of the price but acted as if they were bringing it all to the apostles. Peter, seeing into their hearts, straightly said, ‘Ananias, why have you lied to the Holy Spirit?... the land and the money were yours to do with as you wished. You have not lied to us, but to God’. When Ananias heard this, he fell to the floor and died!” (Acts 4:36-5:11 smf).*

*After Ananias died, the same judgment fell on his wife, Sapphira, and she fell dead.*

From the example of Barnabas and others we learn the Christ’s way of reaching out in love to minister to His people. Just as Jesus worships the Father in Heaven through us- He serves the members of His Body through us. Jesus comforts hurting people by using our arms to embrace them. He lovingly touches them with our hands. He wants to speak to them through the lips of the members of His Body-the Church.

God expects us as members of His family to care for one another even when we are not biologically related or come from the same ethnic background.

The relationships and ties we share with members of our earthly families will end when death comes or the trumpet sounds particularly, if they are not Christians; but our ties and relationships as Christians – children of God, will continue when we get to heaven-forever. What this means therefore is that the church, our spiritual family constitutes the real family for the believer much more than his physical family.

Let us endeavour therefore to care for and do good to all men especially unto them who belong to this household of faith (Galatians 6:10). *“But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased”* (Heb. 13:16)

It was from their ministry to the Lord and to one another that the early church developed their witness to the word:

*“And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved”*  
(Acts 2:43, 47).

Every day, many new believers were added to their fellowship. This is a perfect picture of God’s plan and purpose in action.

While on the cross, before He gave up the ghost, the Lord Jesus did what appeared like a formal institution of the ministry of care and comfort in the church, when He said to His mother, Mary, “Woman, behold thy son!”, in apparent reference to John. And to John himself, He said, “Behold thy mother!”, handing Mary over to him to care for (John 19:26,27).

In our *Koinonia*, i.e. fellowship, we are to cultivate the attitude of empathy with the weak, the aged or infirm; those who are unable or are no longer able to work and support themselves; the bereaved and heartbroken, like Mary, the widows/widowers, orphans, destitute and our increasingly needy and vulnerable youths (1Thess. 5:11), most of whom are unemployed and should be given or assisted to secure jobs by members of the church unconditionally.

Elderly and more mature women in the church, like Mary, should be available to build up and cater for young and upcoming ministers and workers like John.

On their part, pastors, whether young in age or advanced should like Paul, so care for the flock, the churches under them (2Cor. 11:28). They should labour night and day with their wives in prayer and in the ministry of the Word so that whatever is perceived to be lacking in the faith of each person in the church can be perfected (1Thess. 3:10).

In all these expressions of care, no one is expected to take advantage of the other. The ugly and condemnable practices of sexual abuses as found in the church at Corinth should not characterize our relationship with one another. The moral sanctity and purity of the Church MUST not be compromised by anyone.

To this end, we charge every congregation to revisit their welfare policies/plans with a view to improving on what is already on ground.

We also call on the rich, wealthy and comfortable members of the church to be sympathetic and helpful to the needy in our midst (Matthew 25:35, 36; Acts 20:35).

The blessings bestowed upon us through the labours of our hands should not be consumed all by ourselves. Part of them should be used to support the weak. By so doing more of such blessings will come our ways from God.

### **Attitude of peaceful co-existence**

In God’s earthly family, the Church, members are enjoined to cultivate the attitude of peace as they share life together.

*“If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men” (Romans 12:18)*

*“Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord” (Hebrews 12:14).*



The coming of Jesus was meant to bring peace to men on earth. This was part of the message contained in the songs of praise sang by the multitude of the heavenly host to God while announcing the birth of Jesus (Luke 2:13, 14).

This peace however, is to be enjoyed and radiated to others by the spiritually-minded (Rom. 8:6), i.e. all God's children, who are called to a life of peace.

*For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but  
righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost  
(Rom. 14:17).*

One of the many legacies of Christ to His Church is peace – (Eph. 2:14; John 14:27). Through His shed blood, He has reconciled all things unto Himself (Colossians 1:20) and broken down all barriers and removed all causes of separation (Eph. 2:14, 19). Consequently, all members of His family must take into their hearts this peace of God (Col. 3:15) and serve as His agents in transmitting it to others beginning from the church.

Apostle Paul counsels us to cultivate the attitude of peace (Eph. 4:3; 1Thess. 5:13<sup>b</sup>; 2Tim 2:22)

*“For God is not the author of confusion,  
but of peace, as in all churches of the saints”  
(1Cor. 14:33).*

When we engage in bitter quarrels and hatred with one another in the church, we trouble and defile the family fellowship and at the same time set back the very work of God we are called to promote. We become carnal thereby laying a false claim to the new life in Jesus.

Peace is a by-product of God's Spirit (Gal. 5:22) which everyone around a child of God should freely enjoy.

We charge all who are at 'war' with someone else or others with them in the ministry or leadership of the church or community, in politics or over whatever to lay down their arms, embrace the peace of God and also extend same to their brothers/sisters.

The coming of the Lord can occur at any moment from now. The primary duty of the Church is to prepare and encourage one another to make heaven at His appearing and not to dissipate our energy in unprofitable strife, bickering, backbiting and malice.

Hence, in the language of Apostle Paul, we beseech and charge all the 'Euodias' and 'Syntyches' of our Diocese, in the body of Christ in Nigeria, as well as those within the political spheres of Rivers State, Niger Delta and Nigeria as a whole, particularly those who profess faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and regularly share in the fellowship of His earthly family, that they *“be of the same mind”* in the Lord.

Euodia and Syntyche were leaders in the church in Philippi around 61 AD whose diligent involvement in the building of the church was recognized by Paul and other believers in the same way certain persons are today actively involved in the building (growing and expanding) of their Dioceses and local churches; in the same way some of our politicians can be said to be involved in the building of our states and the nation, Nigeria. Sadly however, the two women in the Philippian church were entangled in a bitter dispute which threatened to affect the harmony and well-being of the entire congregation just as some parts of God's earthly family today and our nation are being negatively affected by the misunderstandings between certain brethren on one hand and between political leaders on the other.

Paul's solution was two-fold. First, he called on the two women to "be of the same mind". They were to avoid foolish disputes and those things which were "unprofitable". They were rather to build up the body by letting each esteem others better than herself and look out not only for her interest, but for the interest of others (Phil. 2:3-4). Even though their issues may have been important from a human perspective, they were not "profitable" from a spiritual one.

The second action Paul took was to make an urgent plea to the other leaders in the church to help Euodia and Syntyche reconcile and return to the "same mind" in the Lord.

The body is to work together to help one another function lovingly and harmoniously in Christ.

Our disputes may be considered important from a human perspective, but from the spiritual, they are not "profitable".

Right relationships are essential for the health of the Church and that of any other society. When Christians (family members) and politicians have the mind of Christ, they do not demand their own ways, instead, they choose what is most loving, harmonious and edifying for the building up of the whole congregation and the society at large – that is, what is "profitable".

We acknowledge that this is not easy; but with much prayer, humility, and counsel from the word of God differences amongst brethren can be reconciled.

"Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the Children of God" (Matthew 5:9).

### **Attitude of love**

Love is one of the main attributes of God. In fact, He is the definition of love. Without Him love does not exist (John 3:16; 1John 4:8-10).

Life is all about love.

Because God is love, the most important lesson He wants His family members to learn on earth is how to love. It is in loving that we are most like Him; so love is the foundation of every command He has given us.

*“For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this;  
Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself”.*  
*“Gal. 5:14”.*

We are actually bankrupt in our faith if love is missing in our relationships.

God’s pattern of love is agape – it is active, yet selfless. ‘Agape’ is a one way love, which loves ‘in spite of’, not ‘because of’. Such is the commitment we, members of His family, owe Him (1John 4:19) and also ourselves (Eph. 5:25: 1Peter 1:22). It should not be affected by the other person’s inconsistent behaviour:

*“A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love  
one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love  
one another” (John 13:34)*

Members love for one another should be demonstrated without partiality (Deut. 10:19; unselfishly (Matt 22:39); sincerely (Rom. 12:9) after the example of Christ (John 15:12) and fervently (1Pet. 1:22).

It is the only way we can prove our discipleship to the world (John 13:35).

The level of hatred, envy and strife within most communities of God’s people, including our Evo Diocesan Community, is unspeakable. All these must give way for the genuine love of God to take its place. With our hate, deceit, hypocrisy and lies, we still pray, sing, dance, administer and participate in the sacraments together.

There are many things God hates or abhors in His family. One of such is the hatred, resentments members of His household harbour in their hearts or express in their words and actions against their brethren. (Lev. 19:17). It destroys our testimony here on earth and stands in the way of our heavenly hope.

*“He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his  
brother, is in darkness even until now” (1 John 2:9).*

*“Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and  
ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding  
in him” (1 John 3:15).*

Sincere members of this family strive to promote love, unity and understanding. No member calculatedly seeks the downfall or ill of the other. People are careful not to lure, expose or drag others into sin (1Cor. 8:7-13). Rather, they consider to provoke their brethren unto love and to good works (Hebrews 10:24).

## **Wrong attitude and discipline of erring family members**

In God's earthly family, the Church, members are orderly and disciplined in their private and public lives. This they do because of the reverence they have for the Father and Head of the family, the love they have for the family, and for its members – the brethren. Everyone behaves himself perfectly and in a wise way (Psalm. 101 2); towards other family members and those outside, in order to protect the purity of the home and guard against external ridicule and shame.

When however, a member introduces an attitude that disrupts the harmony, peace, unity and sanctity of the family through an unruly, divisive, corrupt/immoral or vile behaviour, he/she is publicly warned in the first instance (1Thess. 5:14<sup>a</sup>). Where the person chooses to remain unrepentant, he/she is disciplined – separated from the church (Titus 3:10) in order to preserve the spiritual health and pride of the church.

God fearing leaders and members of God's earthly family do not pet or cover up wrong conduct. They rather, expose it for the good of the family. Offending and genuinely sorry church members also accept the warning, correction and discipline of the church. They do not resist it or take offence. That is the proper attitude expected from them.

We must note however, that the goal of all church discipline is never to condemn, but to restore. It is usually motivated by love toward the fallen, that his/her soul might be saved (1Cor. 5:5) at least.

## **Attitude of mutual respect for, submission to and equality with one another**

In God's earthly family, members should for the fear of God have an attitude of mutual respect in their relationship with and to one another.

Towards the aged male members the Bible enjoins an attitude of honour, reverence and obedience by the young including the minister:

“Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and  
honour the face of the old man, and fear thy God: I  
*am* the LORD” (Leviticus 19:32)

*“Rebuke not an elder, but entreat him as a father” (1Tim. 5:1<sup>a</sup>);*

*The younger male members are to be treated as brethren (1Tim. 5:1<sup>b</sup>)*

The elder women are to be regarded as mothers and the younger as sisters with all purity (1Tim. 5:2).

Children of all ages are charged to show filial honour and obedience:

*“My son, hear the instruction of thy father,  
and forsake not the law of thy mother” (Prov. 1:8)*

*“The eye that mocketh at his father,  
and despiseth to obey his mother,  
the ravens of the valley shall pick it out,  
and the young eagles shall eat it” (Prov. 30:17)*

*“Children, obey your parents in all things:  
for this is well pleasing unto the Lord” (Col. 3:20);*

while the parents have the special duties of teaching and instructing (Deut. 6:7; Isaiah 28:9), training (prov. 22:6), providing for (2Cor. 12:14), **nurturing without provoking** (Eph. 6:4), controlling (1Tim. 3:4) loving (Titus 2:4), correcting (Prov. 23:13) them. All these, the parents must do from their own lives of good example (2Tim. 1:5, 1Kings 9:4).

In this family, God encourages marriage among his children who are not in the human sense, biologically related to each other because He sees marriage as a type of our relationship with Him (Eph. 5:21-33).

Married brothers in this family are to love, nourish, cherish and be sensitive to the weakness of their wives as women. On their part, the sisters are to maintain loving, submissive, reverential and obedient attitude to their husbands and be full of good deeds to them (1 Peter 3:1-6; Titus 2:5).

Marriage works best when spouses submit to and serve each other. God wants them to honour, submit and be faithful to each other (Eph. 5:21-6:4; Heb. 13:4).

Couples are to use their union and relationship to serve the Lord as Aquila and Priscilla did (Acts 18:2, 26).

Within this community of faith also, all members are equal in the sight of God. He does not discriminate against or treat anyone with partiality because of his race, colour, status or gender. Consequently, He forbids members from discriminating or acting partially against the disadvantaged and others as doing so will attract his judgement: (Mal. 3:5; Jas 2:1-4).

*“The rich and poor meet together: the LORD is the  
maker of them all” (Prov. 22:2)*

*“For there is no difference between the Jew and the  
Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that  
call upon him” (Rom. 10:12)*

*And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will  
be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against  
the adulterers, and against false swearers, and  
against those that oppress the hireling in his wages,  
the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside  
the stranger from his right, and fear not me, saith  
the LORD of hosts” (Mal. :5)*

*“My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons. For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment; And ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool:  
Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts?” (James 2:1-4)*

Each is to accept and relate to the other as beloved brother/sisters, one in Christ Jesus and heirs of the kingdom of God (Matthew 23:8; Gal. 3:28; James 2:5).

### **Attitude of forgiveness and patience**

In this family, members offend from time to time as they relate with and minister to one another. Depending on their level of spiritual growth, some persons step on the toes of others wilfully while others do so inadvertently – sometimes completely unaware of the pain they have caused the other person.

We are severally counselled from the scriptures on how to react to such inappropriate conduct of the brother/sister. We are to follow the attitude of our Father and Head of the house, God Himself, *“Who forgiveth all thine iniquities” – Psalm 103:3*; and our big Brother and Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: *“In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace” (Eph. 1:7)* and obligatorily extend mercy to the offender who comes seeking forgiveness – even if he/she has sinned against us repeatedly and regardless of however the sin may have been (Matthew 18:21, 22; Luke 17:4; Eph. 4:32; Co. 3:12, 13). God does not allow us to retaliate against others for the harm or injury they have caused us

*“See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men”  
(1Thess. 5:15).*

Our forgiveness of their offenses is a prerequisite for our receiving God’s forgiveness of our own (Matthew 6:14, 15; Luke 11:4; James 2:13).

To be able to forgive others their wrongs against us, we need an attitude of patience toward them. Patience is a “fruit” of the Spirit of God (Gal. 5:22-23). Patience means allowing for others’ faults, out of love (Eph.4:2).

The attitude of forgiveness endears us to God as His obedient children and it defeats all Satan’s attempt at breaking our fellowship with Him (Mark 11:25, 26; Luke 17: 3, 4).

We must however, emphasize here, that in this family no true member wilfully rides on the injunction of forgiveness to offend and/or take advantage of the other(s). In

other words, grace is not abused. Those who abuse grace here are feared to be insincere and ingenuine.

### **Attitude of honesty and sincerity**

Members of God's earthly family are enjoined to be honest and sincere in all their dealings with other members of the household – our Bishop, Priests, the congregation and fellow brethren (Lev. 19: 35, 36).

Our attitude and relationship with others must be devoid of lies or half-truths for whatever gain (Deut. 19:14). God hates dishonesty (Prov. 12:22).

*“Wherefore putting away lying,  
speak every man truth with his neighbour:  
for we are members one of another” (Eph. 4:25).*

### **Attitude of not using foul language but words that edify**

Foul language is not fitting for a Christian (Eph. 5:4). We are to avoid it from ourselves and also not encourage it from other members of the family (Prov. 4:24).

Our words should reflect our relationship with God and should be an example to others:

*“Let your speech be always with grace,  
seasoned with salt, that ye may know  
how ye ought to answer every man” (Colossians 4:6).*

*“... but be thou an example to the believers in word” (1Tim. 4:12).*

*“Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth,  
but that which is good to the use of edifying,  
that it may minister grace unto the hearers” (Eph. 4:29).*

Our mouths should be wells of life (Prov. 10:11). What we say and how we say them are good indicators and measures of wisdom. The words that proceed out of mouths must be pleasant (Prov. 16:24), appropriate (Prov. 25:11), gracious (Eccl. 10:12), inspiring and unforgettable (Eccl. 12:11); comforting, kind and spiritual (Isa. 50:4; Prov. 15:1 and Eph. 5:19).

### **Attitude of kindness, hospitality and courtesy**

Because members of this family are the children of a common Father, (Prov. 22:2; Mal. 2:10), they are to be kind, hospitable and courteous to each other in the same way God does.

The Bible admonishes us to have the attitude of kindness to others *“And be ye kind one to another ...” (Eph. 4:32)* even to people who treat us wrongly (1Thess. 5:15). This we are to do without arguing – 2 Tim. 2:24.

Hospitality is a way to serve those who serve us (Luke 10:7). God desires that His people show hospitality to one another (Rom. 12:13). By being hospitable, we might entertain angels and not know it (Heb. 13:2).

When church meetings of any kind are fixed to hold in our parishes and stations or church dignitaries come visting in the lawful discharge of their functions, it is an opportunity for the priest and the entire congregation to demonstrate their attitude of kindness and hospitality to those who have come.

Jesus enjoyed the hospitality and kindness he always received at the home of Mary, Martha and Lazarus. That was why he often resorted there (Luke 10:38-42)

Instead of murmuring, complaining or even becoming bitter, let us utilize every opportunity that comes our way to show kindness, hospitality and courtesy to all – our ministers (Acts 28:10), fellow brethren (Rom. 12:13), strangers (Acts 28:7), and even our enemies (Rom. 12:20):

*“For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me” (Matthew 25:35-36);*

*“Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous” (1Pet. 3:8).*

### **Attitude of Gratitude**

The story is told of Arthur Ashe, the tennis superstar who died of AIDS, which he contracted from a blood transfusion during heart surgery. Apart from being a great athlete, Ashe was a gentleman who inspired and encouraged many with his exemplary behaviour on and off the court.

Ashe could have become embittered and self-pitying in the face of his disease, but he maintained a grateful attitude. He explained, “If I asked, ‘why me?’ about my troubles, I would have to ask, ‘Why me?’ about my blessings. Why my winning Wimbledon? Why my marrying a beautiful, gifted woman and having a wonderful child?”

Ashe’s attitude rebukes those of us who often grumble, “Why me? Why is God allowing this to happen?” Even if we are suffering acutely, we must not forget the mercies God pours into our lives—such things as food, shelter, healing of our sicknesses, deliverance from danger and all forms of evil attacks, travelling mercies, friends and loved ones and several spiritual blessings that many are deprived of (1 Thess. 5:18).



As His children, we must cultivate the attitude of appreciating and always thanking God for the innumerable gifts that we receive from Him on a daily basis (Deut. 8:10; Luke 17:11-19; Col. 3:15-17). We can show gratitude to God by telling others of what He has done for us (Psalms 107:22; 1Chron. 16:8) and by singing praises to Him (James 5:13).

In our relationships with other members of God's earthly family and those outside, the scriptures teach us to be grateful to them particularly when God uses them to address the diverse needs that crop up in our lives from time to time.

In his letter to the Christians in Philippi, Apostle Paul sent a thank-you note to them:

*“The **things sent from you** (were) well pleasing to God”- (Phil. 4:18).*

The brethren in Philippi were the only church that had supported him financially on his missions trip (4:15), and he wanted to say thanks.

From Paul's example, we learn the all-important lesson of letting those we had approached for help or persons moved by God to reach out to us at our hour of need know how much they are appreciated. Let us not take them for granted or when confronted pretend to have forgotten.

Let us begin afresh to cultivate a thankful spirit which large extent many of us lack toward God and our fellow men as failing to do so would be conveying the impression that we are not quite satisfied and that through our silence, are rejecting the giver as well as his gift (Rom. 1:21).

### **Attitude of service to God and the family**

In this family, God has given gifts, talents and also assigned specific roles to each member. He does not want anyone to be idle or sit on the fence. All are to make the family responsibilities a priority (1Tim. 3:5) and get meaningfully busy. Idleness in the church can lead to a life of meddlesomeness and disorder. And Paul warned the Thessalonian church against this. In thankfulness to God each one is to use his/her gift to serve and help the local church grow (Matthew 8:14-15).

Serving others follows the example of Jesus (John 13:1-17).

The success of the church does not depend solely on the men who sit or stand behind the sacred table but on every member of that church. For the church to grow and fulfil its purpose on earth each member must accept his/her obligation from God to function as a steward or minister of God in one way or the other.

In doing so however, we must each avoid the following **ten destructive attitudes in the church**:

1. **Rebellious Attitude** – This leads people to be unteachable, critical of leadership, defensive to correction, and prideful when dealing with.

2. ***Socially-weirdy Attitude*** – A weirdo is someone that cannot have a normal conversation without others feeling awkward, sometimes it manifests in “over-sensitive emotions”, talking too much about one’s self, long periods of silence, and desire for “clingy-co-dependent-friendships”.
3. ***Perverted Attitude*** – Everything turns into a sexually slanted conversation. Brothers mostly struggle with this, but this could also be seen with a woman who may think that every man (brother) in the church is trying to hit on her.
4. ***False Prophet Attitude*** – This person believes that everything they “feel” God tells them is always to be obeyed by others (including leadership) without question. They think they are above rebuke and correction because they believe those who don’t see things the way they do are not as “spiritual” as them.
5. ***Know-It-All Attitude*** – The know it all always have to let everyone know what they know. They have to have the last word in every conversation, make the most comments in small groups, and take forever to convince they need to learn something new.
6. ***Controlling Attitude*** – This person is not happy unless everything in the church is done their way. They can’t compromise or remain silent when they disagree with something. They need to remain in control and let everyone around them know if they are not happy.
7. ***Victim Attitude*** – The victim believes that what the church is doing for everyone else will not work for them because they are too messed up. They think that their past, current problems, or issues always need special attention because unless they have everyone’s attention they think nobody loves them.
8. ***Quitting Attitude*** – The quitter cannot stick with discipleship of the church because every time things get hard they quit and blame it on someone or something else.
9. ***Self-Centred Attitude*** – This person cannot serve, make sacrifices, or think about what is going on in the big picture of the Church. Everything in the church is about them, their family and needs.
10. ***Lukewarm Attitude*** – They don’t want to be challenged or expected to grow. They just want to be left alone and made to feel comfortable with their current walk with God.

The solution to all these wrong attitudes, especially the ***self-centred attitude*** is found in the second chapter of Paul’s letter to the Philippians:

*“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:  
Who, being in the form of God,  
thought it not robbery to be equal with God:  
But made himself of no reputation,  
and took upon him the form of a servant,  
and was made in the likeness of men:  
And being found in fashion as a man,  
he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death,  
even the death of the cross” (Phil. 2:5-8)*

## **Conclusion**

This theme is a call on Christians to exemplify the characteristics of Christ in their daily lives and relationships with all in the society, and much more in the community of fellow Christians with whom they share spiritual kinship with the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:17; Mark 3:34). We are called to become God's aroma to each other and to those outside (2Cor. 2:12-end).

We cannot claim to be one with Christ and the brethren and yet behave inappropriately. Our fellowship with God and with other members of His earthly family will be better enhanced and beneficial when we each choose to have positive attitudes (Hab. 3:17-19) and walk circumspectly in the light of Christ (Eph. 5:15; 1 John 1:7).

A bad attitude can hurt our relationships with God and man (Genesis 4:6-7); it can lead to poor decisions (Num. 14:1-4).

We have all failed in our relationships with the brethren. But with this call, we can each go back to God and ask Him to give us new attitudes and outlook – those of the new man (Phil. 1:20-25).

As we end this address, let us use this medium to appreciate once again, the entire Diocesan Community, more especially our legal officers, Mama Diocese, Mrs. Chinyere Ordu and our daughter, Uchechi, the Archdeacons, all other clergymen, Church teachers and their wives; leaders of the various activity groups, committees and units of the Diocese, members of the Diocesan Board and the Synod Planning Committees at the Diocesan and Oginigba Deanery levels; all Bishop's and Diocesan office workers, all academic and non-academic staff our Diocesan schools for your prayers, encouragement and invaluable roles in the service of God through the Diocese by which we have been able to get to where we are presently.

May the Lord reward every one of you according to your labours in Jesus name. Amen.

To God the Father, who first loved us, and made us accepted in the Beloved; to God the Son, who loved us, and washes us from our sins in his own blood; to God the Holy Ghost, who sheds the love of God abroad in our hearts; to the one true God be all love and all glory, for time and for eternity.

We thank you for listening!

+Innocent, Evo  
August 6, 2016

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## **APPENDIX I**

### **THE CHURCH OF NIGERIA**

#### **(ANGLICAN COMMUNION)**

#### **THE COMMUNIQUÉ ISSUED AT THE END OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE CHURCH OF NIGERIA (ANGLICAN COMMUNION) HELD FROM 21<sup>ST</sup> TO 25<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER, 2015 AT THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF ST. DAVID, IJOMU, AKURE ONDO STATE.**

##### **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's and Girls' Organizations in attendance, met at the Cathedral Church of St. David, Ijomu, Akure, Ondo State from 21<sup>st</sup>-25<sup>th</sup> September, 2015. One hundred and forty seven Bishops, one hundred and fifty two Clergymen and sixty eight members of the House of Laity were present. At the opening ceremony, the Standing Committee welcomed His Excellency, Dr. Olusegun Mimiko, Governor of Ondo State, who gave a goodwill message. The opening session was also graced with the presence of our Guest Speaker, Prof. Jerry Gana, who presented a paper titled, "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's". At the end, the Standing Committee issued the following Communiqué.

##### **The Theme of the Standing Committee**

The theme of the Standing Committee was 'Look and Live' (Numbers 21:8). Considering the challenges we face as a result of our experiences during trials and temptations in the world, the Standing Committee calls upon:

- All Christians to exercise simple faith and obedience to God for victory, by living lives that are characterized by honesty, truth and integrity and calls the Church to faithfulness in her message to uphold the holiness and righteousness of the living God.
- All Christians to pray to God for a quick end to insecurity of all types – insurgency, kidnapping, arm robbery, etc.
- Government at all levels to look up to God and forsake all vices and corrupt tendencies, so that there can be true development in our country.

##### **Congratulations**

The Standing Committee congratulates His Excellency, Muhammadu Buhari and the Vice President, His Excellency Prof. Yemi Osinbanjo on their victory at the March 28 2015 general elections and assures them of the Church's continued prayers and willingness to partner with the government. The standing committee urges the President to endeavour to harness the vast resources which God has blessed the nation with, and to transform it from a micro-economy to a diversified one.

### **Security Challenges**

The standing committee expresses its gratitude to the Federal Government on the successes achieved so far in the fight against insecurity and insurgency. It commends the Nigerian military for its gallantry and calls on the Federal Government to redouble its efforts towards putting an end to this menace and ensuring the safe return of the Chibok girls as promised.

### **The Challenge of Kidnapping**

The continued kidnapping of prominent religious and national leaders as well as other citizens of the country is still a major security threat and a national embarrassment. Therefore, the standing committee urges the federal government to extend strong security presence to all the areas where kidnapping is thriving in order to completely arrest the menace and ensure security which is necessary for peace, free movement and development.

### **Power Sector**

Of recent, there has been an improvement in power supply across the country. It is on this note that the standing committee wishes to encourage the federal government to ensure that the promise to provide sustainable power be increasingly pursued so that the gains of privatization of the power sector are not only improved upon but also sustained as this is key to industrialization and creation of job opportunities.

### **Unemployment and Poverty**

The standing committee notes with pain the very ugly challenge of poverty and unemployment and calls on government at all levels to be more proactive in providing an enabling environment for the private sector to be also assisted in the area of job creation, for the teeming population of our youths.

### **National Economy**

The standing committee observes with delight the efforts that are being made towards revamping the economy of our nation and calls for intensified efforts to forestall the looming economic recession.

### **Corruption and Indiscipline**

We welcome renewed zeal in the fight against corruption in this country. Accordingly, the standing committee urges all Nigerians to bury their differences –

political, religious, ethnic, etc. in the face of this common enemy that has held the country down since independence. We call on government and all Nigerians to embark on a total war against indiscipline in our public and private lives. Those with the mandate to facilitate this process should ensure that this fight is total, comprehensive and successful.

### **The State of our Roads**

The standing committee recognizes the work of the federal government on the roads through FERMA. Ease of movements being a basic necessity, a lot more needs to be done to deliver good roads to Nigerians.

### **Climate Change and Flooding**

Climate changes have become a worldwide subject for detailed debate and attention but human practices have continued to worsen the situation. The impending gradual release of excess water from Lagdo Dam in Cameroun and the heavy rains expected in the remaining months of the year are a cause for serious concern. The federal government is consequently called upon to expedite action in ensuring that the effects of flooding are mitigated. People living on water ways are called upon to heed timely warnings and relocate to uplands.

### **Issue of Same Sex Marriage**

The standing committee unanimously resolved to continue to maintain the orthodox biblical stand on this matter. It also calls on her members to defend the orthodox biblical teaching on marriage and family. On its part, the federal government is further enjoined to continue to resist foreign pressure to make it rescind its stand on same-sex marriage.

### **The Anglican Communion World**

While the Anglican Communion continues to be impaired by revisionist theologies of some Anglican Provinces, the standing committee calls the leadership of the Anglican Communion to repentance and renewed faith in Christ as expressed in the Bible, the articles of religion and the Jerusalem Declaration and further reaffirms our commitment on these as the basis of our relationship with other parts of the communion.

### **Demise of Chief Dr (Mrs) Hannah Awolowo**

The standing committee received the news of the home call of Chief Dr (Mrs) Hannah I.D. Awolowo with gratitude to God for a life well spent. As a member of our church, we testify that she lived an exemplary Christian life both in family and in public. Apart from being a political icon, she was at different times a member of the General Synod and standing committee of our church. May her gentle soul rest in peace.

### **Conclusion**

The outward peace the world seeks can only come when men obediently embrace the inward peace with God through faith in Jesus Christ to whom the bronze replica of the poisonous serpent points. In all circumstances, therefore, let us as Christians and as a nation, in obedience and faith look up to Jesus the author and finisher of our faith. He is the lamb of Calvary and the conquering lion of the tribe of Judah. “Those who look to Him for help will be radiant with joy; no shadow of shame will darken their faces”.

The Most Rev'd Nicholas D. Okoh

Archbishop, Metropolitan and Primate of All Nigeria



**APPENDIX II**  
**THE CHURCH OF NIGERIA**  
**(ANGLICAN COMMUNION)**

**PASTORAL LETTER FROM THE STANDING COMMITTEE MEETING OF  
THE CHURCH OF NIGERIA (ANGLICAN COMMUNION) HELD FROM  
21<sup>ST</sup> TO 25<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2015 AT THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF ST.  
DAVID, IJOMU, AKURE ONDO STATE**

Beloved People of God,

May the peace of our Jesus Christ abide with you always.

The standing committee of our church was held under the protection and guidance of the Holy Spirit at St. David's Cathedral, Ijomu, Akure, Diocese of Akure, Ondo State, Nigeria from 21<sup>st</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> September, 2015. The theme of the meeting was "Look and Live".

The wilderness experience of the people of Israel on their way to the Promised Land reminds us of the danger of man receiving the grace of God in vain or treating God's patience with disdain. Their problem was a failure to acknowledge God's faithfulness. The recourse to murmuring and bitter complaints in the face of a new challenge displeased God who unleashed fiery serpents that killed many of them. Please learn always to live a life of contentment and no matter how tough the situation may be, you should never consider rebellion and compromise as options in times of distress.

May we remind you there are many poisonous serpents in both the church and the society today. There is a new culture that is trying to foist a new humanity on our world. A culture that promotes moral relativism, denies the sense of sin and guilt, encourages same sex union, practices homosexuality, lesbianism, transgender and bi-sexuality is obviously sponsored from the pit of hell. Again the growing level of insecurity in our world, biting pain of poverty and unemployment and stress occasioned by high cost of living, are no doubt very unsettling.

We are very grateful to our kind and merciful God for providing a solution. As Moses was instructed to raise a bronze serpent on the pole to the effect that anyone bitten by the serpent and who looked at it received healing, so also God has given us our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ who was lifted up on the cross of Calvary. He is the solution to all our problems. You are, therefore, encouraged to look up to Him that you may live. Accepting Him as Lord and Saviour, believing in His Word and living by the values He taught us will give us sure ways of life and well-being. Repentance, prayer, faith, positive confession, encouragement and thanksgiving should remain the attitude of a person who is looking up to Jesus.

We recognize the fact that the society has not been fair to our youths. To remain unemployed many years after one's education is not the best experience. May we remind you that neither taking to crime nor migrating abroad nor joining terror organizations is a godly or profitable option, no matter how attractive these may be. That same God who saw you through your studies and has preserved your life till today will always sustain you. Let this faith inspire you to keep looking unto Jesus.

We ask you to take seriously the warning that there will be heavy flooding this year. You should keep your surroundings clean and obey advice from experts so as to stay alive and well.

Brethren, we are very grateful for the support you continue to give in collection of St. Mathias fund and the relief fund. May you be richly blessed for this display of Christian charity. We remind those who are yet to see the need for these Christian programmes. Our annual spiritual convocation, DIVCCON, comes up from 9<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> November, 2015 in the presence of the Lord. Please come.

The devotional publications (*Daily Fountain*, Bible Study Outline and Sunday School Manual) of our church will soon be available for year 2016. These are sent out annually to help us grow and develop our spirituality. We strongly recommend them to you and encourage you to obtain copies for yourself, family and friends as soon as they are available.

We praise God for the steady growth of mission and evangelism across the length and breadth of Nigeria and encourage you all to sustain the zeal and enthusiasm in this direction. You will recall that at the inception of our primacy, a moratorium was placed on the creation of new Dioceses for five (5) years. It was the pleasure of the standing committee to further extend the period of this moratorium. This is to ensure stability and healthy growth.

The need for a befitting secretariat has become very urgent and compelling. It was the decision of the standing committee that this need be addressed urgently. Consequently, the first Sunday in Advent of every year has been set aside to raise funds for this project. Monies realized in every church congregation in Nigeria shall be remitted to the national office, as in the case of St. Mathias contribution. Also, it was resolved that henceforth, the primatial address to the standing committee meetings and general synods shall be launched to raise money for this same purpose. We trust that you will give these initiatives your usual support.

Brethren, we are distressed by the growing rate of indiscipline being witnessed in our church today. A situation where people resort to violence and brigandage in the face of misunderstanding that should be amicably resolved in the spirit of Christ is not only unfair but also uncharitable and ungodly. We call on those promoting this strange practice to allow peace and unity will prevail in our churches.

With faith in God and hope in the resurrection of the dead, we inform you of the translation to the church Triumphant, of the following:

1. Rt. Rev. Samuel Ebo – retired Bishop of Diocese of Jos, former Okigwe/Orlu and Orlu Dioceses
2. Rt. Rev. Simeon Adebola – retired Bishop of Yewa
3. Mrs. Sarah Nyam – wife of the Bishop of Kano
4. Mama Hannah Idowu Dideolu Awolowo – wife of the late sage and premier of former Western region, Chief Obafemi Awolowo
5. Mrs. Florence Rodiya Akintayo – wife of the late Bishop of Egba
6. Mrs. Felicia Aderin – wife of the retired Bishop of Ondo
7. Hon. Justice C.O.C. Izima – chancellor of Aba Ngwa North Diocese

We ask you to remember to pray for God's grace and the comfort of the Holy Spirit upon their families and loved ones. Join us also to thank God for the miraculous release of the chairman of the Diocesan planning committee of this Holy convocation, Chief Olu Falae, who was kidnapped shortly before our arrival to Akure. Our God is indeed a prayer answering God. May His name be forever glorified. We advise you all to be security conscious in the face of the challenging insecurity problem in the society today.

Beloved in the Lord, we gratefully report that the people of Akure Diocese and Ondo State gave us great hospitality. Rt. Rev. Simeon Borokini, his wife, clergy and good people of the Diocese all gave us their best. So did the Archbishop of Ondo Ecclesiastical Province, Most Rev. George Lasebikan with his wife. The governor of Ondo State, Dr. Olusegun Mimiko, was with us in person at the opening ceremony. We pray the good Lord to bless them all.

Finally we ask that no matter your experience on your earthly pilgrimage, no matter the situation and circumstance, be assured that:

Life is offered unto you  
 Eternal life your soul shall have  
 If you only look at Him  
 Look to Jesus who alone can save

Your Most Beloved Father in God

The Most Rev'd Nicholas D. Okoh  
 Archbishop, Metropolitan and Primate of all Nigeria

**APPENDIX III**  
**CHURCH OF NIGERIA**  
**(ANGLICAN COMMUNION)**  
**BISHOPS' RETREAT 2016-05-11 PREFERMENT**  
**A PRESENTATION BY MOST REV. EMMANUEL EGBUNU**

**INTRODUCTION**

The subject of preferment in the Anglican Church is one of the issues considered to fall squarely within the purview of Episcopal autonomy and the sole discretion of the Bishop. In an ideal situation, this exercise of episcopal discretion is akin to the exercise of a sovereign whereby royalty is not subject to any query by any other authority vested in another individual or committee. All other roles such as the legal administration and investiture at the appropriate ceremonials proceed from the Bishop's pronouncement.

For a new Bishop, the power to make people more than they are by mere pronouncement is a strong temptation that needs to be used with a sense of responsibility. While the idea of an almost boundless exercise of discretion in this matter is a broad perspective, it now needs to be confined within necessary and practical reality, noting the caution against the dangers of reckless display of authority whose primary victim is its possessor. It has been said that "power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely" (Lord Acton).

Absolute autonomy is an attribute possessed by God alone and this is called sovereignty. It is well brought out in Psalm 135:6 "Whatever the LORD pleases, he does, in heaven and on earth, in the seas and all deeps". No one has a right to question God's authority; we only need to submit. So much can be said about this subject but this discussion will be confined to the Episcopal concerns arising from our exercise of this Episcopal discretion and privilege.

In the combined group report from the Refresher Training for Bishops and Wives 2014, a number of leadership issues were highlighted including some related to the matter of preferment: some bishops have been known to prefer Clergy who make monthly return of their personal account, or give large purses during Episcopal visits.

The same report further highlighted cases of preferential treatment (such as in ordination, posting) to wards and relatives of wealthy donors, high handedness of Bishops and wives. That these are the cases of abuse is not in question. What will be protested by a number of Bishops is that this is by no means a general story. Whoever feels implicated by these scandals should note that they amount to an assault and a smear on our corporate integrity, as they give the unhappy impression

which every Bishop may never have the opportunity to defend. That being the case, we need to be guided by certain principles.

## **WHAT IS PREFERMENT?**

The idea of preference is natural to man in the same way that our tasks affect our choices and decisions. Indeed the existence of an inner circle of disciples by the Lord Jesus - namely Peter, James and John – has been used to justify this practice from a Biblical point of view. Centuries earlier, David also had his mighty men (2 Sam 23:8; 1 Kings 1:8; 1 Chron. 11:10-11) who distinguished themselves by heroic acts; and the apostle Paul had his closet associates such as Timothy, Luke, Titus, etc.)

Definitions can sometimes be limiting, or even distracting. For instance, preferment has a wide and almost natural meaning among bakers. Even for ecclesiastical usage, the practice in our parent church (The Church of England) is so closely associated with royalty and the laws in of the Land that this was debated through bills in the House of Commons (see for instance, Ecclesiastical duties and Revenues Bill by Hansard: 1803-2005 which includes debates about virtually everything from buildings, assessments, vestments, titles, appointments, courts, residencies, etc.)

For our purpose, these definitions are helpful:

- Advancement or promotion in dignity, office, or station; apposition or office of honour or profit (Merriam-Webster Dictionary)
- Advancement or promotion especially in the church

The point remains that there are basically three orders: Deacon, Priest and Bishop. The offer of preferment is not, strictly speaking, considered along the same parameters as promotion, even though it translates to that and is understood as such. It is at the pleasure of the Bishop, using the criteria of his vision, ministry goals, and perception of clergy who may possess those (mostly undisclosed) parameters. It may be likened to a new government appointing ministers or making other key appointments. Even then, these appointments are subject to the scrutiny of relevant bodies like party stalwarts, the senate, etc. The general practice is that ecclesiastical preferments related to the cathedral have more procedural requirements that checkmate the threat of excesses in the powers of the Bishop, especially in situations where the constitution stipulates the role of the cathedral chapters for the appointments of provosts, Deans, etc. In some settings around us, the provision of moderating bodies has been turned into a trouble-shooting apparatus for which reason some Diocesans have abrogated such positions altogether and have opted to be Deans of their cathedrals, which has its own unsavoury insinuations too: we cannot find a perfect person anywhere, so we should learn to trust those we have as we were also trusted to lead that church, imperfect as we are.

The most common preferments are: Canon (statutory and honorary), Rural Dean, Archdeacon, Provost, Sub dean, or Dean. In the case of statutory canons, they are to

be installed, and the Cathedral has a limit to how many stalls there are. The most common practice is to have six stalls, and a provision for six honorary canons as enshrined in the Diocesan constitutions. Preferment made within the Diocese is for a specific term: a year, duration of synod (3 years), renewable and can be withdrawn. Statutory canons are expected to preach at least once at the cathedral where they are installed and they belong to the Greater Chapter where those exist.

## **TRANSFER OF PREFERMENTS AND LETTERS DIMISSORY**

One of the issues we have grappled with for some time in this church is the matter of preferment being offered to clergy not serving under our immediate supervision in our Diocese. It is considered both preposterous, and a rude disregard of the sense of judgment of the Diocesan under whom a clergyman serves to offer such preferment from a distance.

Generally, preferment is not transferable. A way around that is to take the route of the provision of letters dimissory. This refers to an attestation given by a Bishop releasing a clergyman who is moving into another Diocese, and recommending him for reception there. Clergy may transfer canonical residence from one ecclesiastical authority (typically the Bishop) of the former Diocese to the counterpart in the new Diocese. It is a testimonial by the releasing Bishop that the clergyman has not been found implicated in any evil conduct or heresy or viciousness of life. The transfer of canonical residence is dated from the date of acceptance of letters Dimissory by the new Bishop. The legal officers of the Diocese and the synod clerical secretary should also be noticed of this correspondence. “Letters Dimissory shall be presented if a member of the clergy has been called to a cure in a other Diocese and shall be accepted unless credible information is received concerning the character of the clergy person that would call for a canonical inquiry and presentment”. When that is done, the authority of the releasing Bishop is relinquished. Related to this is the temporary license required for exercising priestly office in another province for a limited period. The overseas clergy Act is given in the Church of England to clergy of other provinces.

## **PREFERMENT IN THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND**

The discussion of preferment takes its origin from the practice of a benefice from the days of the Roman Empire, and into the Roman Catholic Church. In that context, it was “a reward received in exchange for services rendered and as a retainer for future services. The Roman Empire used the Latin term *beneficium* as a benefit to an individual from the Empire for services rendered”. It went through different stages, (including the problem of power tussle generated over the superiority of the pope to the Emperor) when Pope Gregory VII declared that only the pope could depose an emperor. This enraged Emperor Henry IV and caused the so-called “Investiture Conflict”.

More related to our concern, in England, it referred to an ecclesiastical office in which the incumbent was required to perform certain duties or conditions of a special kind (the “spiritualities”) while being supported by the revenues attached to the office.

## **SOME UNUSUAL AND IRREGULAR PREFERMENTS**

A matter of concern is the matter of preferment to retired clergy or even posthumous preferment. This is rare, but we need to be of the same mind about it to know how helpful this may be or otherwise. Of course it is said to be corrective in some situations of previous injustice which needs a historical redress for the sake of posterity. A guiding principle in this forum is that everything must be done decently and in order.

The observation made by the participants at the Bishops’ refresher training should be taken seriously. In some cases, preferment follows a so-called zoning system or ethnic balancing. This may be a ‘fire-extinguisher’ in some settings and Dioceses, but we must guard the divine trust that episcopacy bestows on us so that it is not hijacked by the parameters of social pressures. Some clergymen get jealous and resentful when a junior gets preferred over them. But increasingly, preferment is related to performance rather than seniority. And despite utterances to the contrary, many clergymen see preferment as promotion. It is actually said that in some Dioceses, preferment is monetized according to the position. This reflects badly on the integrity of Bishops.

Lay Canonry is practiced in some places whereby laity is given honorary Canonry. We need to come to the same mind on this so that we do not have different things happening in different places and thereby encouraging some people begin to demand the same honour.

## **THE PRINCIPLES OF ECCLESIASTICAL PREFERMENT**

**Vacancy:** Some preferments are tied to certain positions such as statutory canonries, or archdeaconries. Where such positions are vacant, then it is incumbent on the Diocesan to make provision to fill the position with suitable clergymen. In the case of cathedrals – especially where the vacant position is one of such dignity and such historical interest as that of the provost or the Dean, much care must be taken to follow the laid down regulations.

**Special abilities:** At first sight, the question may seem to be exceedingly simple. In an 1881 article on this subject, this point is made:

A minister may not always have the knowledge necessary to inform him who the best man is, but there can be no doubt as to the obligation which lies upon him to appoint the best man...special offices require special qualifications...A man who has no time for administration will not make a good Bishop. A man who preaches dull sermons will not be in place as canon of a cathedral, where, during his term of residence, his chief function will be to preach, and where large congregations are for the most part provided for him as matter of course. A man who has no appreciation in stately music and majestic services will be out of his element as Dean of a Cathedral...The Dean of Cathedral should always be one who values to the utmost the great popular opportunities of a cathedral for using and enlarging the influence of the Christian religion.

**Theological and spiritual formation:** This comes under spiritual considerations and stewardship dimensions. We must note that we are granted the position of leading the church as a divine trust. Everything we do in the use of our powers and privileges should advance the gospel and glorify God. The essentials of theological and spiritual formation cannot be over-emphasized. Maturity is important. Don't prefer an inexperienced clergy. It is advised that an Archdeacon should not be less than six years in priesthood. Sometimes he may be experienced in other ways, but it is not the same as experience in the Holy orders. The temptation is always there to elevate other professionals who come in as non-stipendiary clergy above career priests unnecessarily. Their expertise in other fields does not automatically translate to competence in the Holy orders. They should be allowed to gather relevant experience.

One who has been disciplined will reflect the grace of God in whatever position he occupies. We bring in what we are into our positions and this can either edify or hinder. When an arrogant clergyman believes that his preferment is deserved, then he invites envy and jealousy. But if he is level-headed and humble, the reactions to preferment especially by those who feel shunted by virtue of seniority in ordination can be another lesson in Christian maturity. Michael Ramsey, former Archbishop of Canterbury, wrote in his classic book, *The Christian Priest Today*:

As there is a kind of ambition which is lawful and right, so there is a kind of smug disclaiming all ambition which is as spiritually poisonous as it is unattractive. The sound rule is that all our ideas of doing well, of winning praise, and of ambitions in achievement should be within the supreme motive of the humility of Christ. The man who is truly humble can use and accept ambitions and praises because his soul is filled with the glorifying of God. So with authority; there are times when in using your authority you must, in a sense, assert yourself, avoid the false meekness of timidity. But assert yourself with that authority which humbles you because it is not your own but Christ's.



When people feel bypassed in preferments, it is important to remember what the Lord Jesus said in John 5:44, “how can you believe, when you glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from God”. This is very important at all points.

**APPENDIX IV  
THE CHURCH OF NIGERIA  
(ANGLICAN COMMUNION)**

**COMMUNIQUÉ FROM THE STANDING COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE  
CHURCH OF NIGERIA (ANGLICAN COMMUNION) HELD FROM  
FEBRUARY 1-5, 2016 AT ST. ANDREW’S CHURCH, KUBWA, ABUJA FCT**

**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’d Nicholas D. Okoh, Archbishop Metropolitan and Primate of all Nigeria, with his wife Mrs. Nkasiobi Okoh, president of the Women’s and Girls’ Organizations, in attendance, met at the St. Andrew’s Church, Kubwa, Abuja FCT from 1<sup>st</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> February, 2016. One hundred and forty five (145) Bishops, one hundred and fifty four (154) clergymen and seventy (70) members of the house of laity were present. At the opening ceremony, the standing committee also welcomed his Excellency, Prof. Yemi Osinbanjo, Vice President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, who gave a goodwill message. The Honourable Minister of the Federal Capital Territory, Alhaji Mohammed Bello was represented by Mr. Daniel Salka, who delivered the minister’s goodwill message. The opening session was also graced with the presence of our Guest Speaker, Engr. Paul Erinne, who presented a paper titled, “Frank talk on the state of the Church of Nigeria”.

**THE THEME OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE**

The theme of the standing committee was, “Maranatha: come, Lord Jesus” (1 Corinthians 16:22)

At the end of the standing committee meeting, it issued this communiqué:

In view of the challenging situation in the world today vis-à-vis the theme of the meeting, the standing committee reaffirms and also calls upon all Christians:

- To always remember that we are pilgrims on earth and our eternal destination is the heavenly city (Hebrews 13:14)
- To remember that no amount of suffering, hardship, deprivation or challenge should make us lose focus of this eternal hope.
- To remember that only the coming of Jesus can be put an end to all human sufferings. Christians should, therefore, earnestly pray like the early church that the Lord comes. While we await his coming we should be committed to the mission mandate, prayer and effectively occupy the jurisdiction assigned to us.

## **FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION**

The standing committee, while appreciating the Federal Government's efforts towards fighting corruption, calls on the anti-corruption agencies to adopt a strategy that would cut across all arms and tiers of government, agencies and departments, with a more carefully thought out long term institutionalized framework. In furtherance of the fore-going, all well-meaning Nigerians are hereby enjoined to partner with the Federal Government for effective results.

## **THE TERROR OF RUSTLING**

The issue of rustling of flocks: cattle, sheep and goats, by heavily armed men masquerading as cattle rearers, have increased with alarming proportion in many parts of the country. Consequently, the standing committee urges the federal, state and local governments to develop a strategy to urgently and decisively combat this menace, especially now that it is practically becoming a lucrative and competitive ally to armed robbery and kidnapping in the nation. The need to ascertain the sources of arms and ammunitions borne by these bandits is urgent and compelling.

## **NATIONAL ECONOMY**

In the face of the dwindling price of oil in the world market, the standing committee encourages government at all levels to, by way of policies and concrete actions, promote and provide an enabling environment for the participation of everyone in agriculture, allied industries and other local income-generating ventures to increase the economic base of the nation. This will also go a long way to creating employment opportunities for our youths.

## **MASSIVE FOOD PRODUCTION**

The standing committee notes with great joy the laudable steps being taken by the present administration in the area of improving the economy and enjoins the government to pursue the cause with vigour; while every citizen should immediately embark on massive food production for the teeming population of our nation as a major step to achieving food security.

## **THE CHALLENGE OF UNEMPLOYMENT**

While acknowledging the damage occasioned by the falling price of oil, it is, however, believed that the way out of this economic quagmire should not be the retrenchment of workers as being currently contemplated in some states. For this reason, the standing committee calls for caution as this trend could further worsen the hardship being experienced by Nigerians. The committee further recommends that reduction in the cost of governance, curbing financial excesses by public officers as well as blocking all sources of leakages of the national revenues are some of the effective strategies to be adopted by government at all levels.

## **FREEDOM OF WORSHIP**

While the church is trying to recover from the effect of the massive destruction of lives and properties in the North East by Boko Haram insurgents; and while lamenting over the recent demolition of St. Stephen's Anglican Church Gusau, it is most worrisome to note that plans are underway to demolish the 108-years old Cathedral of St. George's, Zaria by the Kaduna state government. Consequently, the standing committee appeals to the President, the National Assembly and all well-meaning Nigerians to prevail on the government of Kaduna state to guide and guard the constitutional provision for freedom of worship and association enshrined in the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and to spare the church under-reference.

## **BUY NIGERIA**

The standing committee calls on all Nigerians to encourage the patronage of made-in-Nigeria products as a way to stimulate local production and employment. By doing so, the country will earn foreign exchange rather than depend on importation of even the simplest commodities.

## **ELECTORAL OFFENCES**

In spite of clear cases of electoral offences and malpractices across the country, there is so far no evidence of people that have been punished. Accordingly, the standing committee implores the Federal Government and National Assembly to take necessary steps towards the reformation of the electoral laws. It calls upon the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and the law enforcement agencies to enforce our electoral laws strictly.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS**

The standing committee notes with dismay that Religious Knowledge is not taught in schools in some parts of the country and calls on the Federal Government to ensure that Religious Knowledge is taught in all schools, while churches are enjoined to, on their parts, to establish schools where pupils are taught the subject, based on well-grounded curriculum.

## **ENDING TERRORISM AND RETURN OF THE INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS (IDPs)**

The standing committee while commending and identifying with the present administration on the successes so far recorded on the war against terrorism, urges the government not to relent on the tempo of the battle against terrorism. Furthermore, in view of the Federal Government's plan to return the IDPs to their homes in the first quarter of this year, the standing committee urges the government to ensure that adequate arrangements are made for their security and rehabilitation.

## **THE ANGLICAN GLOBAL COMMUNION**

The standing committee notes that the January 11-15 2016 meeting of the Primates of the Anglican Communion in Canterbury has reiterated the commitment of the communion to the proclamation of the gospel and teaching sound doctrine on marriage between a man and a woman. It notes that the restriction placed on The Episcopal Church (TEC) underscores a step towards eliminating erroneous teachings and practices in the communion. The standing committee calls upon all provinces in the Anglican Communion to uphold and maintain the faith of the church as expressed in the Holy Bible, the Anglican formularies and the Jerusalem Declaration. It unanimously supports the faithful and courageous leadership of the Primate of Nigeria, the Most Rev'd Nicholas D. Okoh and the GAFCON primates in their resolve to uphold the Anglican Communion in the historic faith.

### **CONCLUSION: 'MARANATHA: COME, LORD JESUS'**

And behold, I come quickly and my reward is with me to give every man according as his work shall be. He which testified these things saith, surely I come quickly, Amen. Even so, come Lord Jesus (Revelation 22:12,20).

The Most Rev'd Nicholas D. Okoh  
Primate of All Nigeria

**APPENDIX V**  
**THE CHURCH OF NIGERIA**  
**(ANGLICAN COMMUNION)**  
**PASTORAL LETTER FROM THE STANDING COMMITTEE MEETING OF**  
**THE CHURCH OF NIGERIA (ANGLICAN COMMUNION) HELD FROM**  
**1<sup>ST</sup>-5<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY, 2016 AT ST. ANDREW'S ANGLICAN CHURCH,**  
**KUBWA, ABUJA FCT**

Beloved people of God,

May the peace and love of God that passes all understanding be with you now and evermore. Amen.

The standing committee of our church was held under the guidance and inspiration of the Holy Spirit from 1<sup>st</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> February, 2016 at St. Andrew's Anglican Church Kubwa, Abuja FCT. The theme of the meeting was "Maranatha: Come, Lord Jesus" 1 Corinthians 16:22

'Maranatha' is an important proclamation in the Christian faith, though it remains unpopular and misunderstood. The belief of a Christian dwelling with the Lord in eternity is the climax of our hope. The prayer, Maranatha: Come Lord Jesus, became imperative due to the travail of the Christians of the first century AD. They faced much persecution under the Roman Empire because they refused to worship Caesar as god. Hence the Romans looked upon them as traitors, and for that reason persecuted them, and put them to death. Living under those adverse conditions, the believers' faith could only be sustained by the hope of the coming of the Lord.

This theme reminds us that sudden and outright persecution of different forms against the church is apparent today. It could be from within the church, or from without, especially from postmodern philosophies or other religions like militant Islam. In the face of trials and persecutions, we, like Apostle Paul, enjoin you to endure hardships without complaining as good soldiers of Christ (2 Timothy 2:5). We urge you to deepen your faith to enable you attain maturity in the areas of knowledge of the word of God, morality, integrity and strength of character. As we wait for the coming of the Lord Jesus, we implore you to develop the courage to be different from the world and detach yourselves from materialism and carnal living. There is so much doctrinal and practical heresy in Christianity today. Some self-acclaimed preachers are using lies coated with similitude of truth to exploit the ignorant. These men twist the word of God for their selfish end. We remind you the words of Jesus: "Beware of false prophets, which come in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits..." Matthew 7:15-16. The only way to discern false doctrine is to be well acquainted with the truth. We must continue to effectively abound in the work of the Lord while waiting for his glorious appearing. The pleasures of the world must not be allowed to neutralize the expectations and blessedness of the fullness of God's presence in our lives.

Brethren, you might have heard that the primates of the Anglican Communion met in Canterbury to discuss issues affecting our Communion. The main highlight of the

meeting was the decision to place some restriction on The Episcopal Church (TEC) for a period of three years for the part they played in promoting unbiblical doctrine in the Anglican Communion. The Archbishop of Canterbury was asked to appoint a Task Group to maintain conversation among ourselves with the intention of restoration of relationship and building of mutual trust. However, we should understand that the state of the broken communion with TEC and the Church of Canada and those provinces that are following their bad examples remain in place until they repent.

Beloved, once again, we wish to thank you for your continued participation and support for DIVCCON, our annual spiritual convocation and St. Mathias Day Collection. We are also glad for the unanimous decision taken during the standing committee at Akure to channel all the Advent Sunday Collections towards the development of the Church of Nigeria Secretariat at Gudu, Abuja for the next three years. The response was encouraging. The foundation stone of the secretariat was laid on Friday 13 November, 2015. Also as agreed, the primate's address was launched in this meeting and will also be launched in subsequent standing committee meetings and General Synod for the same purpose.

In view of the fall in oil revenue and the high rate of unemployment still prevalent in the country, we encourage individuals, groups and organisations in our churches to embark on food production. We also encourage our young men and women to learn a trade or acquire skills to enable them be self-reliant in order to contribute their quota to the spread of the gospel and national development. We urge every citizen to patronize made-in-Nigeria products as a way to stimulate local production and employment.

Brethren, remember that the foremost task we have as Christians is to preach the gospel and win converts for Christ. Although building of structures and monuments in the church is important; we should bear in mind that our mission mandate must not be sacrificed for anything else. More so, we need to restate the urgent need for our Dioceses and churches to establish schools and clinics. These were some of the avenues the early missionaries used to make impact in our land. We must sustain this good idea in our time.

The increasing display of immorality and obscenities in the society, especially on our streets, in the electronic, social and print media has reached very disturbing proportions. We call on all, especially the youths, to imbibe the virtues of moral discipline, patriotism and fear of the Lord, to save the society from total decay.

We have observed that some of our churches jettison the Church of Nigeria devotional - *the Daily Fountain*, for devotional books from other denominations or groups. This is most unfortunate development. *The Daily Fountain* and other literature from the Church of Nigeria are well prepared for our spiritual growth and development. We urge the Bishops with their clergy to enforce the use of our *Daily*

*Fountain*, Bible study and Sunday school manuals in our churches, schools and colleges.

Brothers and sisters in Christ, we sincerely commend the Rt. Rev. Duke and Mrs Sarah Akamisoko and the good people of Kubwa Diocese for creditably hosting the standing committee. We also thank the Bishops of Abuja province and the local organizing committee for their sacrificial commitment which ensured that the meeting was held successfully. May the Lord reward their labour of love out of his abundant riches in glory by Christ Jesus, Amen. Finally, in the face of discouragement, worries, anxiety, grief and other challenges of life, let us continue with the time honoured prayer of our forebears: “Come Lord Jesus!” Maranatha!

May the grace of the Lord Jesus be with you all.  
Your Most Reverend Father in God.

The Most Rev'd. Nicholas D. Okoh  
Archbishop, Metropolitan and Primate of all Nigeria



**APPENDIX VI**  
**STANDING COMMITTEE OF THE CHURCH OF NIGERIA**  
**(ANGLICAN COMMUNION)**  
**ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH KUBWA, FEBRUARY 2016-05-14**  
**REPORT OF GROUP 5**

**Tasks**

1. The meaning of autonomy of Dioceses in the Anglican Communion
2. The challenges resulting from the prevailing perception of Dioceses in the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion)
3. Solutions to the challenges

**First Question: AUTONOMY OF DIOCESES**

Autonomy of Diocese in the Anglican Communion refers to the power of each Diocese in the communion to regulate its affairs without interference by another Diocese. It means it can make its own rules, decide its own measures and execute them and is not under any other Diocese but is their equal for the purposes of relations with the communion as a whole. Some implications of it are as follows:

First, that the duly verified action of every self-governing (Diocese) in the exercise of its own discipline should be respected by the other (Dioceses) and their individual members. Second, that no Bishop or other minister from any self-governing (Diocese) should in any sense exercise his ministry in a Diocese in any other self-governing (Diocese) without the permission of the Bishop of that Diocese. Third, that no Bishop should allow a minister coming from another self-governing (Diocese) to exercise his ministry in his Diocese unless the minister brought with him letters testimonial from his previous Bishop.

The concept operates in the realisation that certain local circumstances can be best regulated by the particular Diocese in which they occur. It also effectively prevents Bishops and Dioceses being meddlesome in the affairs of other Dioceses through cross-boundary preferments, preaching, mission and evangelism and such other activities, no matter how well-intentioned, without the express agreement of the Diocesan. The assumption underlying its application include clearly defined Diocesan territory over which the Episcopal jurisdiction of a Diocesan may be exercised; a properly constituted administration which is synod-governed and Bishop-led; and economic sufficiency.

Matters within the domain of the domestic jurisdiction of Diocese over which it exercises autonomy include: the creation of internal divisions for the purpose of the proper administration of the Diocese, such as archdeaconries, deaneries, parishes and chapelries; the dispensation of clergy; the Episcopal discretion in ordinations and preferment of clergy and the licensing of lay pastoral assistants; the determination and execution of the agenda of its synod; and a host of other spiritual

and temporal matters which can be best considered locally without reference to the centre. It is similar to the division of powers in a federal system with the Dioceses resembling the state in the context of the Church of Nigeria.

### **Second Question: THE CHALLENGES**

The group thinks that although autonomy of Diocese is an issue, and is misunderstood and misapplied, the misunderstanding and misapplication is not general. It is by a few. It accordingly doubts the validity of the assumption inherent in the second question in the words 'prevailing perception'. Where, however, this misunderstanding occurs, it is by Diocesan leaders who assert that they cannot be questioned and so act with impunity under the mask of the doctrine. This strikes at our togetherness as a communion and the collegiality of Bishops. In the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion), the Dioceses are creations of the Church of Nigeria institution which gives power to define the territories, appoint the Bishops to oversee them, declares that they should be governed by synods, provides for approval of the constitution of the Diocese, provides for a supreme General Synod, a Standing Committee, a primate, and other institutions, authorities and offices over all the Dioceses. These are not matters within the domestic jurisdiction of any Bishop or Diocese. There are also matters fully covered from the centre from which there can be no local variation. These include: ecclesiastical discipline of Bishop, clergy and laity; power of appeal to the Episcopal Synod from the veto of a Bishop within the Diocese. Then there are traditions, customs and usages of the Anglican world. Thus there is no absolute autonomy of Dioceses.

Some manifestations or challenges identified are:

1. Insularity from the life of the Communion in Nigeria and the failure, refusal or neglect to comply with its decisions. The group calls to mind default in financial obligations which have been decided with full consideration of the capacities of the various dioceses.
2. Abuse of leadership in a diocese. This happens when the leadership see themselves as supreme and set aside the authority of the institutions, and ignore the traditions, customs and usages applicable in that diocese. The group also identified the deliberate refusal to constitute institutions such as those for cathedral governance whereas a Bishop swears at his enthronement to respect, obey and comply with such traditions, usages and customs.
3. Refusal to recognise the authority of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) when it is acting in matters properly reserved for it in the constitution of the Church of Nigeria. These include the plenitude of the powers of the General Synod to regulate the life of and intervene in such specific matters as residency of a Bishop in his Diocese, and those of the bishops collectively to decide on appeal over any issue of oppressive conduct against a Bishop by any diocese.
4. A view that asserts the equality of bishops and condemns the fact that the primate is *primus inter pares* and has primacy being first.

5. Refusal to recognize the power and right of the Church of Nigeria to state and regulate doctrine. It was observed that some bishops do not give due place or emphasis to the use of materials such as devotionals and manuals prepared for this purpose.
6. There may be ignorance in a diocese of the true extent and limits of the powers of a bishop by the clergy and the laity. It is worsened where the legal officers who are supposed to know this are themselves ignorant or fail to draw the attention of the bishop to them.

### **Third Question: SOLUTIONS**

The group proposed these solutions:

1. The contributions of the diocese should be assessed for the following purposes
2. To ensure that they were drafted to recognise the provisions of the Church of Nigeria constitution as mandatory norms and as supreme over local ones where there is any conflict
3. To ensure that they contain in them the usual checks that are traditional in the Anglican context, such as provisions for overriding the Bishop's veto at synod, the traditions, customs and usage which a Bishop swears to uphold, like the limitation on preferment where there are a number of stalls for statutory canons in a cathedral.
4. An authoritative document clarifying the concept and limitation should be issued and circulated in all dioceses. It should emphasize obedience to the General Synod and its standing committee and to the primate.
5. Bishops are to ensure that manuals of teaching on doctrine such as devotionals and Bible study aids issued by the Church of Nigeria are used in all parts of the dioceses under their jurisdiction. Bishops, vicars and church officials should help by ensuring that they procure the manuals before the year of use and even place complimentary copies of them. Bishops are also to guard against improper release of their pulpits to non-Anglicans and to ensure that at synods and revivals they look within for resource persons.
6. The problem of ignorance should be addressed.
7. By holding a seminar on the concept with education on constitutional provision, other instruments and traditions of the church for the Bishops.
8. By ensuring that only experienced lawyers who are also knowledgeable in Anglicanism are appointed to the legal offices.
9. By ensuring that the meeting of chancellors and legal officers pay attention to profitable and practical things such as ensuring that diocesan constitutions cover all proper themes including provisions for cathedral statutes. They should also teach on the drafting of relevant instruments like deeds of relinquishments and acceptance, dedication of churches, mandates, etc.

Kubwa, Nigeria, 4<sup>th</sup> February 2016

The Most Rev. Ignatius Kattey  
Facilitator

**APPENDIX VII  
THE CHURCH OF NIGERIA  
(ANGLICAN COMMUNION)  
THE MOST REV'D NICHOLAS D. OKOH  
ARCHBISHOP, METROPOLITAN AND PRIMATE OF ALL NIGERIA**

Archbishops/Bishops  
Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion)

My beloved in the Lord,

**MEETING OF PRIMATES OF THE ANGLICAN COMMUNION WITH THE  
ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY, THE MOST REV'D AND RT. HON.  
JUSTIN WELBY, MONDAY 11 – FRIDAY 15 JANUARY, 2016**

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. We thank God for his inestimable grace that strengthens us in His service. To Him be the glory.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Rev'd and Rt. Hon. Justin Welby invited all the primates of the Anglican Communion to a meeting in Canterbury to discuss issues affecting our Communion. After some regional and sub-regional consultations with the Global Anglican Future Conference (GAFCON) and the Global South Groups, it was decided that we should accept the invitation for whatever it was worth, irrespective of the fact that some of our provinces are in impaired relationships with the Episcopal Church (TEC) and the Anglican Church of Canada (ACC) in particular, and other churches that are following their footsteps.

It had been a collective resolution of the GAFCON Group for several years that we shall not participate in any gathering in the Anglican Communion to which TEC and ACC were invited, until they repented of their erroneous doctrinal and theological postures and practices. However, following the almost unanimous resolution of the GAFCON and the Global South Groups, we decided to accept the invitation.

Attached is the statement of the meeting regarding TEC:

The Anglican Church of Canada (ACC) was not focused on it because it claimed that it has not altered its Marriage Canon. However, we know that the Anglican Church of Canada, Scotland, Wales, Brazil and New Zealand are on the way to toeing the footsteps of TEC. We are yet to be convinced that the restrictions imposed on TEC will be implemented. The bottom line therefore is that nothing has changed.

As stated in the statement of the meeting attached herewith, for a period of three years, the Episcopal Church no longer represents us on ecumenical and interfaith bodies, should not be appointed or elected to an internal standing committee and that while participating in the internal bodies of the Anglican Communion, they will not take part in decision-making on any issues pertaining to doctrine or policy.

Furthermore, the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Rev'd and Rt. Hon. Justin Welby was asked to appoint a Task Group to maintain conversation among ourselves with the intention of restoration of relationship, the rebuilding of mutual trust, healing the legacy of hurt, recognizing the extent of our commonality and exploring our deep differences and ensuring they are held between us in the love and grace of Christ.

**In the meantime, the state of broken communion with TEC and Canada and those churches that are following their bad example remains in place.** Our decision to sever relations was based on their practice of ordaining and consecrating clergy in active homosexual relationship. This is what led to GAFCON, Jerusalem 2008. Reported reactions of some church leaders and members of TEC to the statement of the Primates' meeting clearly suggest that they are not yet willing to repent of their unbiblical doctrines and practices. We shall remain fervent in prayers and steadfast in upholding the word of God in the teachings and life of the Church. God's grace is sufficient unto us.

Yours in His service.

The Most Rev'd. Nicholas D. Okoh, MA, Fss, Mss, LLD  
Archbishop, Metropolitan and Primate of all Nigeria