

CHURCH OF NIGERIA  
(ANGLICAN COMMUNION)

# DIOCESE OF EVO

*THIRD SESSION OF THE SECOND SYNOD*

**THE PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS/ BISHOP'S  
CHARGE**

*DELIVERED BY*

***HIS LORDSHIP***

THE RT. REV. INNOCENT U. ORDU, JP  
(DIOCESAN BISHOP)

ON

SATURDAY, 1<sup>ST</sup> AUGUST, 2015.

AT

CHAPEL OF GRACE & KNOWLEDGE  
*(The Firstfruits Parish),*  
Archdeacon Crowther Memorial Girls' School, Elelenwo,  
*Port Harcourt, Rivers State.*

## **PROTOCOLS AND GREETINGS**

We bring greetings of joy, love and peace to everyone seated here in this chapel to listen to our address at this Third Session of the Second Synod of the Diocese of Evo (Anglican Communion).

Our very special welcome goes to Your Graces, the Archbishops, especially The Most Rev. and Mrs. Ignatius C.O. Kattay, JP, Archbishop of the Niger Delta Province, my Lords and brother Bishops here present. We thank you for sparing the time to come for our Evo Synod. Your esteemed presence is a huge encouragement to us.

We welcome Your Excellency, the Executive Governor of Rivers State, Chief Barr. Ezebunwo Nyesom Wike, CON; The Deputy Governor, Her Excellency, Dr. Mrs. Ipalibo Banigo, The Speaker, Rivers State House of Assembly, Rt. Hon. Ikuinyi-Owaji Ibani, Hon O.K. Chinda – member representing Obio/Akpor Federal Constituency in the House of Representatives, Abuja, Hon. Martins Amaewhule – House Leader and member Representing Obio/Akpor Constituency 1 in the Rivers State House of Assembly, all other officials of the Rivers State Government, State and National Assemblies. We congratulate Your Excellencies and Honourables on your recent victories at just concluded general elections in the country. Thank you for coming.

We welcome all serving and retired functionaries of the State Judiciary and the Local Government Areas. We appreciate your presence as well with us today.

We greet and welcome all our dear brothers of the House of Clergy of the Diocese of Evo and their supportive wives and those visiting. You have laboured much with us in our preparation towards this synod. We thank you very specially and pray God to bless you more for all your invaluable contributions.

Our many thanks go to you, our highly respected Diocesan legal officers led by the Registrar, Barrister Nlerum Amadi, members of the Diocesan Board, the Clerical (Ven. Chidi Worgu) and Lay (Sir Chief G.I. Ebenezer & Dame Meg Orianwo) Synod Secretaries and other members of the Diocesan and Local Synod Planning Committees, the Bishop's, Diocesan and various Church office workers. You have all worked so tirelessly at your various duty posts for the growth of the Diocese and for the success of this synod. May the good Lord reward you abundantly.

We appreciate the rest of you Synod delegates from the various Administrative Units, Churches and groups, Bishop's nominees, Presidents and members of the Council of Knights, Men's Christian Association, Anglican Youth Fellowship, Lay Readers, Your Royal Highnesses and my Lords temporal, other members of the Diocese and friends of Evo for honouring our invitation.

We acknowledge the presence of our friends and highly esteemed members of the Fourth Estate of the realm from the various media houses. Thank you for coming and for your positive coverage of the activities of this synod.

Words are not enough to thank you, Mrs. Chinyere Uchenna Ordu, JP, my dear wife of twenty five (25) years and untiring partner in the ministry with our daughter,

Uchechi for your unceasing prayers, encouragement and immense support with the women of the Diocese. The Lord reward you greatly for your enduring partnership. The Lord be with you all.

## **OUR SYNOD VENUE**

***The Chapel of Grace and Knowledge, First-Fruits Parish, Archdeacon Crowther Memorial Girls' School Compound, Elelenwo is our Synod Venue.***

The Chapel of Grace and Knowledge, Firstfruits Parish, ACMGS, Elelenwo is the first church planted at the inception of the Diocese of Evo in 2009.

This church was the result of the very commendable efforts of St. Mark's Anglican Church, Elelenwo Deanery under The Ven. Fyneface N. Akah, JP (now Venerable Dr.) as Rector and in direct compliance to Our Diocesan vision and directive that new worship centres/churches be planted across the Diocese by stronger churches and activity groups.

The planting of the church was preceded by a 3-Day crusade held in the school compound from Friday, 23<sup>rd</sup> to Sunday, 25<sup>th</sup> October 2009 in which the Reverend Canon Charles Mordi (now Venerable) preached in the first two days and the Rev. Kingsley Ohajianya (now Reverend Canon and Vicar of this Parish) preached on Sunday, 25<sup>th</sup> October, when the first Church service took place with us in attendance. It was also on this occasion that we christened the new church, Chapel of Grace and Knowledge, ACMGS, Elelenwo.

The service was held in what used to be the old Dinning Hall of the school which was in a very bad condition. The rain that day further exposed the bad state of the building thus requiring immediate attention.

In the ensuing days, The Rector, Ven. Fyneface N. Akah, JP drafted The Rev. Kingsley Ohajianya (one of the priests serving with him at the time at St. Mark's, Elelenwo) to the Chapel to give pastoral presence both to the Church and the School with the following persons as missionaries: Sir O.J. Kamalu, Messers. Uche Ugwuja, Obed Opiah, Henry Otto and Frank Okonkwo; Mrs. Margaret Otto, Mrs. Nkechi Ejekwu and Sister Ivy Kanu (now Mrs. Ivy Jonathan).

The first facelift that the church witnessed came through Mr. Clifford Amadi, an Anglican who was then worshipping at the Redeemed Christian Church of God. He was invited for a service here in the Chapel and assigned one of the lessons for the day. At the end of the service, Mr. Amadi offered to replace the dilapidated ceilings and also installed some ceiling fans in the church. Subsequently, the altar of the Church was rugged by Chief and Mrs. Kennedy Chidi during the dedication of their child, Master Onyedikachi Chidi.

The untiring efforts of a pioneer member, Mr. Seyi Olusanya during the period is worthy of note. His initiative through regular prayer meetings on Tuesdays for men only, gave birth to the formation of the Men's Christian Association (MCA) of the

church of which he later became the Chairman. He led the men of the Church to change the windows from louvers to what we have today and also spearheaded the procurement of a set of new musical instruments for enhancement of worship in the Church. He later became the chairman of the first Harvest Committee as well as a synod delegate of the church.

With less than fifteen (15) men (including the missionaries), the MCA activities continued through the prayer meetings on Tuesdays with Mr. Uzoma Igboeli and Chief Kennedy Chidi taking up the positions of the financial secretary and treasurer respectively. It is also on record that the first Mothering Sunday celebration of the church was marked with less than ten (10) women and at this time the Steering Committee decided on operation “everyone bring one chair” appeal which led to the acquisition of white plastic chairs that occupied less space as a replacement for the ones given to the church by St. Mark’s, Elelenwo. Members responded positively to this appeal.

During the celebration of the First Anniversary of the Church in 2010, the acquisition of a new church bus project was initiated and by 2011 this was actualized and dedicated by us.

Not long after the dedication of the new church bus, the church embarked on the building of a Parsonage which foundation was laid on 2<sup>nd</sup> October, 2011 and four (4) months thereafter the building was dedicated by us on Saturday, 14<sup>th</sup> April, 2012.

The next visible project was the construction of an Amphitheatre-shaped church building for which foundation stone we laid on Sunday, 28<sup>th</sup> April, 2013.

Closely following the above was the commencement of the process of becoming a Parish Church by a formal application to the Diocese through the St. Mark’s, Elelenwo Deanery Council, the Parent Church under The Ven. Akuro Omubor.

The Church having satisfied the constitutional requirements for attainment of a parish status was approved a Parish by the Diocesan Board with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2013. The service of formal inauguration of the Parish took place on Sunday, 14<sup>th</sup> April, 2013. On this occasion, we tagged the Church “The Firstfurits Parish” in apparent recognition that it was the first new church plant of the Diocese after our inauguration. The Rev. Kingsley Uba Ohajianya became the first Vicar in charge. We commend St. Mark’s Church, Elelenwo Deanery for faithfully superintending this young church until her attainment of Parish status.

Since the Constitution of the Diocese of Eyo does not allow for Parish Churches to operate under the supervision of deaneries, we decided in our Synod Address of 2013 that the Chapel of Grace and Knowledge having become a Parish, should come under our direct supervision until assigned to an Archdeaconry. It was also accorded the status of a Mission-oriented Parish with the charge to adopt the Holy City Anglican Church, Pipeline, Rumuokwurusi as her mission field in conjunction with the Diocesan Lay Readers Association. So far the Parish has satisfactorily carried out this assignment

In one of our visits to this church, we envisioned the need for an expansion of the current auditorium and advised the Priest and his council members to do so. The congregation soon after swung into action leading to what we have here today as our synod venue. We commend the understanding of the Priest and contributions of Parishioners. Added to this is the acquisition of a higher capacity power generating set to serve the increasing needs of the church.

The first wedding in the church was between two active members of the Church, Miss Chioma Soribe and Mr. John Eze (now Ordinand John Eze) and it took place on Saturday, 13<sup>th</sup> November, 2010. Since then 26 other marriages and 61 baptisms have been conducted in this church.

The average church attendance stands presently at between 350 to 400 adult worshippers, and between 120 to 150 children/teenagers.

We commend the numerous positive strides of this church since the past five and half years of her existence and also for the courage to accept the hosting of this year's Synod after the original host was found not to be too prepared for the task.

## **OUR GUEST SPEAKERS**

### ***The Rt. Revd. Paises E. Omole-Ekun.***

Praises Efurosibina Omole-Ekun, was the first child born to Pa. E.B. Omolekun and late Mrs. Felicia Omolekun (nee Dangana) in Kano, where he had most of his elementary education and later Jos for his secondary and post-secondary education.

His journey into the ministry started in January 1989 when he felt called by the Lord to live his life like Samuel's, of the Holy Scriptures. His parents had actually dedicated him to the Lord having not had him until the seventh year of their marriage. So in the same year 1989 Praises felt led to discontinue his studies at the University of Jos, where he at that time had been a student for an upward of two years.

The Rt. Rev. T. E. Idowu Adesola, then bishop of Jos on hearing about Praises' convictions employed and sent him to St. Timothy's Anglican Church, Nassarawa, Jos to work as a Church-Agent. He continued here, until he was sent as a special

candidate to Immanuel College of Theology, Ibadan in September 1990.

Praises graduated from Immanuel College, in June 1993 with a Diploma in Theology and on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July of the same year, he was ordained a Deacon by the then Rt. Rev. B.A. Kwashi and Priested a year later, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of July 1994.

On the 1<sup>st</sup> of April 2001, he was absorbed as clergy into Kaduna Diocese. The bishop of Kaduna, on the 1<sup>st</sup> of September 2002, preferred and collated him as a Statutory Canon to the stall of St. Augustine of Hippo, in the Cathedral of St. Michael's, Kaduna. Two years later, he was installed Archdeacon of the same Cathedral on the

3rd of July 2004. He was elected Bishop for the Church of God on the 14th of March 2009. His consecration and enthronement as bishop took place on the 26th of April of the same year, at the Cathedral Church of St Andrew's, Zonkwa, to the See of Zonkwa.

In addition to his basic theological training and Diploma Certificate from Immanuel College of Theology, Praises also holds a Certificate of Ministry from the Kingdom Faith Bible College, Horsham, United Kingdom. He holds a Certificate in Missions and Youth work from the FUSION School, Australia, and a Bachelor of Divinity degree from the Theological College of Northern Nigeria, Bukuru, an affiliate of the University of Jos. He also has a Master of Arts degree, from the University of Jos.

He is currently a Ph.D student at the Oxford Centre for Mission Studies, Oxford, U.K.

Praises on the 20th of December 1997 married former Dr. Nanben Penzin and they are blessed with two beautiful girls, Fure and Osiya.

Presently, Praises is the Dean of St. Francis of Assisi Theological College, Wusasa, Zaria, Kaduna State, a position he felt called to serve in, and was appointed into on the 1st of February 2011.

Bishop Praises brings to us that freshness, zeal, commitment and passion with a touch of scholarship.

We thank him for honouring our invitation and for his effective delivery of the Synod Meditations and Bible Studies so far. We look forward to tomorrow's Synod Thanksgiving Service when he would take the pulpit again.

### **Dr. Basil Okwuchukwu Ibeh**

Dr. Basil Okwuchukwu Ibeh is by the grace of God, the General Overseer of Living Saints Global Ministries and Director General of Dael Institute of Leadership, Lagos, Nigeria. He is an acclaimed leadership development guru with extensive experience in curriculum development and human capacity building. He has served as a consultant to Churches, business organisations, government agencies both in Nigeria and other nations including South Africa and USA. He is an international conference speaker and prolific writer, an author of more than 18 books. Basil is passionate about leadership development and prayer revival in Africa. He is married and blessed with two sons.

Dr. Basil Okwuchukwu Ibeh delivered all the Synod Talks including ministering at the Special Sessions for youths. We thank him immensely for his deep sense of commitment and preparedness towards our invitation of him. May God bless his ministry continually.

## OUR SYNOD THEME

The theme of this Third Session of our Second Evo Diocesan Synod is **“Recapturing the Spirit of Excellence and Integrity in Service: The Daniel Example”** (Daniel 6:3; Proverbs 22:29).

Why did we choose this theme? The following are our reasons for doing so:

- i. We started the year 2015 with a prayerful choice and focus on the theme “A Commitment to Excellence” (Daniel 6:3; Proverbs 22: 29). This theme has formed the basis of most sermons, Bible studies and other discussions at the Diocesan level, churches and activity groups gatherings.

All these preaching, teachings and discussions notwithstanding, I strongly think that we are still very far behind in understanding what the Holy Spirit is probably saying, not to talk of our practicing them.

Consequently, this Synod theme is a continuation of our discourse on the 2015 Diocesan theme, which largely draws from the life of the Biblical character called Daniel.

The additional element or pillar introduced to the 2015 theme in this Synod theme is “integrity”.

There is actually a relationship between excellence and integrity.

- ii. Our second reason for the choice of this theme is based on the fact that we have for long observed that the pathways of excellence and integrity in the conduct of our human affairs as a people are becoming disturbingly and sadly too, very unattractive. They are now to most Nigerians like the road less travelled. The highways of excellence and integrity in Nigeria can be likened to the Biblical strait gate and narrow way that many reject to travel by and yet it leads to life (Matthew 7:4).

- iii. Thirdly, the low emphasis on these virtues in virtually every facet of our national life, including the church, has almost crippled the developmental strides of our nation and the spirituality of the Christian church.

We are now very much concerned about this development. Consequently, our choice of this synod theme should be seen as a call on all Nigerians and particularly Christians to make a detour from all other wide gates and broad ways that lead to destruction and continue with the journeys of our national and Christian lives on the way of excellence and integrity as Daniel did.

### Definition of some Basic Terms in the Theme:

1. **‘Recapturing’**

This word simply means the act of capturing again, recovering or retaking a person or animal that has escaped. It speaks of the act of taking or reclaiming something back or saving something lost (or in danger of becoming lost).

2. **‘Spirit’**

The word ‘Spirit’ in the context of our theme talks about ‘mind-set’ “the nature of, ability and essence”; here we are talking about “attitude”.

3. **‘Excellence’**

Excellence speaks of the state of possessing good qualities in an eminent degree; it means exalted merit and superiority in virtue or being extremely good.

Two words are used in Greek to define Excellence:

The first is ‘Chrestotes’ which stands for goodness, and uprightness;

The second is ‘Arete’ – which refers to moral goodness, i.e. virtue.

4. **‘Integrity’**

The word “integrity” is derived from the Latin adjective *integer*, meaning *whole* or *complete*. It speaks of a quality of character – the quality of being honest and having strong moral principles. Other synonyms used in its place include uprightness, probity, righteousness, nobility, virtue, decency, sincerity, truthfulness, soundness and trustworthiness. Integrity is regarded as an inward reality that refers to singleness of heart or mind, the development of a blameless character by adhering strictly to an exemplary ethical or moral code.

5. **‘Service’**

This refers to the work or actions we find ourselves doing or carrying out which affects God and our fellow men. It is the giving of ourselves to others through actions that give joy to God and those around us.

Based on these definitions, we can interpret our Synod theme to mean: Reclaiming or taking back the lost or about-to-be lost mind-set or attitude of merit, moral goodness, uprightness, good qualities and blamelessness in whatever we find ourselves doing which affects God and our fellow men.

## **Bible teachings on Excellence and Integrity**

### **The Old Testament teachings on Excellence**

In its teachings on **excellence**, the Old Testament approaches it from the angle of **diligence** in our work: “Whatever your hand finds to do, **do it with your might**; for there is no work or device or knowledge or wisdom in the grave where you are going” (Eccl 9:10); “Do you see a man who excels in his work? He will stand before kings; he will not stand before unknown men” (Proverbs 22:29; 2:6; 10:5; 12:11).

The Old Testament also addresses excellence from the angle of **fidelity** or **faithfulness** in service as was the case with Joseph, whose master so trusted that he left everything about his house into his care and supervision (Genesis 39:6). We also have other examples of fidelity in service in the workmen under Jehoiada who were faithful in handling the money committed to their hands (2Kings 12:15); Nehemiah’s treasurers as well (Nehemiah 13:13), and Moses, who was adjudged “faithful in all his house, as a servant.....” (Hebrews 3:5).



Another character trait the Old Testament uses to define excellence is **honesty** as we find in Leviticus 19:35, 36; Deut. 25:15 and Proverbs 11:1. God hates dishonest dealings.

From the perspective of the Old Testament one cannot be possibly excellent if he lacks the mind-set or attitude of diligence and industry and the godly virtues of faithfulness and honesty in one's dealings. An excellent person therefore is diligent and hardworking; he is faithful, trustworthy, dependable, honest and sincere.

From the book of Psalms numbers 8, 15, and 19:14 we draw the following lessons:

1. For one to be excellent in life, he must be connected and focused on the Excellent One Himself, i.e. God. God's excellent Spirit will readily rob off on the life of anyone who is connected to Him;
2. There is no excellence in anyone who lacks basic godly character. An excellent person must exemplify the life of uprightness as against being crooked and fraudulent; the life of truth as against falsehood and deceit and the life of love for one's neighbor as opposed to hatred.
3. One's actions must command divine recognition, approval and acceptance before he is adjudged excellent.

### **The Old Testament teachings on Integrity**

The theme of **Integrity** is continually emphasized in the Old Testament particularly in the book of Proverbs. The reason being that none can truly excel in life without integrity. The Old Testament teaches that a person's whole character must be morally sound as was again clearly evident in the life of Joseph. Potiphar, his master, had entrusted all he owned to Joseph (Genesis 39:6). And when Potiphar's wife tried to seduce him, Joseph maintained his integrity by refusing her advances (vv 8-12). It cost him dearly, but ultimately it yielded great rewards (Genesis 41:37-50:26). From the Old Testament teaching every child of God and persons who have been given a trust must, in the example of Joseph, have passion for integrity. There might be pains to pass through, but the end rewards far outweigh the pains.

### **A person of integrity therefore has nothing to hide.**

Other teachings of the Old Testament on the subject of integrity is that it is marked by innocent actions (Genesis 20:5) as in the story of King Abimelech who innocently took Sarah, Abraham's wife to be his wife having been told by the couple that both of them were related. When confronted by God he pleaded his innocence and integrity. A man of integrity does not willfully do wrong while in the service of God and mankind. A man of integrity has the fear of God; he is truthful and opposed to covetousness (Exodus 18:21). He is blameless, upright, righteous like Job (Job 2:3; Psalm 25:21, 7:8) and disassociates himself with evil doers (Ps. 26:4).

From David's answers to his own questions in the opening verses of Psalm 15, a person of integrity must be a man/woman of:

#### **❖ A Godly lifestyle**

David measures integrity by how we live in accordance with God's standards and not according to human standards. God has set standards of truth, of

right and wrong and which do not change with the individual. A person of integrity searches out these standards and lives consistently with them.

❖ **A Godly Speech**

He is one who speaks the truth from a sincere heart.

❖ **Godly Values**

People of integrity are those who hate what God hates and love what God loves. They understand the difference between good and evil, holy and profane. People with godly values are guarding what they watch and read and whom they allow to influence them in life (and we all have people who we allow to influence us)

❖ **Trustworthiness**

People of integrity are reliable, honest, committed to the truth as well as just in all their dealings, whether it is in their involvement in governance, business, marriage or all other relationships with people. For these virtues they possess, such persons are easily trusted.

❖ **Accountability and fear of God**

The other reason a person is considered as having integrity is because he feels accountable in all he does and says. He is conscious that God is examining his every action. Consequently, he watches all he does in the fear of God. As Christians we should be accountable, hold one another accountable and maintain integrity and fear of God at all times (Matt. 12:36; 2Cor. 5:10; Luke 17:3).

The Old Testament teaches that integrity of heart guides a person into right and rewarding situations (Proverbs 11:3). Integrity is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice (Proverbs 21:3).

### **The New Testament teachings on Excellence**

Generally, the Bible presents God to us as One who is holy and righteous with whom there is no failure. In other words, divinity and fallibility are incompatible. Excellence is a major attribute of God and He demands it from His children: “Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect” (Matthew 5:48).

Paul in his letter to the Ephesians charged them: “I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called” (Eph. 4:1).

Two words are used in the gospel and epistle above to refer to excellence in the New Testament. They are ‘perfect’ and ‘walking worthy’. When the New Testament says that God as our heavenly Father is perfect, it is saying that He is excellent in all His ways: “O LORD, our Lord, How excellent is Your name in all the earth, Who have set Your glory above the heavens!” (Psalm 8:1). God is our ultimate example in excellence and consequently He calls us to reach for perfection or excellence in our vocation and professions.

From Paul's position, when we live up to the demands of our offices – in conduct, commitment and in the results we produce, we are definitely on the part of excellence.

The Apostle spoke further on excellence:

“And whatsoever ye do, do (it) heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men” (Colossians 3:23).

“With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men, knowing that whatever good anyone does he will receive the same from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free.” (Eph. 6:7-8).

“But thou, o man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness” (1 Tim. 6:11).

“Show yourself in all respects to be a model of good works...,” (Titus 2:7).

“Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things” (Phil. 4:8).

Excellence is strongly enjoined in the New Testament. It is a way of life everyone must pursue.

### **The New Testament teachings on Integrity**

Our society idolizes the so-called “beautiful people” – popular entertainers and models whose youthful faces dominate the pages of magazines and newspapers. But such attractiveness has nothing to do with the kind of beauty that delights the heart of God.

From the New Testament point of view, **integrity** speaks more on what is in a person's heart than we do on superficial things. (1Pet. 3:3-4).

According to William Dyrness, something is lovely by God's standards “if it displays the integrity that characterizes creation and that in turn reflects God's own righteousness”. In other words, a truly beautiful person or person of integrity is one who serves God's purposes. New Testament position on the subject matter of integrity therefore is that people who lay claim to it should be those who mirror Christ.

The New Testament model of integrity is marked by three distinct features:

1. A clear conscience toward God and men – (Acts 24:16; Heb. 13:18)
2. Freedom from that which is shameful, crafty, or deceitful, (2 Cor. 4:2) and
3. Honourable behaviour (2 Cor. 8:21; 1 Peter 2:12).

Our character and actions as ministers and leaders in society should be guided by these features.

### **The Man Daniel (605-536 BC) and His Example:**

1. Daniel was a teenager taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar during the first siege of Jerusalem in 605 BC.
2. He was of royal blood.
3. While in captivity, without the slightest compromise he faithfully served under the administration of three kings, Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, and Darius.

4. He was himself ministered to by both of heaven's recorded archangels, Gabriel and Michael (9:21, 10:13).
5. He had more to say about the coming antichrist than any other Old Testament writer.
6. One of his contemporaries, Ezekiel, refers to
  - a. The righteousness of Daniel, comparing him with Noah and Job (Ezek 14:14)
  - b. The wisdom of Daniel (Ezek 28:3)
7. Jesus quoted Daniel during His Mount Olivet discourse (Matthew 24:15).
8. The unusual feature of his book is that Daniel wrote the central portion (2:4-7:28) in the Aramaic language.
9. He may be compared to Joseph, for both men had the gift of interpreting dreams (compare Genesis 37:5,9; 40:8; 41:25 with Daniel 2:24; 4:19)
10. His book marks the third of five great periods of miracles in the Bible. The periods are:
  - a. The time of Moses and Joshua
  - b. The time of Elijah and Elisha,
  - c. The time of Daniel
  - d. The time of Christ and His disciples
  - e. The time of Peter and Paul
11. Daniel's life may be characterized by purpose, prayer, and prophecy.
12. Daniel was among some choice Hebrew youths selected by Nebuchadnezzar to enroll in the special three years B.D. (Babylonian Development) Course. He and his 3 friends – Hannaniah (Later renamed Shedrach), Mishael (renamed Meshach) and Azariah (renamed Abednego) were a part of the student body (vs. 4).
13. These youths were assigned the best of the King's food and wine (1:5). Daniel and his friends submit to their new names, but determine not to accept the King's menu (1:8). In this rejection of the King's menu, we see Daniel's character of excellence and integrity beginning to manifest.
 

Three factors may have entered into his decision:

  - a. The meat and wine had probably been sacrificed to false gods
    - i. Christians in public service or who belong to secular organizations or groups must be sensitive and careful not to submit to any evil practice or way of life of others who do not yet know the Lord Jesus.
  - b. The food may have been prohibited under Mosaic Law (Lev. 11:44-47)
  - c. He may have previously taken the Nazarite Vow (Num. 6:3)
    - i. We each have our personal commitments and allegiance to Christ to guard jealously wherever we find ourselves.
14. Satan doubtless attempted to get Daniel to rationalize through various ways. He may have considered:
  - a. The King had ordered it, therefore it was a law
  - b. To disobey might bring severe punishment
  - c. It would probably spoil all chances of advancement
  - d. When in Rome (or Babylon), simply do as the natives do
  - e. He was a long way from home and no one would ever know
  - f. God had failed him anyway in permitting his capture.

Daniel did not succumb to any of these reasons as many of us would do today, sadly, because of the excellent spirit in him and for the sake of godly integrity. People of excellence and integrity who have the mind of Christ do not give in to satanic reasoning.

A Christian with an excellent spirit and integrity will not do what others around him do in order to advance (i.e. get to the next level), curry favour or be accepted. He is usually not a native to the negative practices around. Those tendencies are alien to him and he in turn takes a disciplined, hard stand against them for the glory and honour of God.

### **Daniel in the Public Service of Babylon**

Daniel's steady rise to prominence in Babylon was definitely not unconnected with these virtues of excellence and integrity which he started manifesting right from the days of King Nebuchadnezzar. In the days of this King, Daniel was identified in the kingdom of Babylon as a man "in whom is the spirit of the holy gods", possessing "light and understanding and wisdom like the wisdom of the gods... (Daniel 5:11); in whom also was found "an excellent spirit, and knowledge, and understanding, interpreting of dreams, and shewing of hard sentences, and dissolving of doubts..." (v. 12).

These were the very qualities that also endeared him later in the kingdom to Nebuchadnezzar's son and successor, King Belshazzar. King Belshazzar was greatly troubled by his sight of a mysterious finger of a man's hand which wrote "MENE, MENE, TEKEL UPHARSIN" over against the candlestick upon the plaster of the wall of the King's palace when he made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, princes, wives and concubines, drinking with the golden vessels that were taken out of the temple of the house of God which was at Jerusalem. The King desperately needed the services of his astrologers, Chaldeans, and the soothsayers (the equivalent of the marabouts we have today from Senegal, Mali and Burkina Faso on whom some of our Nigerian leaders are said to rely) in reading and interpreting the writing. Belshazzar was so desperate for an interpretation that he even promised to elevate the interpreter to the position of the "third ruler in the Kingdom". What the King's 'wise men' could not do, i.e. reading and interpreting the writing, Daniel did by the excellent spirit of God that was in him. The promise of the King was fulfilled and Daniel was decorated and proclaimed the third ruler in the Kingdom. Sadly, that night, King Belshazzar was slain as the Persians under Cyrus came conquering the Babylonian empire in fulfillment of Daniel's interpretation in which he announced God's judgment against the King and his reign.

The emerging new King, Darius the Mede decided to restructure the administration of the Kingdom with the appointment of 3 Presidents to oversee the activities of and receive stewardship accounts from the 120 Princes (governors) set over the kingdom. The King appointed Daniel the first of the 3 Presidents i.e. Prime Minister over the other Presidents and governors.

The reason(s) for this honour conferred on a captive Jew – a 'non-indigene' of a sort was clear. In Daniel the King found a man of excellence, integrity, accountability, honesty, upright and blameless character.

Progressive leaders have an eye for excellence. They will always go for the best available minds and hands. They will never settle for the second best, for as Philip Chesterfield said, “Whatever is worth doing at all is worth doing well”.

Leaders also understand that excellence is a quality rather than a quantity. Of all the 120 Princes and the other 2 Presidents, King Darius found quality and integrity in Daniel and consequently chose him over and above the rest.

Leaders are not content to go for the silver. They like the feel of real gold. In this case, the other leaders were seen by the King as silver and Daniel as real gold. And so the King preferred him.

What stuff are those of us itching for preferment actually made of? Silver or gold? The King would not have preferred Daniel if the later was negligent, disrespectful, disloyal, always avoided the King’s summons without explanation, and hateful of the king.

The nation, state, church or community will suffer losses when leaders compromise merit, excellence and integrity and commit sensitive affairs into the hands of power-seeking, visionless and dishonest persons. President Muhammadu Buhari and Governor Nyesom Wike and all other leaders (including church leaders like us) should draw inspiration from King Darius in their appointments, and those so appointed should dare to be like Daniel in their stewardship.

### **The Cost of Excellence and Integrity**

From the events in the life of Daniel... *“Then this Daniel was preferred above the presidents and princes, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king thought to set him over the whole realm. 4 Then the presidents and princes sought to find occasion against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find none occasion nor fault; forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him. 5 Then said these men, We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God”* (Daniel 6:3-5), we learn that a choice to go the way of excellence and integrity is usually costly. It is an invitation to conspiracy, gang-ups, evil plots, pull him down syndrome (Ph.D), hatred, false accusation, misunderstanding and several other negative reactions against oneself from people around the Excellent.

Daniel’s colleagues in government saw his rising profile on account of his excellent disposition as a huge threat to their own chances of advancing higher. Consequently, they conspired to discredit and stir up the King against him:

*6 Then these presidents and princes assembled together to the king, and said thus unto him, King Darius, live for ever. 7 All the presidents of the kingdom, the governors, and the princes, the counsellors, and the captains, have consulted together to establish a royal statute, and to make a firm decree, that whosoever shall ask a petition of any God or man for thirty days, save of thee, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions. 8 Now, O king, establish the decree, and sign the writing, that it be not changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not. 9 Wherefore king Darius signed the writing and the decree... 13 Then answered they and said before the king, That Daniel, which is of the children of the captivity of Judah, regardeth not thee, O king, nor the decree that thou hast signed, but maketh his petition three times a day... 16 Then the king commanded, and they brought Daniel, and cast him into the den of lions. Now the king spake and said unto Daniel, Thy God whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee.*

We are called to pursue or go the way of excellence and integrity. If we maintain that path we should expect some negative reactions from *“false accusers... and despisers of those that are good”* (2 Tim. 3:3). Like Daniel, we Christians are also of royal blood. In fact, the Bible describes us as “royal priesthood”. Royalty goes with excellence and integrity. As children of the heavenly King, the Spirit of excellence and Integrity should characterize all our actions and ways of life as it was with Daniel. We must stay on that chosen path of excellence and integrity, knowing that even when the whole world rises against us, God will go all the way with us, even to the lions’ den.

### **GENERAL LESSONS FOR US ALL**

*For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope (Romans 15:4).*

All we have read in the Bible about the life and experiences of Daniel are not mere fables but true stories that carry immense lessons for us all. Consequently, the Lord would want us to learn those lessons even as the scripture above tells us that it is for our learning that they have been written. So what further lessons can we learn on excellence and integrity from the life of Daniel?

#### **On Excellence**

*“Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest” (Eccl. 9:10).*

*“The hand of the diligent will rule, while the slothful will be put to forced labour” (Proverbs 12:24);*

Excellence in service is about **being dutiful and passionate** in all we are called to do or we find ourselves doing. It is about being and remaining undeterred in doing that which God considers pleasing to Him in particular and beneficial to humanity.

E.M. Forster had this to say on the need for passion in what we do: “One person with passion is better than forty people merely interested”.

Field Marshal Ferdinand Foch said: “The most powerful weapon on earth is the human soul on fire”.

Walter Cronkite said: “I can’t imagine a person becoming a success who doesn’t give this game of life everything he’s got”.

Joseph Campbell, an American Mythologist also said that “Passion will move men beyond themselves, beyond their shortcomings, beyond their failures”.

To excel therefore in our service to God and society would require that beyond our mere interest in a thing we become passionate about it.

Secondly, it would require **our souls being on fire**, not letting anything or anyone negative stand in our way. Our human souls must be set on fire for the church we pasture or lead; in the service we are called upon by the church, state, community, organization or nation to render.

The proof of this ‘consuming fire in our bones or souls’ should be seen in the positive, heartwarming results we produce for all to see.

Our souls must be set on fire for evangelism and soul winning; for the spiritual and physical wellbeing of our parishioners; for the growth of our units, chaplaincies, activity groups etc. and for the nation.

Thirdly, to become a person of excellence would require **that one gives everything he's got, i.e. his/her very best to all he does** whether it be service to God and His church or to God and humanity as only the best is good enough for Him.

Fourthly, we must always put **passion in our prayers and worship to God**. Are you a clergyman, Church Council member, worker, government functionary, teacher, politician, community leader, student, apprentice, CEO, MD or a company staff? Let your passion in the service of God and humanity increase more than before. Let your passion for your vocation/calling, profession, job, study, office, project, legitimate business increase and the results for your efforts speak for you.

Finally, to excel in any service to which we are called, **we need enthusiasm**. Winston Churchill once said: "Enthusiasm is one of the most powerful engines of success".

When we are given a task to perform, we must approach it with all our might, putting our whole soul, personality, energy and faith into it.

*"Do you see a man who excels in his work? He will stand before kings (Presidents, Prime Ministers, Governors, Primates, Bishops, MDs/CEOs, Ezes/Igwes etc.); he will not stand before unknown (mean) men" (Proverbs 22:29).*

Nothing excellent and great has ever been achieved without exceptional commitment, devotion, diligence, sacrifice, passion, enthusiasm, Christ-like zeal, extreme hard work, total visible seriousness and driving passion and unwavering faith.

If we will ever become people of excellence at whatever level of service it means we have to separate ourselves from the crowd of those who want the status quo of mediocrity, laziness to remain. We have to be consumed in whatever legitimate thing we are doing i.e. be totally dissolved by it until our feelings or the contrary feelings of others no longer matter. The Bible said: "the zeal of thy House has consumed me"(Psalm 69:9; John 2:17).

Excellence in service is about being diligent, honest, sincerely true to one's self, the task itself and to the one who has assigned us the task whether it be God or our fellow man (who is in a position to do so). It is about executing our task without pretense, hypocrisy and a desire for any personal advantage or gain.

It was diligence, commitment, passion, zeal and enthusiasm for God and faith in Him that propelled Daniel to the seat of excellence and favour with the King above his other colleagues.

When will the desire for excellence, zeal for God, the Church and the gospel of Christ, your political office and service to the state and nation, your profession/vocation, career etc. consume you? What has been written about Daniel are there as examples for us to follow in his steps.



## **On Integrity**

Integrity which is the soundness of moral character is a problem today. It is common today to hear or read of:

- ❖ Church leaders being involved in sexual scandal;
- ❖ Politicians who claim like pastors to have been called by God and the people to serve, taking bribes and committing all forms of indecent acts including engaging in whisper campaigns which are designed to undermine another's position;
- ❖ Employees (including Church workers) who steal from their employers ;
- ❖ Students who cheat on exams or competitions and their parents and teachers who encourage them with examination officers to do so;
- ❖ Athletes who use performance enhancing drugs in order to win at competitions;
- ❖ Government officials who will claim that the state lacked money to carry out basic people-oriented projects but spend far much more of the so called 'scarce resources' in addressing other non-beneficial issues' or even sitting down with some political godfathers to share money meant for the general good amongst themselves as in the case of Federal allocations to some Local Government Councils;
- ❖ Witnesses who lie on documents and in court;
- ❖ People who claim to be Christians but cannot be trusted in business;
- ❖ Workers who never arrive to work on time (and often leave early);
- ❖ People who are prominent in a church but do not live lives any different from the pagans around them.

For our integrity to remain unblemished as ministers and public office holders, we must be very careful in our dealings and conducts.

Secondly, we must guard against greed, covetousness, stealing/looting, diversion and misappropriation of National, State, Diocesan, Church, Community and organizations' funds that are committed to our charge. We should be so disciplined in this matter that any money that is not assigned to us officially is avoided. We should avoid enacting policies that will attract undue and questionable advantage to ourselves. Rather than always collect, we should be forthcoming in making needful sacrifices. It will motivate the people. As people of integrity our emphasis should shift from what the nation, state, church and society will do for us to what we shall do for these institutions we are called to serve.

Thirdly, we must guard against betraying the People's trust and respect for us. Our integrity will surely be called to question when we use the powers of our office/positions to exploit the people – the needy and vulnerable youths, women (including widows), our workers and the masses.

Fourthly, we should not shy away from admitting it when we are wrong. Owning up to our mistakes is more a sign of strength than weakness. To the diehards, such admission of one's faults is seen as weakness. We should learn to admit it when we have said or done the wrong thing. "I'm Sorry" is a phrase that has power to change the entire atmosphere in a room. Let us use it often.

Integrity is about living a life of no compromises and that is why it has become an especially significant problem for many. It takes effort to build – Psalm 101:3-8. As citizens of our great country, Nigeria especially as leaders in the church and society our inconsistency and lack of integrity destroys our testimony before a watching world.

We must make effort to develop integrity by:

➤ **Being ruthlessly honest with ourselves even when it hurts.**

A high school senior was honoured as one of the “Best and Brightest” in a community. When his school team was given the word ‘auditorium’ in a regional spelling Bee, Brady Davis glanced down to ponder his response and noticed that the word was printed on the microphone stand. He called this to the attention of the judges who responded with a more difficult word. Brady did what he knew was right whether others noticed or not.

We don’t know when our actions might become an example to others. But if we live each day to honour Jesus, our behaviour will model His righteousness, not matter who is watching. Uprightness and honour should be goals for Christians of every age. Paul told his young protégé Timothy, *“Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity” (1 Timothy 4:12).*

We should be forceful in our demonstration of integrity.

➤ **Seeking wise counsel.**

We all have blind spots. It’s one thing to be honest with one’s self, but sometimes one is just blind to faults others can see. We are encouraged to find three or four people who believe in us and ask them for feedback on our lives.

➤ **Deciding to honour God, not please people.**

Doing the right thing is almost never the easy thing, and sometimes it’s not the popular thing. Honouring God means deliberately choosing to live in line with the standards of the scriptures even when that choice is not popular with those around us.

➤ **Being appropriately transparent.**

Be honest both with yourself and with others not minding that they might think less of you.

➤ **Prayerfully training up ourselves in righteousness.**

Jesus spent thirty years preparing himself for Ministry before ministering for three. And during those three years he often disappeared to pray. We can only give what we have got. It was at these moments of self-separation that he received from God what he gave the people. We must always draw closer to God in order to draw his nature unto ourselves.

When we have integrity, we also have happiness, Psalm 119:1.

When we have integrity, we have firm footing, Proverbs 10:9.

Our life of integrity will be a blessing to our children, Proverbs 20:7.

## **Conclusion**

We must realise that though we are Nigerians by earthly citizenship, that we are first and foremost as Christians, citizens of heaven where there are not compromises, shortcuts, mediocrity, low standards, excuses, disorderliness; but order, excellence, integrity, purity and everything good.

If this country will ever progress and be like other 'good' nations Nigerians and nay Christians at all levels must go back, to the path of excellence and integrity that many once trod. We must each aim and walk at excellence and integrity and encourage those who are on that path. We should not be working hard at accusing, discouraging or even seeking ways of destroying them so that they are no longer there to hinder us in our insistence on the wrong ways.

Excellence and Integrity provide a "mind-set" towards perfection and uprightness, and an abiding intent to do the will of God and to walk in His ways. When we choose to be men of excellence and integrity, even the ungodly will show us favour. *"When a man's ways please the LORD, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him"* (Proverbs 16:7).

The spirit of excellence and integrity is almost lost, jettisoned. It is no longer the point of emphasis, people hardly strive for mastery or excellence in what they do these days. Mediocrity is celebrated, people of questionable character are empowered and exalted to high levels and those of sound mind and character are vilified. Let us strive to recapture, reclaim, take back these good virtues which Satan has stolen from us.

The church should champion this return to excellence and integrity in all spheres of our national life!

Prayer:

O God, give me, in addition to excellence a high degree of integrity. I yield my inner being to you for the inrush of Divine life that brings with it integrity.

## **THE DIOCESE IN THE LAST ONE YEAR**

### **Scholarship Grant**

The Diocese received the sum of N2.5m being donation from Sir Godfrey and Lady Angela Ohuabunwa which was disbursed to 25 Senior Secondary School Students from Evo Diocese as scholarship grant for the last academic session 2014/2015. Each student received the sum of N100,000 during the Synod Thanksgiving Service held at St. Andrew's Church, Rumuobiokani Deanery on Synod Sunday, 3<sup>rd</sup> August, 2014.

The following were beneficiaries of this noble gesture:

<b>S/N</b>	<b>NAME</b>	<b>REMARK</b>
1	Sampson Orlumati	All Saints' Cathedral, Rumuokwursi
2	Chika John Okea	Daystar Ang. Youth Church, R/Okwursi
3	Aleruchi Gift Mba	St. Michael's, Rumuomasi Deanery
4	Miracle Orlu	St. Andrew's, Rumuobiokani Deanery
5	Sarima Wopara	❖
6	Austin Ike-Woko	❖
7	Blessing Woko	❖
8	Favour Chigor Ihunwo	St. Nicholas', Woji District
9	Benita Chinwebudu Elewa	Bethel Church, Rumuibekwe Parish
10	Precious Chika	Christ Harvest, Woji Parish
11	Love Ariolu	St. Jude's Church, Oginigba Deanery
12	Chinenye M. Ihunwo	St. Simon's Church, Okporo Deanery

13	Blessing Uzoamaka Anosike	New Wine Church, Okporo
14	Chiburuoma Precious Chima	St. Philip's Church, Oroigwe District
15	Blessing Wogwu	Holy Trinity Elingbu Parish
16	Desmond Goodluck	Church of the Holy Spirit, Eliozi Parish
17	Bridget Ejekwu	Mount Zion Church, Eliogbolo
18	Faith Ovunwo	Church of Advent, Rumuewhara
19	Jane Wamadi	St. Matthias', Atali District
20	Ekene Uzochukwu	Bethany Church, Pipeline, Rumuokwurusi
21	Chiamaka Friday	Holy City, Pipeline, Rumuokwurusi
22	Olufemi Oladapo Igbamerun Jr	Clergy Child
23	Cephas Cephas Okarefe	Clergy Child
24	Cassius Ejekwu	Clergy Child/Elelenwo
25	Godwin Badubulachim Chinda	Clergy Child/Elelenwo

The couple announced that this grant would be extended annually to committed but indigent students in the Diocese up till 2019 and the awardees shall receive their cheques on every Synod Thanksgiving Sunday. We are pleased to announce that Sir and Lady Godfrey N. Ohuabunwa have since issued us yet another cheque for the sum of N2.5m for the same scholarship grant to would be beneficiaries for the 2015/2016 academic year. Those selected will receive their cheques during the Synod thanksgiving service tomorrow. We pray for God's abundant blessings on this couple and their family.

### **Preferment/Ordination**

The 2014 Synod held at St. Andrew's Church, Rumuobiokani Deanery ended on Sunday, 3<sup>rd</sup> August with the Bishop announcing the following preferment of clergy:

**1. Archdeacons**

- ❖ Rev. Canon Charles Mordi
- ❖ Rev. Canon Chris Chukwumati

**2. Honorary Canons**

- ❖ Rev. Hosanna Naenwi
- ❖ Rev. Chimaobi Chieme
- ❖ Rev. Godfrey Onyemelukwe
- ❖ Rev. Bright Okocka
- ❖ Rev. Kingsley Ohajianya

They were all collated Archdeacons and installed Honorary Canons respectively on Saturday, 13<sup>th</sup> December, 2014 at the All Saints' Cathedral, Rumuokwurusi and now go by their new titles of 'Venerable' and 'Reverend Canon'. We congratulate them.

**3. Ordinations:**

- ❖ Rev. Chukwudi Theophilus was ordained Priest, while Ordinands Nelson Okocha, Tukabari Poni were both ordained Deacons on Sunday, 14<sup>th</sup> December, 2014 at Christ, The Redeemer Ang. Church, Eliogbolo. We congratulate them with their wives.

#### 4. **New Clergy**

We welcome the following priests who joined us from other Dioceses:

- ❖ Rev. Canon Joseph Ofoegbu from the Diocese of Bauchi joined our clergy team on Tuesday, 19<sup>th</sup> August, 2014. He is now serving at St. Jude's, Oginigba Deanery;
- ❖ Rev. Chukwujekwu Ifeakandu Umenna of the Diocese of Afikpo was also absorbed into our Diocese on Thursday, 22<sup>nd</sup> January, 2015 and posted to the Anglican Church of the Passion, Rumuodani under St. Mark's Elelenwo Deanery.

#### 5. **Voluntary Withdrawal of Service**

One of our senior priests and former Rector of St. Mark's Church, Elelenwo Deanery, **The Venerable Akuro Omubor** has out of his volition withdrawn his services as a clergy of the Diocese of Evo. In his words in writing to us... "Come out and wait on Me" was an instruction from God urging him to 'disengage' from the services of the Diocese.

We thank Venerable and Mrs. Omubor for their years of service to the Diocese and wish them well in all their future endeavours particularly in the vineyard of the Lord.

### **Foundation-Stone Laying of New Projects**

The foundation-stone of the following projects were specifically laid between the end of the last synod in August 2014 and July this year.

- i. New Church Building at Upper Room (Ang.) Church, Elioizu on Sunday, 24<sup>th</sup> August, 2014.
- ii. 16 Classroom Block with offices and Assembly Hall at the Bishop Crowther Memorial Secondary School, Rumuobiokani on Friday 12<sup>th</sup> September, 2014.
- iii. A 21 Classroom Block with toilets, Hall, Library, etc at the Archdeacon Crowther Memorial Girls' School, Elelenwo on Wednesday, 26<sup>th</sup> November, 2014.
- iv. An Office Block Complex at the Chapel of Grace & Knowledge, ACMGS, Elelenwo Premises on Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> November, 2014.
- v. Multipurpose building to house a parsonage, conference/events halls, offices, etc. being built by the Men's Christian Association (MCA) of St. Nicholas', Woji District on 6<sup>th</sup> of December, 2014.
- vi. New Parsonage Building for Holy City Ang. Church, Pipeline, Rumuokwurusi being built by the Evo Diocesan Lay Readers Association on Saturday, 24<sup>th</sup> January, 2015.
- vii. Two Storey Parsonage/Church workers complex at St. Michael's Ang. Church, Rumuomasi Deanery on Sunday, 22<sup>nd</sup> March, 2015.
- viii. New parsonage building at Anglican Church of the Pentecost, Rumuogba Parish on Saturday, 16<sup>th</sup> May, 2015.
- ix. New Parsonage building complex at St. Matthias' Church, Atali District on Sunday, 12<sup>th</sup> July, 2015.

- x. 3 bedroom staff quarter at Trinity Theological College, Umuahia on Monday, 13<sup>th</sup> July, 2015.

### **Dedications**

The following projects and properties across the Diocese were dedicated by us within the Synod year. They include:

1. An 18 Seater Bus of ACMGS, Elemenwo on Wednesday, 8<sup>th</sup> October, 2014.
2. Evo South East Archdeaconry Women's Work Office with furnishings on Sunday, 5<sup>th</sup> October, 2014.
3. An 18 – Seater Brand New Bus by the women of St. Matthias' Church, Atali Parish on Sunday, 26<sup>th</sup> October, 2014 during our episcopal visit to the Church.
4. The Archdeacon's office – Trinity Missionary Archdeaconry on Sunday, 26<sup>th</sup> October, 2014.
5. 6-toilet rooms complex donated by the Rotary Club of Port Harcourt to ACMGS, Elemenwo on Tuesday, 28<sup>th</sup> October, 2014.
6. A water Borehole Project provided by the women of Bethany Anglican Church, Pipeline on Sunday, 9<sup>th</sup> November, 2014.
7. A new place of worship for Holyhill Anglican Church, Elioizu Flyover built by Sir & Lady Ama Hart on Sunday, 9<sup>th</sup> November, 2014.
8. New Church Building of Immanuel Anglican Church, Ogbatai Woji Parish on Sunday, 23<sup>rd</sup> November, 2014.
9. One Key Board and some other Musical equipment at St. Michael's Church, Rumuomasi Deanery on Sunday, 30<sup>th</sup> November, 2014.
10. New church building of the Anglican Church of the Passion, Odani, Elemenwo on Saturday, 6<sup>th</sup> December, 2014
- ❖ A 100KVA Power generating Set at St. Mark's Church, Elemenwo Deanery on Saturday, 6<sup>th</sup> December, 2014
11. A 500KVA Power generating set at St. Andrew's Church, Rumuobiokani Deanery on Sunday, 7<sup>th</sup> December, 2014.
12. Holy City Anglican Church building and furnishings on Sunday, 25<sup>th</sup> January, 2015.
13. A new church building of Holy Ghost Anglican Church, Iriebe Housing Estate Parish, Iriebe, the Main Entrance Gate and the Children's Hall and toilet facilities on Sunday, 1<sup>st</sup> February, 2015.
14. ICT equipment donated by Sir/Lady George Agbogu to St. Nicholas, Woji District on Sunday, 22<sup>nd</sup> February, 2015.
15. A 110KVA Power Generator at St. Michael's Church, Rumuomasi Deanery on Sunday, 22<sup>nd</sup> March, 2015.
16. Air-conditioned Children's Chapel and 2 sets of Choir Robes at Bethel Anglican Church, Rumuibekwe Parish on Sunday, 29<sup>th</sup> March, 2015 (Palm Sunday).
17. A brand new 14-Seater Bus by the women of St. Andrew's Church, Rumuobiokani Deanery on Tuesday, 24<sup>th</sup> March, 2015.

18. Uniforms for members of the Christ Church, Woji Federal Housing Estate Gospel Band donated by Mrs. Irene Nwafor on Good Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> April, 2015.
19. Musical instruments – violin, viola, cello, trumpet gold, horn gold, trombone, baritone, flute, clarinet and choir robes donated by some parishioners at All Saints' Cathedral, Rumuokwurusi on Easter Sunday, 5<sup>th</sup> April, 2015.
20. A Brand new electricity generating set (7-KVA) at Great Shepherd Church, Mgbuesilaru donated by the women of the Church on Mothering Sunday, 12<sup>th</sup> April, 2015.
21. Oroigwe/Eliogbolo Archdeaconry House and the new church building of St. Philip's Church, Oroigwe District on Saturday, 18<sup>th</sup> April, 2015.
22. 60 classroom desks for SS3 students of ACMGS, Elenwo donated to the school by an Old Girl and proprietress of Royal Girls' Academy, Port Harcourt, Mrs. Christie Jumbo on Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> April, 2015.
23. A 30 Seater Coaster Bus bought by the Women of All Saints Cathedral, Rumuokwurusi on Saturday, 25<sup>th</sup> April, 2015.
24. New Church Building of New Wine Anglican Church, East/West Road, Okporo on Saturday, 27<sup>th</sup> June, 2015.
25. 16 Classroom Block with offices and Assembly Hall at Bishop Crowther Memorial Secondary School, Rumuobiokani on Saturday, 25<sup>th</sup> July, 2015.
26. Church Administrative Building, Bishop's Lodge and Prayer Room by the Chapel of Grace and Knowledge, ACMGS, Elenwo on Tuesday, 28<sup>th</sup> July, 2015.

### **Inaugurations**

The following churches were inaugurated **Parishes** within the year:

1. Immanuel Anglican Church, **Ogbatai Parish**, Woji on Sunday, 23/11/2014.
2. **Eliogbolo Parish** comprising Mount Zion Church, Eliogbolo. Christ, The Redeemer Church, Eliogbolo and Living Waters Anglican Church, Eliogbolo New Layout on Whitsunday, 24<sup>th</sup> May, 2015.
3. New Wine Anglican Church, **East/West Road Parish**, Okporo on Sunday, 28<sup>th</sup> June, 2015.

### **Church Christening**

Two newly planted Churches in the Diocese were christened by us. They are:

1. **Anglican Worship Centre, Elioza Flyover** planted in November, 2013 by St. Andrew's, Rumuobiokani Deanery was christened "**Holy Hill Anglican Church**" (Ps. 15:1) on Sunday, 9<sup>th</sup> November, 2014. This beautiful Church building was donated by Sir and Lady Ama Hart of Rumuobiokani Deanery. We thank them immensely. This is the second time this couple would be making such a huge investment into the ministry and mission of the Diocese of Evo. May the Lord reward them abundantly.
2. **The Anglican Worship Centre, Eliogbolo** was Christened "**Living Waters Anglican Church**" on Pentecost Sunday, 24<sup>th</sup> May, 2015 during the inauguration of Eliogbolo Parish Churches.

## **Confirmations**

A total of **365** baptized members of our church were confirmed by us as follows:

1. Sunday, 5<sup>th</sup> October, 2014 – Confirmation of 27 candidates at Evo South East Archdeaconry 5<sup>th</sup> Anniversary service at Church of the Holy Spirit, Elelenwo District.
2. Sunday, 19<sup>th</sup> October, 2014: Confirmations of 16 candidates at St. James' Ang. Church, Iriebe Parish.
3. Sunday, 26<sup>th</sup> October, 2014 – Confirmation of 35 candidates at St. Matthias' Church, Atali Parish.
4. Sunday, 2<sup>nd</sup> November, 2014 – confirmation of 39 candidates at St. Simon's Church, Okporo Deanery centenary thanksgiving service.
5. Saturday, 6<sup>th</sup> December, 2014 – confirmation of 22 candidates at St. Mark's Ang. Church, Elelenwo Deanery.
6. Sunday, 1<sup>st</sup> February, 2015 – confirmation of 38 candidates at Holy Ghost Ang. Church, Iriebe Housing Estate Parish.
7. Sunday, 22<sup>nd</sup> March, 2015: Confirmation of 29 candidates at St. Michael's Church, Rumuomasi Deanery.
8. Sunday, 5<sup>th</sup> April, 2015: confirmation of 37 persons at All Saints' Cathedral, Rumuokwurusi.
9. Sunday, 19<sup>th</sup> April, 2015: confirmation of 49 persons at St. Philip's Church, Oroigwe District.
10. Sunday, 12<sup>th</sup> July, 2015: confirmation of 31 persons (mainly students) at Chapel of Grace & Knowledge, ACMGS, Elelenwo.
11. Saturday, 25<sup>th</sup> July, 2015: confirmation of 42 students at the BCMSS, Rumuobiokani.

## **Human Capacity Development (Trainings)**

**From the end of last synod to date, the following human capacity development programmes took place within the Diocese:**

- ❖ Following the outbreak of the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) in Nigeria, an ***enlightenment/sensitization session*** was held for the Bishop, Clergy, Church Teachers & Wives on Thursday, September, 4<sup>th</sup> at the Archbishop Akinola Retreat Centre, Rumuobiokani by officers from the Federal and Rivers State Ministries of Health led by Dr. Ogunniyu Abiodun, a Medical Epidemiologist – Ebola Emergency Operation Centre, Federal Ministry of Health, Lagos and Mr. Sekibo Charles – Ebola Emergency Operation Centre, Port Harcourt. A total of 113 of us were in attendance. A similar session was held for the management, staff & parents of ACMGS, Elelenwo on Sunday, 14<sup>th</sup> September, 2014.
- ❖ ***Bi-Monthly Sessions of Clergy and Clergy Wives Schools*** were held, as well as monthly trainings for All Church teachers and other specialized



trainings for church sextons and drivers by the Council for Clergy/Laity Continuing Education.

❖ ***The 2015 Post Vestry Meeting Training/Workshop for All Leaders*** of Churches and Groups in the Diocese took place at Bethel Church, Rumuibekwe Parish from Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> - Saturday, 21<sup>st</sup> March. Topics treated included “Commitment: The price for a result – oriented leadership”, “The disciplines of a godly leader” both by Dr. Basil O. Ibeh; “Leadership in God’s community and the “Role and influence of the Anglican Church leader” by the Rt. Rev. Justus Nnaemeka Mogekewu, Bishop of Asaba; “The management and control of Church financial & physical resources by Sir Victor Dania; “The place of investments in the fulfillment of the Church’s mission and Ministry” by the ARM Money Market Fund; and “The Victorious Church” by we, the Bishop, Rt. Rev. Innocent U. Ordu, JP. The well-attended training also featured a “Ministry Fair”.

❖ ***Church of Nigeria Publications Writers Workshop***

This annual training programme for contributors of articles to the various publications of the Church of Nigeria was held from Monday, 23<sup>rd</sup> to Thursday, 26<sup>th</sup> March, 2015 at Faith Plaza, Bariga, Lagos. The Diocese sponsored The Rev. Canon Olufemi Igbamerun, The Rev. Canon Joseph Ofoegbu, The Rev. Cephas Okarefe and The Rev. Ozioma Iheanetu to this workshop. Our team writers have continued to put content to the various publications of the National Church e.g. the ‘Daily Fountain’, the ‘Sunday Bible Study Manual’ and the Children Ministry Teaching Manuals, etc. We commend all those who have faithfully offered themselves to write each time we have had cause to call upon them.

❖ ***‘Women in Leadership’ Course***

The wife of the Bishop, Mrs. Chinyere U. Ordu, JP (Mama Evo) was among other women from different parts of the world who took part in a special course on Women in Leadership in the Church which held from Sunday, 19<sup>th</sup> to Sunday, 26<sup>th</sup> July, 2015 at the Anglican Centre, Rome. Her trip to Rome and participation in the course was partly sponsored (on bursary) by the organizers.

Three other women from our Diocese who were billed to travel with the Bishop’s wife for the course were unfortunately denied Visas twice by the Italian Embassy in Nigeria.

### **Other Special Diocesan Programmes and Convocations**

❖ International of Day of Peace observed in our Churches on Sunday, 21<sup>st</sup> September, 2014.

❖ Special Sermons on the 2014 Diocesan Theme in all Churches on Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> August, 2014 and on Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> October, 2014.

❖ The 6<sup>th</sup> **Diocesan Discipleship/Revival Conference** with the theme “**Saved to Serve**” – Luke 1:74, 75; Evo Sing Aloud and Diocesan Harvest Thanksgiving Service took place at St. Michael’s Church, Rumuomasi Deanery from Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> – Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> November, 2014. The guest speakers

were The Rt. Rev. Manasses C. Okere—the Bishop of Isuikwuato/Umunneochi Diocese, The Rev. Sam Tukura and Rev. Mrs Darlene McGregor. Other speakers from the Diocese included We, the host Bishop and wife, The Venerable Charles Mordi (Chairman, Conference Planning Committee), The Ven. Dr. F.N. Akah, Canon Joseph Ofoegbu, Rev. Cephas Okarefe, Rev. Gospel Onuchukwu, Sir Godfrey Ohuabunwa, Dame Meg Oranwo and Mrs. Ijeoma Anagbogu. Attendance to the Conference was an improvement on those of past years. We thank the Chairman and members of the Planning Committee, the clergy/churches that donated foodstuffs and other items towards the successful hosting of the Conference; and lastly the host Church, St. Michael’s, Rumuomasi Deanery for their outstanding hospitality.

- ❖ **The Evo Sing Aloud Musical Night** was a major highlight in the 2014 Discipleship Conference, it featured scintillating performances from the Diocesan Band, the Joint Evo Schools’ Choir and other local and guest artists.
- ❖ The Discipleship Conference came to a close with a well-attended **Diocesan Harvest Thanksgiving Service** on Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> November, 2014.
- ❖ The 2014 Service of Christmas Carols and Nine Lessons took place at the Bishop’s Court on Wednesday, 17<sup>th</sup> December. The Diocesan Choir and Band ministered on the occasion.
- ❖ **The 2015 Diocesan Rededication Service** took place at the Cathedral, Rumuokwursi on Sunday, 18<sup>th</sup> January. Over 7000 worshippers from all over the Diocese were in attendance. We used the occasion to pray for all persons aspiring to occupy political offices across the country. The Rev. Gospel Onuchukwu preached the sermon of the day based on the 2015 Diocesan theme: “A commitment to Excellence (Daniel 6:3; Prov. 8:6-9).
- ❖ **Universal Week of Prayer** for Christian Unity was observed in all Churches from Monday 19<sup>th</sup> – Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> January, 2015.
- ❖ **General Diocesan Prayer & Fasting for the nation** and the general elections that ushered in the new governments at both the national and state levels took place from Ash Wednesday, 18<sup>th</sup> – Good Friday, 20<sup>th</sup> February and from Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> – Friday 27<sup>th</sup> March, 2015 with a Night Vigil.
- ❖ **Maiden Diocesan Family Conference.**  
The Diocesan Family Life and Home Fellowship Ministry organized the Maiden Diocesan Family Conference for couples with the theme: “**Marriage of Excellence**”. The Conference took place at St. Andrew’s Anglican Church, Rumuobiokani Deanery from Friday, 12<sup>th</sup> to Saturday, 13<sup>th</sup> June, 2015 and had an appreciable number of couples in the Diocese in attendance. It featured talks, group discussions, and a question/answer session. The speakers were the Rt. Rev. Anga Fred Nyanabo, Bishop of the Diocese of Northern Izon, Evangelist and Mrs. Matthew Owojaiye from the Food for the Total Man Ministry, Kaduna. We gave couples in attendance a copy of the book ‘Ideal Christian Marriage’ by the speaker from Kaduna.
- ❖ **Annual Cathedral Lecture**  
This annual event usually held during the week of the anniversary of the Diocese took place on Tuesday, 7<sup>th</sup> July, 2015 at the All Saints’ Cathedral,

Rumuokwurusi. This year's lecture which was delivered by Mr. John Kennedy Opara, the Executive Secretary of the Nigerian Christian Pilgrims Commission (NCPC), The Presidency, Abuja ably represented by Barr. Sonny Ebiyaibo, the Deputy Director and South-South Coordinator of the Commission focused on the theme: **“The Nigerian Society in search of a role model: The role of the Church”**. The event which was chaired by Sir Chief Hon. Ike Chinwo, a former member of the Federal House of Representatives and the current president of the Evo Diocesan Council of Knights. It attracted the cream of the Diocesan faithful. It was part of the events to mark the low keyed 6<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Diocese.

Our many thanks and appreciation go to The Ven. Chris Chukwumati, other priests and members of the Cathedral Standing Committee for successfully hosting the annual event once again for the Diocese.

❖ **6<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Prayer Meetings**

The entire Diocese divided into three groups of Men, Women and Youths was called to prayer to mark the 6<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Diocese.

The prayer meetings were held for 2 hours each day (5-7pm) from Thursday, 9<sup>th</sup> to Saturday, 11<sup>th</sup> July, 2015 at New Wine Anglican Church, East/West Road Parish, Okporo for the men; Bethel Church, Rumuibekwe Parish for the women and St. Michael's Church, Rumuomasi Deanery for the youths. We thank all who turned out for the prayers.

## **MINISTRIES OF THE CHURCH**

### **Diocesan Men's Christian Association**

- ❖ We held a special service for all men inducted into the Men's Christian Association from 2009 – 2014 at Ebenezer Ang. Church, Slaughter/Woji Road, on Sunday, 14<sup>th</sup> September, 2014. We regret to note that the turnout of men to this service despite publicity was poor.
- ❖ The Diocesan MCA Conference was held from Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> - Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> September, 2014 at St. Nicholas' Ang. Church, Woji District. It ended with a Harvest Thanksgiving on 28<sup>th</sup>. The theme was 'The Real Man', Acts 10:12. A major feature of the conference was the Bible Quiz Competition amongst the Cathedral, Archdeaconry and Deanery MCAs. The competition centered on the Books of Jude, Amos and on Anglicanism. The host Archdeaconry, Woji took the first position. They were followed in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> by the Cathedral and Evo South East Archdeaconry respectively.
- ❖ Members of the Diocesan Men's Christian Association participated in the Provincial Conference which was held at the Diocese of Okrika from Thursday, 19<sup>th</sup> – Sunday, 22<sup>nd</sup> March, 2015. Mr. Joseph Olaseni was elected the Assistant Secretary of the PMCA; Sir Reginald Wagboso, our Diocesan President, was honoured as one of the Founding Fathers of the Provincial MCA. In the Conference Bible Quiz competition among participating Dioceses our Diocesan MCA team took the 2<sup>nd</sup> position which was an improvement on their

performance of 2014. The men showcased our diocesan belief that we are known for the teaching and preaching of the Word of God.

We commend our men for their consistency and excellent performance each time they go out on external programmes.

- ❖ The Diocesan MCA has offered assistance to Mr. Henry Ordu in the payment of his fees at the Trinity Theological College, Umuahia. We commend them.
- ❖ Our Diocesan MCA hosted the General Meeting of the Provincial MCA at the All Saints' Cathedral, Rumuokwurusi on Friday, 14<sup>th</sup> October, 2014.
- ❖ Indebtedness to the DMCA. We have received the report of the embarrassing heavy indebtedness of the various units of the Men's Christian Association in the Diocese to the tune of N6, 037, 000m to the main body – Diocesan Men's Christian Association (DMCA). We condemn this development as it is capable of stifling the plans and activities of the central body. We hereby direct the Cathedral, Archdeaconry, Deanery, Parish and church station chapters of the MCA that are owing to immediately clear their debts. We have carefully studied the records and are convinced that the debtor units have the capacity to pay the amounts they have willfully accumulated as debts within the past six years.

### **Diocesan Women and Girls' Ministries**

- ❖ The Evo Diocesan Girls' Guild Conference, 2014 was held at All the Saints' Cathedral, Rumuokwurusi from Friday, 8<sup>th</sup> – Sunday, 10<sup>th</sup> August. The theme was **"I press toward the mark"** taken from Philippians 3:14.
- ❖ The Diocesan Sisters' Forum held their 2014 Conference at Church of the Epiphany, Azumini, Rumuokwurusi Parish from Friday 29<sup>th</sup> to Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> August. The theme was **"Soaring Higher"**, taken from Isaiah 40:31.
- ❖ The Bishop had a Special Fellowship with Women inducted/admitted into the Women's Guild and Mothers' Union since 2009 at St. Mark's Deanery, Elelenwo on Wednesday, 8<sup>th</sup> October, 2014.
- ❖ The 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Diocesan Women's Conference/Harvest Thanksgiving with the theme: **"The role of women in nation-building"** (Judges 5:6-7) took place at St. Mark's Church, Elelenwo Deanery from Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> – Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> October, 2014. Other conferences and activities of the women such as Diocesan Women's Prayer Conference, Anglican Women's World Day of Prayer, Mothering Sunday, Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary and Girls' Guild Conference took place within the year.
- ❖ On Welfare, the Diocesan women assisted in the payment of school fees of some children in addition to helping other needy persons.
- ❖ **Outreach to the Diocese of Jos:** The Diocesan women embarked on an outreach to the Diocese of Jos between 12<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> December, 2014. The Bishop's wife, Mrs. Chinyere U. Ordu, JP, led a delegation of ten women which included Mrs. Priscilla Usifoh, Mrs. Kate Ejekwu, Mrs. Ifeoma Sam-Gabriel, Lady Nkiru Egege, Lady Lale Aminobiren, Lady Victoria Weli, Mrs. Oris Gaius Assor, Mrs. Angelina Orianwo and Mrs. Victoria Erhabor. They went with the

generous donations of cash, clothing and food items from women of the Diocese. While in Jos the women missionary team assisted Mrs. Gloria Kwashi, wife of The Most Rev. Benjamin Kwashi, Archbishop/Bishop of Jos in taking care of about 35 orphaned and destitute children adopted by the couple. These children of different ages, backgrounds, some with serious health challenges were all survivors of terrorist attacks that took the lives of their parents and guardians. Our women's outreach to Jos is in keeping with God's word in James 1:27: *"Pure religion and undefiled before God and Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world"*.

- ❖ Other achievements by the women include considerable improvement recorded in the Garment Industry with the sewing of uniforms for our Diocesan schools and a few others within the state, the making of customized bed-sheets, window blinds, packet shirts, graduation gowns, etc.
- ❖ The women are almost completing work on the new Rose of Sharon, Atali Church building project which was started in July last year. We hope to dedicate this beautiful edifice as soon as finishing touches are put on the project before the end of this year. We congratulate the women heartily for these giant strides.

### **The Anglican Youth Fellowship**

- ❖ The Diocesan Anglican Youth Fellowship (AYF) Bible Study Conference took place from 24<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> July, 2014 and was hosted by the Evo South East Archdeaconry. It featured expositions, Bible studies, Talks, Holy Ghost Baptism and Quiz Competition.
- ❖ Our Youths also attended the National Conference at the Diocese of Umuahia from the 6<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> August, 2014 and actively participated in some activities of the conference such as talent hunt and quiz competition. We hereby endorse the decision of the Diocesan executives that those who do not attend the Diocesan Conference would no longer be allowed to attend the national.
- ❖ Other major events of the Youth Fellowship in the year under review include the following:
  - Diocesan AYF officers convention held at St. Michael's Rumuomasi on 17<sup>th</sup> August, 2014.
  - Diocesan Youth Summit at St. Philip's, Oroigwe on October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2014.
  - The Annual General Meeting from 5<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> December, 2014 at St. Simon's Church, Okporo Deanery.
  - The 2015 National and Diocesan Youth Week activities which featured a well-attended Praise Night at Bethel Church, Rumuibekwe Parish and an interactive session with the Bishop on Tuesday, 5<sup>th</sup> May, 2015 at the All Saints' Cathedral, Rumuokwurusi.
  - Youth exchange of Pulpit on Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> May, 2015.
- ❖ The first Diocesan Easter Holiday Camp for members of the Anglican Youth Fellowship (AYF) Youth Stars and teenagers of the Anglican Children's Ministry (ACM) was held at the Bishop Crowther Memorial Secondary School

(BCMSS), Rumuobiokani from Thursday, 16<sup>th</sup> – Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> April, 2015. The holiday camp featured talks on Youth related matters and sporting activities. We thank the organizers – the Chaplains of the AYF & ACM, Children’s teachers across the Diocese and all Churches that responded to our request to provide food items for the camp meeting. And particularly churches of Woji Archdeaconry that jointly hosted the programme.

- ❖ The youths of our Diocese attended the 2014 Divine Commonwealth Conference (DIVCCON) at Abuja in a large number. This was made possible by the various churches that complied with our directive to sponsor them to this national convocation of the Church of Nigeria. We thank all the churches concerned and pray that they would repeat the sponsorship in this year’s conference.

### **Concerns of The Youths**

During our interactive session with the youths on Tuesday, 5<sup>th</sup> May, 2015, the youths raised a number of complaints against the clergy and the leadership of the various churches in the Diocese. These are but not limited to the following:

- i. Failure on the part of church leadership to assign them meeting times and venues leading very often to conflict with other preferred church groups such as the Choir and Band;
- ii. Exorbitant charges on intending couples (most of whom are youths who are not well to do) by priests during weddings on such things as ‘blessing of rings’, ushers (steward guild), use of church halls, huge cash honorarium to officiating ministers and church building or development levies;
- iii. Being treated as second rate members of the church;
- iv. Being made to fuel church Buses before using same for general Youth fellowship outings; and lastly,
- v. Grudging financial support (if at all) when attending Provincial and National AYF conferences and meetings.

Ordinarily we should not take these complaints from the youths seriously. However, we have since discovered that these allegations against the priests and other church leaders are largely true in a good number of churches. This negative attitude and insensitivity towards our youth ought not to be the case and so we condemn it totally. We advise all priests and church council members to as from henceforth see the youths as full members of the church not only of tomorrow but much more of today whose presence and interests must be handled with a fatherly heart. **The clergy must with immediate effect stop all charges in respect of wedding services and other similar events that tend towards the extortion of church members. Church Councils should immediately review all charges/levies as they affect particularly the youths.** Please note, the emphasis here is on **review**. Genuine and committed youths of our church should be helped and relieved in their moments of need. The salaries and allowances the church pays every clergyman cover preparing intending couples for marriage and the wedding service proper. Intending couples and other members seeking special services of the church through the priest should be allowed to use their discretions within the limits of their material strength to determine what goodwill to extend to the minister(s). This is a time to encourage the youths to remain and mature in the church and not to do anything whatsoever that would make them feel not wanted.

Let no priest who is regarded as a shepherd do anything against these lambs out of selfish interest. God will definitely not be happy if by our policies and our actions as priests and church leaders we scare away the very youths we are called to gather for the Lord.

Let me however say this to the youths. It would amount to sheer hypocrisy and sin on your part if you claim to be financially handicapped as not to be able to meet basic church requirements prior to your wedding, only for you to go to weddings receptions and display affluence to the pleasure of your friends and other guests. If a minister has genuinely laboured to prepare you for your wedding day, there is nothing wrong if you extend some form of goodwill and appreciation to that minister and the choristers who have sacrificed their other schedules of the day to be there for you.

*For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn..... **If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?** (1 Cor. 9:9, 11. Emphasis mine).*

### **The Anglican Children's Ministry (ACM)**

- ❖ The Church of Nigeria ACM Train the Trainers course was held at Bishop Falope Memorial Secondary School, Diocese of Illesa from 11<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> August, 2014. The Rev. Canon Olufemi Igbamerun, our Diocesan ACM Chaplain, Mr. Justin Anunobi, Diocesan Coordinator and Mrs. Ifeoma Muanya who have attended and completed this five-year course have since been certified by the Primate's office.
- ❖ The Provincial Anglican Children's Ministry (ACM) Conference/Children's Bible Quiz was held from Thursday, 21<sup>st</sup> August – Sunday, 24<sup>th</sup> at the Diocese of Niger Delta West, Bayelsa State. Our Diocesan children's team in the quiz competition took the 2<sup>nd</sup> position. We congratulate them.
- ❖ The National ACM Teachers' Conference was held at St. Barnabas Cathedral Church, Diocese of Kwara from Thursday, 4<sup>th</sup> – Sunday, 7<sup>th</sup> September, 2014. Children from our Province of Niger Delta took the 1<sup>st</sup> position at the National Quiz Competition. Our Diocese (Evo) was represented at the Conference by the Chaplain, Canon O. E. Igbamerun and 12 teachers.
- ❖ The maiden Diocesan ACM singing competition was held on Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> May, 2015. Children choirs from the Cathedral, St. Michael's, Church of the Holy Spirit, Elioizu, Church of the Epiphany, Rumuokwurusi, New Wine Church, Okporo, Church of the Messiah, Iriebe and the Joint choir of our Evo Diocesan Schools took part in the finals held at All Saints Cathedral, Rumuokwurusi. The participating choirs finished in this order:
  - a. First position – Evo Diocesan Schools' Choir
  - b. Second Position – All Saints' Cathedral, Rumuokwurusi
  - c. Third Position - Anglican Church of the Messiah, New Haven Parish, Iriebe.
  - d. Fourth Position – Church of the Holy Spirit, Elioizu Parish.
  - e. Fifth Position – Church of the Epiphany, Pipeline, Rumuokwurusi
  - f. Sixth Position – St. Michael's Church, Rumuomasi Deanery .
  - g. Seventh Position – New Wine Church, Okporo.

We commend the leadership of the ACM in the Diocese and the Diocesan Music Ministry Chaplain, Canon Ikechukwu Anene for their efforts in the successful staging of the Singing Competition. The leadership of the two units of the Diocese should ensure that this remains an annual event.

### **Diocesan Council of Knights**

The Diocesan Council of Knights under the leadership of Sir Chief Hon. Ike B.S. Chinwo has continued to offer immense support to the overall ministry of the Diocese of Eyo. So far the Council has kept faith with its mission statement which is “to diligently embark on a new brand of evangelism through sponsorship and building of Christian schools, colleges, universities and hospitals, award of scholarships, youth empowerment, empowerment of widows, training of priests. Creating opportunities for the youths to undertake gainful Christian ventures and thereby improve the lives of our people”.

Within the Synod year the Council:

- ❖ Has decided to set apart the sum of Five Hundred Thousand Naira (N500,000.00) annually as support for the training of would be priests of Eyo Diocese. It plans to assist five (5) of such persons every year with the sum of N100,000.000 each through the Bishop’s office. This has already taken effect since the last academic session with our students at Trinity Theological College, Umuahia.
- ❖ Empowered fifteen (15) widows with a cash gift of Fifty Thousand Naira (N50,000.00) each to assist them in their micro finance businesses.
- ❖ Organized an evangelism/revival programme at the Emmanuel Anglican Church, Okporo, Iriebe, their mission field from Tuesday, 28<sup>th</sup> October to Sunday, 2<sup>nd</sup> November, 2014 and donated the sum of Five Hundred Thousand Naira (N500,000.00) towards the ongoing building of the new church auditorium.
- ❖ Awarded bursaries to the tune of N100,000 each to 20 undergraduate students in various institutions of higher learning within the country for the 2014/2015 academic year. The awards were given and received on Sunday, January 18<sup>th</sup> during the Diocesan Rededication Service at All Saints’ Cathedral, Rumuokwursi. 13 of them had benefited from the 2013/2014 academic year award while the additional 7 recipients were new.
- ❖ Attended with us the meeting of the Primate with all Archbishops/Bishops and the Presidents and Secretaries of the various Diocesan Councils of Knights in the Church of Nigeria which was held at the Ibru Centre, Agbarha-Otor on Monday, 20<sup>th</sup> April, 2015.
- ❖ The 2014 set of new knights of our Diocese donated twenty (20) sets of computers, ten (10) pieces of UPS, one (1) printer and one (1) photocopier towards the take-off of the Diocesan Youth ICT development Centre. We also thank Mr. Jonathan Azozie for his donation of a Laptop computer towards this same youth ICT Centre. May God bless him. With these donations and previous ones before now by other individuals, the Centre can now commence trainings and other activities for interested youths.



- ❖ Organized the 2015 edition of their annual luncheon for the purposes of generating funds to sponsor their several welfare schemes on Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> July, 2015 at Archbishop Akinola Retreat Centre, Rumuobiokani. The Bishop of Ikwerre Diocese, The Rt. Rev. Blessing Enyindah gave the word while Dame Aleruchi Cookey-Gam Chaired the occasion. We thank them for honouring the Council's invitation. The occasion was equally used to unveil the maiden edition of the **Evo Knights' Digest**, a publication of the Diocese of *Evo Council of Knights*. We commend them. We encourage every member of the Diocese to buy a copy of this publication.

### ***Ladies of the Knights***

The Maiden Conference with Thanksgiving of the Diocesan Ladies of the Knights was held from Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> – Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> September, 2014 at the All Saints' Cathedral, Rumuokwursi. The theme of the Conference which was taken from Isaiah 6:8 was “**Here am I, use me**”. We commend the Bishop's wife, Mrs. Chinyere Ordu for initiating it. Highpoint of the Conference was the election of new Diocesan officers to lead the Fellowship as follows:

1. President – Lady Uzor Onweluzor
2. Vice President – Lady Grace Okene
3. Secretary – Lady Evangeline Nlerum
4. Assistant Secretary – Lady Ogechi Onwuchekwa
5. Treasurer – Lady Patience Wokoma
6. Financial Secretary – Lady Gloria Uchebulam
7. P.R.O. – Lady Progress Elewa
8. Provost 1 – Lady Glory Nwachinyere
9. Provost 2 – Lady Edna Odum
10. Evangelism Coordinator – Lady Lale Aminobiren
11. And One Representative each from the 10 Administrative Blocks

We wish to commend the Ladies of the Knights for the huge progress already recorded in their building of a Sick Bay at Bishop Crowther Memorial Secondary School, Rumuobiokani. We are happy to announce that the project has since been roofed and plastering work completed.

We thank the Council of Knights and the Ladies for all their supports and encouragements to our work in the Diocese. May the Lord bless them most abundantly.

### **Diocesan Lay Readers' Association**

- ❖ Diocesan Lay Readers' Conference was held from Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> – Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> October, 2014 At Church of the Resurrection, Stadium Road, Rumuomasi. It featured talks on the theme: “But seek ye first the Kingdom of God” (Matt. 6:33), politics, health and gifts of the Holy Spirit.
- ❖ We retreated with the Lay Readers of the Diocese from Friday, 23<sup>rd</sup> to Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> January, 2015 in preparation for ministry responsibilities in the new year. The retreat ended with a service of the Holy Eucharist and the Renewal of the vows of Licensing administered by us on all lay readers present.
- ❖ Lay Readers Association has commenced work on a Duplex Vicarage at the Holy City Anglican Church, their mission field. The foundation stone was laid by us on Saturday, 24<sup>th</sup> January, 2015. Being satisfied with the level of

commitment and effort of the Lay Readers in the Diocese, we have since January this year written off the outstanding loan of Two Million, Two Hundred and Fifty Thousand Naira (N2, 250,000.00) being owed the Diocese by the Association in respect of the purchase of land for the Holy City Church. We pray that they would now channel this money towards the ongoing vicarage project.

- ❖ Lay Readers' Exchange of Pulpit: This took place on Sunday, 17<sup>th</sup> August, 2014. The 2015 edition will now take place on Sunday, 30<sup>th</sup> August, 2015. We encourage every congregation to raise offerings to support their work at Holy City Church, Pipeline, Rumuokwurusu.

### **Adult Sunday School Ministry**

The Diocesan Adult Sunday School, Discipleship, Publication and Literature Ministry has continued to be an important arm of our ministry, ensuring that the Word of God is given its due place in the Diocese. The Ministry at the Diocesan level carried out the following activities in the course of the year:

- ❖ The Diocesan Bible Week in all churches of the Diocese from 20<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> October, 2014. The theme was "Back to the First Love" (Rev. 2:20-25). Activities of the week included Bible Quiz competition among the various Administrative Blocks on Saturday, 25<sup>th</sup> October with Oroigwe/Eliogbolo Archdeaconry, All Saints' Cathedral, Rumuokwurusu and Woji Archdeaconry winning the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> positions respectively.
- ❖ Diocesan All Teachers One-Day Conference at Mount Zion Church, Eliogbolo on Saturday, 18<sup>th</sup> October, 2014 with the theme "Feed My Flock" (John 21:15-17; Prov. 27:23);
- ❖ One-Day Retreat/Training for Adult Sunday School Teachers held at Church of the Epiphany, Rumuokwurusu on 31<sup>st</sup> January, 2015 with the theme "Commitment to Excellence in the Adult Sunday School Ministry of the Church";
- ❖ Workshop/Training for members of the Diocesan Board of Writers at Mount Zion, Eliogbolo between the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> of May, 2015.

We would like to use this forum to remind all clergy, church teachers and leaders of our churches that the teaching and preaching of the Word of God constitutes a central objective of our ministry as a Diocese and must be continually encouraged and promoted in all we do. Those who use their offices to stifle this aspect of our ministry are hereby warned to desist from this practice before they make themselves enemies of God and of the gospel of Christ. No Sunday Service should be considered complete without a full Sunday school session.

### **Diocesan Prayer Ministry**

The Diocesan Prayer Ministry has continued to superintend the various prayer programmes of the Diocese. The following programmes were anchored by the Ministry within the period under review:

- ❖ One Day special retreat of the Bishop, Clergy, Church Teacher and their wives on Tuesday, 18<sup>th</sup> November, 2014 in preparation for the Diocesan Discipleship Conference.

- ❖ Diocesan night vigils at St. Michael's, Rumuomasi Deanery on Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> November and at the All Saints' Cathedral on Friday 19<sup>th</sup> December, 2014.
- ❖ The Bishop, Clergy, Church Teachers with their wives began the year 2015 with a three-day prayer and fasting programme held at The Redeemer's Cross Anglican Church, TAP, Elelenwo from Wednesday, 14<sup>th</sup> to Friday, 16<sup>th</sup> January, 2015.
- ❖ A One Day retreat for all prayer squad members was held on Saturday, 7<sup>th</sup> March, 2015 at this Synod venue.
- ❖ A One Day Solemn Assembly for Bishop, Clergy, Church Teachers and wives was also held here on the 1<sup>st</sup> of July, 2015 in readiness for this Synod.

A non-stop Diocesan Prayer Watch introduced by us at the Post Vestry Meeting Leadership Training started on the 1<sup>st</sup> of April this year and is still very much in progress. We had sent out some persons to the various churches to mobilize willing intercessors (clergy and laity) to join voluntarily in this prayer watch. We thank as many as have been coming to the Bishop's Court Chapel to pray on a daily basis for the Diocese, our state, nation and for the needs of all men. May God Himself continually bear their burdens in Jesus' name, Amen. We invite you to be a part of this prayer revival in the Diocese particularly as leaders of the church. We are confident of God's positive answer to the prayers and supplications being made and shall continue to be made in the name of His Son by everyone of us.

### **Clergy & Church Workers' Children**

This Ministry caters for the spiritual wellbeing of the children of all clergy and church workers in the Diocese. In the course of the year a One Day Retreat was held during the long vacation in August 2014. It featured Talks, Seminars on Academics, Health, Sex Education and the Anglican Heritage. Similarly, a retreat for all Cathedral, Archdeaconry and Deanery Coordinators was held in January this year at Faith Community Church, Eliowhani with the theme pursuing the spirit of excellence in service. The second edition of the Clergy and Church Workers Family Retreat will hold from Friday 28<sup>th</sup> to Monday, 31<sup>st</sup> August, 2015 at the Ibru Ecumenical Centre, Agbarha-Otor. All Clergy, their wives and church workers are to attend this retreat unflinchingly.

### **Ministry to Royal Fathers, Chiefs, Elders and Retired Clergy**

We commend the leadership of this Chaplaincy for its untiring effort towards providing spiritual guidance and direction to members of the traditional institution and other senior citizens within our Diocese. Some of the activities carried out by the Ministry in the last one year include:

- ❖ A **workshop** for the Ezes held on the 28<sup>th</sup> of August, 2014 at St. Philip's Church, Oroigwe District with the theme "Bringing Peace to our Land".
- ❖ A **prayer/end of year meeting** on December 27<sup>th</sup>, 2014 at St. Mark's Church, Elelenwo Deanery with the theme "Behold He Cometh". About 20 Traditional Rulers were in attendance including some community heads in Evo Kingdom.

- ❖ A beginning of the year **retreat** on Thursday, 29<sup>th</sup> January, 2015 for the Retired Clergy and their wives at the Chapel of Refuge, Bishop's Court with the theme "In Times Like This".

### **Industrial/Workplace and Business Chaplaincy**

The Diocese through this Chaplaincy has continued to maintain regular fellowship in the various industrial/business establishments within our Diocesan jurisdiction. This ministry in collaboration with the various industrial/business concerns seeks to instil godly principles among their workforce in the daily discharge of their duties.

Some of the new organizations and outfits where the door of ministry has been opened to us in the last one year include Unity Bank, Rumuomasi, FCMB, Rumuomasi, Read Logistics, Atali, Mechanic Workshop, Atali, Stitches & Styles, Elingbu and Posh Kiddies, Rumuogba.

Members of the ministry have also maintained monthly Bus evangelism outreaches from 9am to 12noon along Aba road on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesdays of every month.

On Tuesday, 17<sup>th</sup> February this year we the Bishop in company of the Chaplain, Rev. Ugochukwu Nwahaghi visited and ministered to the management and staff of Pentagon Security Limited, Port Harcourt. May God continue to enlarge the ministry coasts of this chaplaincy.

### **Diocesan Family Life/Home Fellowship Ministry**

This Ministry monitors and coordinates the activities of the various Marriage Committees and Home Fellowship Units of churches in our Diocese.

On Saturday, November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2014, it organized a retreat for the Home Fellowship, Marriage/Family Life unit coordinators and members from all the churches in the Diocese at St. Mark's Church, Elemenwo Deanery. It was a forum for the establishment of proper standards and procedures necessary for the smooth running of this ministry in all churches. About 180 persons participated in the retreat.

We thank members of the Unit headed by the Diocesan coordinator Mrs. Ijeoma Anagbogu for the able manner in which they packaged the recently held Diocesan Family Conference for Couples without much pastoral supervision.

### **Evo Diocesan Ministry to Private and Public Secondary Schools (PPSSM)**

With the steady decline in moral values in most spheres of our national life; the lack of drive for spiritual and academic excellence, particularly among our young ones, we in the Diocese of Evo established *The Public/Private Secondary Schools Ministry (PPSSM)* as a special interventionist arm of our ministry with a mandate to come up with programmes and packages to help rescue our young people in secondary schools owned by government and other private bodies/individuals. The scope of this

ministry does not cover our Evo Diocesan Schools which by the grace of God are being effectively run by the Principals and Chaplains attached to each of them.

As a part of the body of Christ which has also received the mandate of our Lord Jesus Christ to “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.....”; the PPSSM pay regular visits to schools within our Diocesan jurisdiction to minister the word of God to staff and students.

As part of our efforts at promoting academic excellence, the PPSSM is mandated to organize on behalf of the Diocese annual quiz competitions/debates among the various schools. This year’s edition was concluded on Saturday, 4<sup>th</sup> July at the Archbishop Akinola Retreat Centre, Rumuobiokani.

The table below shows the performance of the best three schools out of several others that took part in this year’s **Quiz Competition**.

S/N	SCHOOL	CONTESTANTS	PRIZES			
			Trophy for the School	An Educational Tablet each for the 2 students	N30, 000 for the 2 students	A Certificate of excellence each for the school and the 2 students
1	ABEC, WOJI	CHIOMA NWOSU & FIDELIA JOB	Trophy for the School	An Educational Tablet each for the 2 students	N30, 000 for the 2 students	A Certificate of excellence each for the school and the 2 students
2	NASAM EDUCATIONAL CENTRE, RUMUODARA	OKAGWU JUDITH & JOSHUA OLASUPO	A Certificate of excellence for the school	An Educational Tablet each for the 2 students	N20, 000 for the 2 students	-
3	DESALEM INT. SCHOOL, ELELENWO	GOODSWILL OTTO & DEBORAH LEMCHUKWU		An Educational Tablet each for the 2 students	N10, 000 for the 2 students	-

A very disturbing trend in the quiz FINAL was that the performances of students were generally very low in Bible knowledge. This to us shows clearly the need for us as a Diocese to take very seriously the task of encouraging students in secondary schools in every way possible in the art of daily and systematic reading of scriptures which is part of the focus of the Public and Private Secondary Schools’ Ministry (PPSSM).

The ministry is also publishing on behalf of the Diocese *‘Excellent Minds’*, an outreach magazine for secondary school students. The soon to be unveiled maiden edition is titled *‘YOU CAN!’* We commend the Chaplain, The Rev. Cephas Okerefe and his team of volunteers for their renewed zeal.

We are planning under this ministry to organize a holiday camp for secondary school students (**depending on the availability of funds**) from Wednesday, 19<sup>th</sup> to Sunday, 23<sup>rd</sup> August, 2015 at Bishop Crowther Memorial Secondary School, Rumuobiokani. We encourage parents to allow their children and wards to attend for their academic and spiritual benefits. We also appeal to everyone to generously give in support of this Diocesan schools’ ministry. Those led to do so are to please contact us or the Chaplain.

### **Diocesan Sports Ministry**

The Sports Ministry of the Diocese has continued to organize sporting events aimed at promoting the physical health and fellowship of members of the different groups in the Diocese.

In October 2014, the Ministry organized a Youth Football Competition for members of the Anglican Youth Fellowship in the 10 Administrative Units of the Diocese. Even when this competition was put together to promote the youth ministry, it is however regrettable that the youth body according to the Sports Ministry officials despised the programme. The proof of this was the low participation of the various Blocks in the competition. Notwithstanding, at the end of the competition, St. Andrew's Anglican Church, Rumuobiokani Deanery emerged champions. They were followed in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> positions by St. Jude's, Oginigba Deanery and the Diocesan Churches (Chapel of Grace & Knowledge) respectively. Only 6 Blocks took part.

As part of this year's Father's Week activities, the Ministry also organized a football competition amongst the various chapters of the Diocesan Men's Christian Association. At the end of it all, All Saints' Cathedral MCA emerged champions and received the gold cup, while St. Andrew's Rumuobiokani Deanery emerged 1<sup>st</sup> runners up and the Diocesan Churches (Chapel of Grace & Knowledge) the 2<sup>nd</sup> runners up.

Only eight Administrative Blocks took part in the competition.

We encourage everyone in the Diocese to show interest in the monthly Keep Fit exercise being organized by the Ministry in the interest of our individual health.

In compliance with our earlier directive, the Ministry has formed an Evo Football Club which has already commenced trainings. We wish them well.

The Ministry should further explore the possibility of raising a Diocesan Kids Football team from our Primary Schools in conjunction with the school authorities to compete in the annual Channels Television National Kids Football competition which holds in the month of May.

### **Diocesan Media and Communications Unit**

This Ministry has constituted the Evo Media Team comprising of members from all our churches. This is after several adverts to brethren who are trained in journalism to identify with the Diocesan Media Team. Currently, the members of this team have been undergoing training by the leaders of the Unit. At the end of this synod, sub units of this team will be inaugurated in all our churches. This will enable the activities of all churches and church units to be adequately covered and publicized at the Diocesan level and in the *Go-Tell* magazine. We encourage all pastors to support the work of the members of the Diocesan Media in their churches, especially, during diocesan programmes in which We the Bishop will be present.

We also wish to announce the publication of the Diocesan *Go-Tell Magazine* for this Synod after a long period of inactivity. We congratulate the leaders of the Diocesan Media Team for waking up from their long slumber. We encourage them to sustain the publication of the magazine as we will not entertain any more excuses from them. Every quarter, or at least, twice a year, the *Go-Tell Magazine* must hit the newsstands. We also call on pastors, units and members of the diocese who have a flair for writing to send in articles for publication in subsequent editions of the magazine.

The Ministry was also represented at the Church of Nigeria 2014 Diocesan Communicators' Conference in Abuja. Our diocese was appointed into a committee set up by the Primate to fashion out training linkage programmes with universities in Nigeria for diocesan communicators. We appeal to the unit to carry out this task with utmost commitment and to apply the knowledge gained from the conference into their activities in our diocese.

Finally, we congratulate this Ministry for putting content from our diocese on the Anglican Cable News Network (ACNN). All our synod proceedings for last year were fully aired on the cable network. We encourage them to aim even higher.

### **Social Welfare Directorate**

The Diocese through the donation of members from various churches largely funded the medical treatment of one of our own, Mr. Godspower Ozomeyo, a Sunday school teacher from New Wine Church, Okporo in September/October last year. He was diagnosed with cancer of the bladder and needed further treatment in India. A total sum of One Million Five Hundred Thousand Naira (N1,500, 000.00) came from the Diocese and her churches and another One Million Five Hundred Thousand Naira (N1,500, 000.00) was donated by Archdeacon Crowther Memorial Girls' School, Elelenwo towards the same purpose. In all the sum of Three Million Naira was released in aid to him for his treatment. Brother Ozomeyo has since returned home and is doing well in his health and contributing to the work of God in his local church.

The Diocese has also assisted a number of needy persons including widows, indigent students and through the Social Welfare Directorate visited several hospitals and prisons in the State.

### **Conclusion**

The strength of the churches and the Diocese is derived from the activities of the many groups, ministries and units established to promote our overall vision and ministry. Usually, at this time every year, each unit leader would expect the Bishop to highlight their respective accomplishments for the period under review in his Charge. And it has always been our joy so to do.

However, we hope that group Chaplains and leaders would not be expecting us to report to the world of progress that was actually not made or hastily and poorly packaged or worst still intended but never carried out just in order to have something written or said.

At the beginning of each year, we draw a calendar of harmonized programmes and activities which are usually contributions from the Chaplains and lay

leaders of these activity groups and when approved, everyone is thereafter expected to prayerfully take up his/her assignment at the time/season set aside for such. We do not have the time to waste or to move already scheduled programmes to some other times especially when there are no good reasons to do so.

As we conclude this section of our address on Diocesan ministries, we would like to be categorical in stating that some of the activity groups have done well in the last one year and we thank God for them. We urge them to build on the progress so far made. On the other hand, some other groups/ministries were not able to put up a convincing performance as much as they were expected to do. They need to sit up. Those who do not particularly feel like committing themselves to their assigned tasks are hereby advised to honourably make their decisions clearly known to us instead of holding on to the positions and not giving their bests. The Diocese is in a genuine hurry to grow, and it would not be proper for anyone or group to continue to slow down the pace at which we have long settled to move. In the work of this Diocese, timeliness, zeal, quality, team spirit, excellence, integrity and proper attitude are of essence. We must imbibe these virtues without which we should not expect to be hailed or celebrated.

We advise everyone called to the ministry or service of the church to humbly re-examine his/her attitude to the work of God and the type of spirit that influences him/her in the course of service. God is not the author of confusion but of peace. Consequently, everything (i.e. our services) must be rendered decently and in order with respect to whomsoever it is due and above all in reverence and worship to God our Father.

### **Advisory Committee to the Bishop on Economic Empowerment**

This Committee embarked on an elaborate screening of members of our Diocese who applied for assistance from us to be economically empowered in their chosen areas of skills acquisition.

The following are the details:

	<b>SKILL APPLIED FOR &amp; APPROVED</b>	<b>BENEFICIARIES</b>
1	<b>Catering</b>	Victoria Agu Onwaeze Omasirichi Nwaubani Vivian Agoha Hope Ihunwo Lilian Lois Ijeoma Funke Anunobi Eke Trust Nwadiuto Sophia Onyinyechi Rachel Samuel Etiuk
		Ihekaire Ijeoma Favour Samuel Bari Lois Aaron



2	<b>Fashion Designing</b>	Wamadi Joy Ekezie Rejoice Sarima Amadi Gladys Hanacho Juliet Chisa Allen Goodness Ujile
3	<b>Video Editing</b>	Stanley Orji
4	<b>Mechanic</b>	Promise Amadi
5	<b>Hair Dressing</b>	Allwell Chibuzor Wonuoha
6	<b>Bead and Hart Making</b>	Chizi Ngozi Wopara
7	<b>Electrical</b>	Tenalo Bestman
8	<b>ICT/Computer/Photocopier Repairs</b>	Ikechukwu Ow'honda Emmanuel Gold Obilor Joel Felix Onyekachi
9	<b>Purchase Of Equipment For Catering</b> (Oven & Gas Cylinder)	Lilian Akarahu Juliet Ezeoduneje Theresa Onianwa
10	<b>Cash Support for Business Take-Off</b>	Peace Ogugua

Apart from those in categories 9/10 above, the rest of the beneficiaries of this Diocesan Economic Empowerment Scheme are undergoing special trainings in their various areas of interest. So far we have spent the sum of One Million, Four Hundred and Ten Thousand Naira (**N1, 410, 000**) on the scheme. We pray that the beneficiaries would make adequate use of this opportunity the Diocese has given them to be economically established. We thank Dame Priscilla Nosiri and her team drawn from the ten Administrative Blocks of the Diocese for the great job they did in screening and deciding on those to be so empowered.

### **Support To some Missionary Dioceses.**

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

1. Diocese of **Ogoni** (Niger Delta Province) – N600,000.00 only towards the payment of the salaries of five (5) missionaries for 6 months.
2. Diocese of **Northern Izon** (Niger Delta Province) – N500,000.00 only toward the building of the new girls' secondary school by the Diocese;
3. Diocese of **Irele Ese-Odo** (Ondo Province) – N500,000.00 only towards the fencing of the soon-to-be completed Diocesan Bishop's Court;
4. Diocese of **Ogorimagongo** (Lokoja Province) – N500,000.00 only towards the completion of the Bishop's Court;
5. Diocese of **Ikwuano** (Aba Province) – N500,000.00 only towards the new Bishop's Court building project.

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. It was not easy for us to embark upon these outreaches considering our numerous challenges and needs begging for attention. We are however, motivated by the examples of the Early Churches which

gave sacrificially to one another. For instance, when the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem were in famine, the poor, suffering Gentile church helped them:

*“Out of the most sever trial,  
their overflowing joy and their  
extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity.  
For I testify that they gave as much as they were able,  
and even beyond their ability” (2Corinthians 8:2,3).*

Secondly, we are guided by the Biblical Law of generosity which teaches us that *“whoever sows generously will also reap generously”* (2 Corinthians 9:6). And so, we thank God that despite our increasing cry for help from God and man, we are able to support others like us who are in need.

### **Church Planting**

As at the time of writing this address, only the Church of the Holy Spirit, Elelenwo District, Christ Church, Federal Housing Estate Parish, Woji and Trinity Missionary Archdeaconry have informed us through their Archdeacons and Vicar of the planting of new church stations by them at their different locations. These and the **Rose of Sharon Anglican Church, Atali** built by the Women of Evo Diocese (which will very soon take off) would be the only new church plants in the Diocese since the end of last year’s synod. We commend the Vicars and members of the Churches named above for these achievements. We expect the mother churches to offer all necessary support and provisions for the new church plants until they come of age.

The women of the Diocese have faithfully and sacrificially accomplished their assignment of planting a new church for the Diocese. They bought the land and also put up a beautiful church building. We are proud of and sincerely commend them. Having accomplished this task, we hereby assign the new Church station to the Trinity Missionary Archdeaconry to take full charge and nurture it unto full maturity. This would include the payment of the Salaries/allowances of the Church Teacher or Priest. The 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 and the Diocese.

The Diocese very recently purchased **three plots of land** for the sum of **N9m** along the Shell Pipeline section of Atali strictly for the take-off of a new church plant. St. Andrew’s Church, Rumuobiokani Deanery is hereby directed to immediately take over the said three plots of land and plant/sponsor a new church there unto maturity in the name of the Diocese.

We would like to use this medium to remind the various churches in the Diocese to which we assigned the task of opening new churches by the 7<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Diocese which comes up next year, 2016 and by the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2019 that we are not wavering on our directive. It will therefore be in the interest of the Clergy and the Councils of the churches concerned to do everything possible to achieve these targets. We must keep busy and occupy for the Lord until His return.

For the avoidance of doubt, we hereby publish afresh our directive and mandate to the churches and groups regarding our earlier instructions on the new churches to be planted:

1. Towards the **7<sup>th</sup> anniversary** which comes up **next year, 2016**, the following churches and group were charged to **plant at least one new church** in any part of the Diocese and fully develop them. They are:
  - i. All Saints' Cathedral, Rumuokwurusi
  - ii. St. Andrew's Church, Rumuobiokani Deanery
  - iii. St. Mark's Church, Elemenwo Deanery
  - iv. Woji Archdeaconry
  - v. St. Nicholas' Church, Woji District
  - vi. Christ Church, Federal Housing Estate, Woji Parish
  - vii. St. Simon's Church, Okporo Deanery
  - viii. New Wine Church, Okporo
  - ix. St. Philip's Church, Oroigwe District
  - x. Trinity Missionary Archdeaconry
  - xi. Church of The Holy Spirit, Elioizu Parish
  - xii. Bethel Church, Rumuibekwe Parish.
  - xiii. Diocesan Mission and Evangelism Board
  - xiv. Diocesan Women's Ministries
  - xv. Anglican Youth Fellowship

The names of these new church plants have already been determined by us and they shall be formally christened during the celebration of the **7<sup>th</sup> Anniversary** of the Diocese in 2016.

Similarly, and towards the **10<sup>th</sup> anniversary** celebration of the Diocese in **2019** the following churches were mandated to plant and nurture unto maturity **at least one new church** in their areas of location. They are:

- i. St. Michael's Church, Rumuomasi Deanery
- ii. St. Andrew's, Rumuobiokani Deanery
- iii. St. Mark's, Elemenwo Deanery
- iv. St. Jude's Church, Oginigba Deanery
- v. St. Matthias' Church, Atali District
- vi. St. James', Iriebe Parish
- vii. Holy Ghost Church, Iriebe Parish
- viii. Holy Trinity, Elingbu Parish,
- ix. Church of Pentecost, Rumuogba Parish
- x. Chapel of Grace & Knowledge, ACMGS, Elemenwo (Firstfruits Parish)
- xi. Church of Messiah, New Haven Parish, Iriebe
- xii. Church of The Epiphany, Azumini, Rumuokwurusi Parish
- xiii. Church of the Advent, Rumuewhara and any other able and willing church and groups
- xiv. Diocesan Missions and Evangelism Board

The christening of this set of church plants will commence by 2018 and completed by 2019.

All clergy, Church Councils, Diocesan Mission, Evangelism and Church Planting Board and the Cathedral/Archdeaconry/Parish Evangelism Committees should consider this as a primary task and MUST do everything possible to accomplish it.

**We should please avoid excuses!**

### **Outreach**

The Diocesan Mission and Evangelism Board carried out a weekend outreach at Eliogbolo New Layout where we have our Living Waters Anglican Church. We commend them and urge them to do more so as to make their impact better felt across the Diocese.

### **EVO DIOCESAN SCHOOLS**

To the glory of God, the three Secondary Schools: Bishop Crowther Memorial Secondary School, Rumuobiokani, Archdeacon Crowther Memorial Girls' School, Elemenwo and Woji Town Word of Faith Schools, Woji (with their Nursery and Primary sections) owned and run by the Diocese of Evo are making steady progress in all spheres. We use this medium to extend our sincere gratitude and commendation to the management team of the schools led by the Director of schools, The Ven. Dr. Fyनेface N. Akah, JP, the Principals, the entire staff of the schools and Chaplains for the highly commendable work they are doing. We are equally encouraged by the support coming from the wider section of the Diocesan Community, and pray that this continues to be the case.

Over the past years we have repeatedly decried the neglect of the Missions Schools by the Rivers State Government which handed them over to the respective mission agencies. For us here in Evo we have severally appealed to the state government to assist us update the facilities in these schools, particularly in the ACMGS, Elemenwo which was returned to us in 2008. But these appeals have always fallen on deaf ears. Our thinking on this indifference is that the Rivers State Government ought to borrow a leaf from some other state governments in the country where schools returned to the mission by them are being very generously supported in the understanding that these schools are contributing just as the public ones in the raising of future Nigerians.

We hereby strongly appeal to the new government of Chief Barr. Ezebunwo Nyesom Wike of Rivers State, members of the State Assembly to reconsider the hard posture of past administrations in the State in offering assistance to the Mission Schools returned by the government.

We make bold to say that we are contributing very meaningfully to the overall development of the State and Nation at large and so deserve some measure of encouragement and support from the government in our upgrading of all out-dated facilities in these schools especially Archdeacon Crowther Memorial Girls' Secondary School, Elemenwo where we are here gathered for this synod.

As at today, Evo Diocesan Schools have in their employment a total staff strength of 211 whom we are faithfully paying as and at when due. At a time when we complain of high rate of unemployment in the state and nation, this figure should be seen as a huge contribution by the Diocese of Evo to the growth of our economy. We therefore

call on the government to extend its milk of human kindness to these schools and help us in our efforts at rebuilding them.

Within the last one year, the following achievements have been recorded in our schools.

- ❖ **A commencement of Session Retreat** for all teaching & management staff of Evo Diocesan schools on Monday 15<sup>th</sup> – Tuesday, 16<sup>th</sup> September, 2014 at Word of Faith, Woji.
- ❖ The Bishop led an **eight-man delegation** from our Diocesan schools comprising of the Director of Schools, Ven. Dr. Akah, the three Principals/Vice Principals of – BCMSS, ACMGS and Word of Faith to a Conference in Johannesburg from 7<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> March organized by the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI) with Africa Headquarters in South Africa for Proprietors, Managers of Christian Schools. Lessons from this conference were further passed on to the teachers of the three schools during a commencement of third term training held for them on Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> and Friday 24<sup>th</sup> of April, 2015.
- ❖ With our approval, the **teaching of the Anglican Catechism** has been introduced into the curriculum of our Diocesan schools since October, 2014. We commend the Director of School, The Ven. Dr. F.N. Akah, JP for his able handling of this. The Director should ensure that **only** he and some other suitably qualified **Anglican Priests of our Diocese** handle these teachings.
- ❖ Some of the students of our three Diocesan Schools participated in **3<sup>rd</sup> edition of the Einstein's Science Challenge** organized by the Rotary Club of Nigeria, Port Harcourt District 9140, Manipulo and the Rivers State Sustainable Development Agency (RSSDA). Four students of BCMSS received certificates for being among the best One Hundred (100) Science Students in Rivers State, and Miss Favour Kelvin-Amaechi of ACMGS also emerged as one of the finalists. The focus of this challenge is to raise scientists who will be in the class of or even greater than the late Physicist, Albert Einstein.
- ❖ **2015 Joint Children's Day Celebration.** The 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of the Evo Diocesan Schools Children's Day event took place at the BCMSS, Rumuobiokani School field on May 27<sup>th</sup> to mark this year's Children's Day in the country. The three schools participated in various colourful events such Match-past, Drama, Cultural Dances, Choreography, Sac Race, Filling the Baskets, etc.  
At the end of the various competitions, Archdeacon Crowther Memorial Girls' School, Elemenwo took the 1<sup>st</sup> position, Bishop Crowther Memorial Secondary School, the 2<sup>nd</sup> and Word of Faith, 3<sup>rd</sup>.
- ❖ The maiden **Diocesan Anglican Children's Ministry Singing Competition** had its finals on Saturday, 30<sup>th</sup> May, 2015 and the Joint Diocesan Schools Choir emerged the best children's choir in the Diocese.
- ❖ We hosted a special joint Father's Day service and interactive session for fathers of all the students/pupils in all our Diocesan Secondary and Primary Schools on Sunday, 21<sup>st</sup> June, 2015 at the Archdeacon Crowther Memorial Girls' School (ACMGS), Elemenwo. The Joint Diocesan Schools Choir

ministered in songs at the occasion. The service afforded us the opportunity to appreciate the parents, teachers and the management team of our schools and also pray for them. We thank the parents who found time to attend. The parents (fathers) present strongly urged the Diocese to consider the establishment of a University.

❖ **Bishop Crowther Memorial Secondary School (BCMSS), Rumuobiokani**

Students of **BCMSS** emerged the 2<sup>nd</sup> overall best in the **2014/2015 Obio/Akpor Chairman's Quiz/Debate Competition** for secondary schools in the LGA. The school was presented with a cash reward of One Hundred and Fifty Thousand Naira (N150,000.00) among other gift items.

Students of this school have continued to participate and excel in external examinations and competitions leading to their admission into Universities within and outside Nigeria. An outgone student of the same school, Master Ezekiel Oludi who is now studying medicine in a German University currently serves as a coordinator of foreign students in that country and has promised to assist students from Evo schools secure admission/visa to any German University of their choice. We encourage the management and staff of this school to continue in this commendable path and also encourage other schools to emulate them. We are a mission-based school and therefore cannot settle for anything less than excellence.

❖ ***Sixteen (16) classrooms/Assembly Hall project:***

On Friday, 12<sup>th</sup> September, 2014 we laid the foundation for the construction of a sixteen (16) classrooms complex with an Assembly Hall of over 400 seating capacity, two staff rooms, one Tuc-shop, two stores, one office for the Vice Principal (Academics) and 12 toilets at BCMSS, Rumuobiokani. To the glory of God, we are glad to inform the Synod that this project has been very successfully completed by the Diocesan Projects Committee led by Sir P.W.O. Owhor. We dedicated it on Saturday, 25<sup>th</sup> July, 2015. We thank Sir Owhor and his team for a job well done.

As at the time of dedication, the Diocese had spent a total sum of Seventy Three Million, Three Hundred and Twenty Five Thousand, Six Hundred and Eighty Nine Naira, Fifty Three Kobo (**N73, 325, 689.53**).

❖ **Archdeacon Crowther Memorial Girls' School (A. C. M. G. S), Elelenwo**

We commend the **Open-Day exercise by the A. C. M. G. S, Elelenwo** on Wednesday, 10<sup>th</sup> June, 2015 wherein the parents/guardians and form teachers gathered to discuss the academic performance of their children/wards with the students present. This exercise served as a great eye-opener to the parents/guardians as well as put the students on their toes. We are hopeful that the effect of this will improve the students' academic performance.

❖ **Accreditation**

We are also glad to announce to this Synod that ACMGS, Elelenwo was on Friday, November 21<sup>st</sup>, 2014 successfully **re-accredited** by the National Examination Council (NECO) for Senior Secondary and also given fresh

accreditation for the Junior Secondary section. The School recorded a 98% pass in the 2013/2014 academic session Junior Secondary School Examination. In the Senior WAEC however, we must say that the performance of the students stands kilometers behind the other two Diocesan schools. Whatever the reason for this, we implore the management and staff of the school to correct this in future examinations.

❖ ***Nursery/Primary School Project:***

The ACMGS is currently building a 2-storey complex consisting of an assembly hall, 21 classrooms, library, computer laboratory, offices, and toilets. We laid the foundation of this project on Wednesday, 26<sup>th</sup> November, 2014 and work has reached an advanced stage. It is expected to be ready before the start of the new academic session.

❖ ***Special Donations:***

- ✓ We very specially commend the Rotary Club of Port Harcourt for the following projects executed and donated to ACMGS, Elelenwo:
  - A Block of six (6) toilets which foundation laying was done on 28<sup>th</sup> August, 2014 and commissioned for use on 28<sup>th</sup> October, 2014.
  - Construction of a water borehole with overhead tank,
  - Donation of a 5KVA electricity generating set.

We thank them and pray they continue to assist our girls' school and others in the years ahead.

- ✓ We acknowledge and deeply appreciate Mrs. Christie Jumbo, the Proprietress of the Royal Girls' Academy, Ozuoba, Akpor for her generous donation of sixty (60) classroom desks for use by the SS3 students of ACMGS, Elelenwo. Mrs. Jumbo is an Old Girl the school.
- ✓ We thank the PTA of Bishop Crowther Memorial Secondary School for the donation of a set of musical equipment for the school's chapel use.

❖ ***Rehabilitation of ACMGS School Road: Thanks to NDDC.***

We express our deep appreciation to the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) for their timely intervention in restoring the very deplorable ACMGS School Road to what we have today. A year ago, access to the school was almost impossible and the institution was fast being cut off from the rest of the community, which led to many parents/guardians who could not cope with the difficulty at that time to withdraw their wards. Several appeals made to the past government to come to our aid were unsuccessful, not even with the promise of the immediate past State Governor made on the 17<sup>th</sup> February, 2014 during the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration of the school. The choice of this place as synod venue would not have been possible without this noble gesture of the NDDC. We thank Mr. Wanoro Weli, Lady Ahunna Imoni and Sir Chief Ike Chinwo for their individual efforts at getting the NDDC to reconstruct this road. The School's internal roads undertaken by the same Federal Government Interventionist Agency were commissioned on Monday, 22<sup>nd</sup> June, 2015 by top officials of the Commission with a pledge to do more for the School. We welcome more assistance from the NDDC. May God Almighty immensely bless the management and staff of the Commission.

❖ **The Word of Faith, Woji Town Group of Schools**

This school has been accredited to write both the Junior and Senior National Examinations Council (NECO) examinations as well as registered for the writing of the West African Examinations Council (WAEC). In the 2013/2014 external examinations, the School recorded an excellent performance by the students.

❖ **Special Donations:**

We commend the Parent-Teacher Association of the School for undertaking to construct modern school desks for the secondary section; the teachers for their donation of plastic chairs to the school library and a generator to the primary section; Sir Eze Dr. Emeka Ihunwo and Mr. Charles Gbandi for their donations of the sum of Two Hundred and Fifty Thousand Naira (N250,000.00) and One Hundred Thousand Naira (N100,000.00) respectively to the school during her 2015 Inter-house Sports Competition, and Lolo Woluchem for her donation of a set of computer also to the school.

The Diocese has made some provisions in this year's budget towards the upgrading of facilities in this institution. We are hopeful that by next Synod this would have been achieved.

### **Holy Pilgrimages**

Our Diocese has sent a team of 7 youths to participate in this year's **special pilgrimage exercise for youths** in Israel organized by the Nigerian Christian Pilgrims Commission.

This pilgrimage is considered quite unique because it offers opportunity for participants to go through some **training in Leadership and Skills Acquisition** for 8 days.

Those currently in Israel are:

1. Mr. Chiolu Hope N. – All Saints' Cathedral,
2. Mr. Amadi Chika H. – Rumuomasi Deanery,
3. Mr. Amadi Chris N. – Rumuobiokani Deanery,
4. Miss Unabunwa Charity C. – Elelenwo Deanery,
5. Mr. Mgbechi Christian C. – Woji Archdeaconry,
6. Miss Osondu Odochi L. – Oroigwe/Eliogbolo Archdeaconry,
7. Mr. Igweneme Christian A. – Evo South/East Archdeaconry.

These youths were picked for the trip after careful screening by their respective Administrative Blocks which also sponsored them fully.

We thank the Archdeacons, Clergy of the sponsoring Blocks and their churches for responding sacrificially to our directive on this exercise following the letter of the Primate of All Nigeria on it. The Deaneries of Oginigba, Okporo and Trinity Missionary Archdeaconry which failed to sponsor their youths are hereby charged to prepare to do so next year should there be another opportunity.

Similarly, the Diocese of Evo through the office of the Nigerian Christian Pilgrims Commission, Federal Capital Territory, Abuja is sponsoring 3 adult members of our Diocese on pilgrimage to the Holy land (Israel) in September this year. Those to



benefit from this sponsorship are The Ven. Godwin Chinda (Rector, Okporo Deanery), Sir G.I. Ebenezer (Lay Synod Secretary) and Sir Collins Amadi.

### **Review of Churches Audited Accounts and Award for Outstanding Performances**

It has been our practice for some years now to publicly appreciate the Churches/groups that excel each year in the remittance of the 15% or 10% of their weekly income to the Diocese. At the first Diocesan Board meeting of this year, the record of how each Church/group fared was published and this was to be followed by the usual award for higher performances. We decided however to keep the awards on hold until the audited accounts of the various churches for **January to December, 2014** submitted to the Diocese before this year's Vestry Meetings had been reviewed by the team of Diocesan Auditors.

The Auditors did carry out the task of reviewing those audited accounts and at the end came up with these alarming reports submitted to the Diocesan Board meeting held on Tuesday, 23<sup>rd</sup> June, 2015 at St. Simon's Church, Okporo Deanery:

1. Total under remittance by churches to the Diocese stood at Eleven Million Five Hundred and Fourty Eight Thousand Naira, One Hundred and Ninety-four Naira, Ninety Eight Kobo (N11, 548, 194.98). Churches discovered to have under remitted include the following:

<b>S/N</b>	<b>NAME OF CHURCH</b>	<b>AMOUNT UNDER REMITTED (Outstanding) for 2014</b>
1	All Saints' Cathedral, Rumuokwurusi	N6, 361,951.91
2	Daystar Anglican Youth Church, Rumuokwurusi	N193, 439.50
3	Our Saviour, Christ Ang. Church, Rumunduru	N4, 041.25
4	Anglican Church of the Beatitudes, Rumuokwurusi	N18, 178.50
5	St. Michael's , Rumuomasi Deanery	N456, 409.60
6	Church of Resurrection, Rumuomasi	N25, 495.75
7	Anglican Youth Church, Rumuomasi	N25, 838.50
8	St. Andrew's, Rumuobiokani Deanery	N622, 571.29
9	Holyhill Ang. Church, Eliozu Flyover	N9, 955.75
10	St. Nicholas', Woji District	N1, 239, 664.14
11	Christ Harvest Church, Faith Avenue, Woji Parish	N11, 443.39
12	Immanuel Anglican Church, Ogbatai Parish	N55, 274.85
13	St. Jude's Church, Oginigba Deanery	N64, 284.72
14	Church of The Holy Spirit, Eledenwo District	N71, 845.80
15	Redeemer's Cross Anglican Church, TAP, Iriebe	N7, 801.03
16	St. James' Church, Iriebe Parish	N91, 402.30
17	Holy Ghost Ang. Church, Iriebe H/E Parish	N99, 555.00
18	Church of Messiah, New Haven Parish, Iriebe	N102, 800.00
19	St. Simon's Church, Okporo Deanery	N413, 212.00
20	New Wine Ang. Church, East/West Rd. Okporo Parish	N80, 920.81
21	Faith Community, Eliowhani, Okporo	N16, 849.60
22	Christ, The Redeemer, Eliogbolo	N9, 955.75
23	St. Matthias' Church, Atali District	N591, 648.34
24	Great Physician Atali	N84, 148.00
25	Holy City Ang. Church, Pipeline, Rumuokwurusi	N573.50

26	Bethany Ang. Church, Pipeline, Rumuokwurusi	N2, 976.20
27	Church of the Epiphany, Azumini, Rumuokwurusi	N194, 814.00
28	Chapel of Grace and Knowledge, Elemenwo	N694, 859.25
29	AWC Eliminigwe Phase three (3)	N4, 954.25
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>N11, 548, 194.98</b>

We are glad that these figures were published only after the priests/clerks/Treasurers of the affected churches had been invited to a session to reconcile the figures with the auditors and finance officers of the Diocese. We are quite embarrassed at this unpleasant development.

However, as at the time of writing this address, the following under-remitting churches had issued cheques to clear their outstanding debts:

- Daystar Ang. Youth Church, Rumuokwurusi
- Anglican Church of the Beatitudes, Rumuokwurusi
- Church of Resurrection, Rumuomasi
- Anglican Youth Church, Rumuomasi
- Christ Harvest Anglican Church, Faith Avenue, Woji Parish
- Immanuel Anglican Church, Ogbatai Parish
- Church of the Holy Spirit, Elemenwo District
- Redeemer's Cross Anglican Church, TAP, Iriebe
- Church of The Messiah, New Haven Parish, Iriebe
- Bethany Anglican Church, Pipeline, Rumuokwurusi
- Church of the Epiphany, Pipeline, Rumuokwurusi (part payment of N32,000) only
- New Wine Anglican Church, Okporo Parish (part of payment of N50, 000)

We hereby direct the priests and leaders of the remaining affected churches to very urgently pay to the Diocese all the outstanding amounts they are owing as we are convinced that the auditors did a thorough and decent job. We also counsel affected priests and their church councils not to waste their time blackmailing the Bishop on this matter as we have not been and will not be unjust to any church.

2. Secondly, the audit review shows that despite repeated directive and warnings of many years, the church workers (Priests/Clerks) and the leadership of the following churches failed to comply with the Diocesan Policy that churches should conduct a proper audit of their accounts before holding their Annual Vestry Meetings. They are:
  - a. The Great Shepherd Ang. Church, Mgbuesilaru
  - b. Anglican Church of Pentecost, Ahia-Woji
  - c. Immanuel Ang. Church, Iriebe
  - d. Jericho-Inn Church, Elemenwo
  - e. True Vine Church, Abuja Estate, Iriebe (incomplete records)
  - f. Living Waters Ang. Church, Eliogbolo
  - g. Ebenezer Ang. Church, Trans Woji.

This is definitely not a welcome development and it only paints an ugly picture of impunity which we do not intend to condone. Consequently, we hereby upturn the outcome of the Vestry Meeting elections conducted by these

churches in February this year. Their respective Councils or Steering Committees are hereby dissolved and will be replaced by Caretaker Committees which should conduct proper financial audits of the affected churches within three months and submit their reports to us. The pastors or church teachers serving in these churches who ought to have enforced the policy of the Diocese but regrettably failed to do so are to forfeit their one month (August) full salary.

In the light of these discrepancies, we cannot for now declare any church(es) the winner(s) of our annual awards in their respective categories. When all payments are effected by defaulting churches we shall still fulfil our part.

We must be careful not to introduce into the life of the Diocese/our churches those sharp practices we readily condemn when they are committed by others outside the church. People of excellence and integrity keep clean records and they do not flout organizational policies and leadership directives. God is watching!

### **New Cathedral Building Project**

Work on the new Cathedral Building is fast nearing completion. As at date work on the ceiling and upper window installations, electrification and plumbing have been concluded. We commend the efforts of the entire cathedral worshipping community for this remarkable progress. The Diocese has remained financially committed to the speedy completion of work on this edifice.

### **Gift of Cars to Some Clergy**

We wish to very specially note the voluntary gift of cars to four of our clergymen by members and some committees of friends in their respective congregations on the occasion of last year's Pastors Appreciation Sunday and during their preferment thanksgiving services. The beneficiaries of these generous gifts are The Rev. Samuel Fedigha, Supervising Priest of Daystar Anglican Youth Church, Rumuokwurusi, Venerable Chris Chukwumati of the Cathedral Church, Venerable Charles Mordi of St. Andrew's Church, Rumuobiokani, and The Rev'd Canon Godfrey Onyemelukwe of the Church of The Holy Spirit, Elioza Parish. In the same vein, we thank Mr. Felix Otto of St. Mark's Church, Elelenwo Deanery for his gift of a car to the Rev. Samuel John Ejekwu on the occasion of the clergyman's send-forth from that Deanery.

We thank these parishioners and friends for their very sacrificial gesture and well doing towards these servants of God. May the Lord Himself reward them and their children eternally.

We pray that the gifts will spur the recipients unto greater commitment to the service of God.

## **Province of Niger Delta**

- ❖ The meetings of the Provincial Council were held at the Holy Trinity Cathedral, Diocese of Calabar from Wednesday, 10<sup>th</sup> – Thursday, 11<sup>th</sup> September, 2014 with the theme: "The Earth is the Lord's" (Psalm 24:1) and

also at St. Peter's Deanery, Yenagoa, Diocese of Niger Delta West from Tuesday, 27<sup>th</sup> to Wednesday, 28<sup>th</sup> January, 2015 with the theme "Paul the Sinner, Paul the Saint" (Eph. 3:8).

- ❖ The Bishops of our Province with their wives, led by the Archbishop and his wife, The Most Rev. I.C.O. Kattey, JP resorted to the Obudu Mountain Resort in Cross River State on a 5-day retreat from Monday, 18<sup>th</sup> to Friday, 22<sup>nd</sup> May, 2015. Participants dwelt on the theme: "Challenges of the episcopacy". The retreat featured talks, sessions of devotional worship, prayers, Bible studies led by the guest speakers – Archbishop Emmanuel Egbunu of Lokoja Province, Bishop Emmanuel Ajulo of Okene Diocese and some others from amongst us, and a guided tour of the of the Ranch and some of the surrounding communities.

### **Joint Provincial Council, East**

- ❖ **Joint Retreat with Link Diocese.** On the Lake & Evo:  
A Joint Retreat for the Bishops, Clergy and wives of the Link Dioceses of Evo and On The Lake was hosted by our Diocese from Thursday, 30<sup>th</sup> October to Sunday, 2<sup>nd</sup> November, 2014 at St. Andrew's Church, Rumuobiokani Deanery. The theme was: "**Strengthening our Spiritual and Ministerial Disciplines**" – 1 Cor. 9:27. The speakers include Rev. Dr. Steve Ogan, Lady Christy Onuabu and Rt. Rev. Chijioke Oti, Bishop On The Lake. The visiting clergy and wives from On The Lake stayed with their counterparts from Evo in the parsonages and preached at the various churches from Friday 31<sup>st</sup> October to Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> November. It was both refreshing and challenging. We thank the churches for their exceptional hospitality.
- ❖ The **Meeting of the Joint Provincial Council**, East of the Niger was held at the Diocese of Mbaise from February 10<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> with the theme "**Do not be deceived, God is not mocked....**" (Gal. 6:7). The Council now has a new Chairman in the person of His Grace, The Most Rev. Christian Efobi, the new Dean of the Church of Nigeria, Archbishop of the Province of the Niger and Bishop of Aguata Diocese.
- ❖ The Conference of all Clergy from the 55 Dioceses that make up the Joint Provincial Council East of the Niger (Old Province 2) was held from Monday 4<sup>th</sup> – Friday, 8<sup>th</sup> May, 2015 with the theme: "**Take heed**" (Acts 20:28). The venue was the Regional Camp of Faith, Okigwe. Among the speakers were Archbishops I.C.O. Kattey (Niger Delta Province), Ikechi Nwosu (Aba Province) and Emmanuel Chukwuma (Enugu Province); Bishops Cyril Okorochoa (Owerri Diocese), Ephraim Ikeakor (Amichi Diocese) and Chidi Oparaojiaku (Ohaji/Egbema); Barr. Emeka Nwankpa and Rev. Mrs. Darlene McGregor (A Canadian Max International Health Minister). The Conference featured Talks, Bible Studies, Health Seminar and Revival rallies. Nearly all our Evo pastors were in attendance.
- ❖ **Towards the development of Trinity Theological College, Umuahia and Paul University, Awka.**

The Primate of all Nigeria, The Most Rev. N.D. Okoh, during his maiden visit to Trinity College Umuahia in November, 2014 found the Institution where clergymen are trained for our church in a deplorable state of decay and underdevelopment. Consequently, he challenged all the Dioceses and Bishops of the Joint Provinces of the East who are the proprietors of the school to commit themselves to the task of upgrading the physical infrastructure in the place. Various Dioceses were challenged to take up the construction of different projects in the school. Specifically, our Diocese was charged to build one 3-Bedroom staff quarter, which we accepted to carry out by the grace of God.

On Monday, 15<sup>th</sup> June, 2015, the College authorities allocated a piece of land for the siting of the project. We laid its foundation-stone on Monday, 13<sup>th</sup> July, 2015. We trust God for the grace to accomplish this assignment before the end of the year. Your financial support to us in this regard will be most welcome and appreciated.

Work on the on-going students Hostel Project being embarked upon in the Institution by the entire clergy of the 55 Dioceses that make up the Joint Council, East is progressing. We thank you all for your generous offerings of Sunday, April 26<sup>th</sup> which enabled us to pay in the sum of Six Hundred and Forty Eight Thousand Naira (N648, 000. 00) on behalf of the clergy of Evo for the continuation of work on the project. May God reward you abundantly in Jesus name.

Similarly, our Diocese remitted the total sum of Four Hundred and Ninety Four Thousand, One Hundred and Forty Naira (N494, 140.00) only to Paul University, Awka from the annual operation One Thousand Naira (N1,000.00) per communicant towards the development of the University.

- ❖ The Administrator of the Superannuation Fund office, The Rev. Canon Christian Nwankpa and his team came to our Diocese on an enlightenment exercise on Tuesday, 9<sup>th</sup> June, 2015 at St. Matthias' Anglican Church, Atali District. Church workers who are contributors to the Fund were addressed by the visiting team from Onitsha.

### **Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion)**

- ❖ **National Prayer Convocation:** The 16<sup>th</sup> National Anglican Prayer Convocation held at the Christian Events Resource Centre, Lagos from 26<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> August, 2014. Theme: “Intercession in the healing of nations” – 2Chron. 7:12-16. Rev. Samuel Udeh, Assistant Prayer Chaplain, represented the Diocese. The 17<sup>th</sup> edition has also taken place from Monday, 29<sup>th</sup> June to Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> July, 2015 at the Christ Anglican Church, Owerri. The theme was: “Standing Together in Prayers for the Church and Nations” (Matt. 18:19; Ezek. 22:30).
- ❖ **Conference of Legal Officers.** The Diocese sponsored our four legal officers led by the Registrar, Sir Barr. Nlerum Amadi to the Church of Nigeria Conference of Legal Officers held at Abuja from Monday, 4<sup>th</sup> to Thursday, 7<sup>th</sup>

August, 2014. The 2015 edition of this Conference comes up from August 17<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> at the Basilica of Grace, Gudu District, Apo, Abuja.

❖ **Church of Nigeria Senior Clergy Advanced Management Course 6** was held from Monday 11<sup>th</sup> to Friday, 22<sup>nd</sup> August, 2014 at the Ibru Centre, Agbrha-Otor. Five of our clergy were in attendance:

- ❖ Ven. Charles Mordi
- ❖ Rev. Canon Chimaobi Chieme
- ❖ Rev. Chukwuma Anukem
- ❖ Rev. Chukwuemeka Okonkwo
- ❖ Rev. Samuel Obialor.

We delivered a lecture to the participants on Friday 15<sup>th</sup> August, 2014 and also during the course 7 in January, 2015. We were however not able to send participants to the session held in January and on-going edition due to this synod.

❖ **General Synod**

The 11<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of the General Synod held from Monday, 15<sup>th</sup> to Saturday, 20<sup>th</sup> September at the Cathedral of the Good Shepherd, Enugu had the Theme: “Thy Kingdom Come” (Matt. 6:10). It was presided over by the Primate with 13 Archbishops and 154 Bishops and wives and about 1, 500 delegates representing the Diocesan Chancellors, Registrars, elected Representatives of the Laity, Clergy and women in attendance.

The next General Synod will be hosted by our Niger Delta Province in 2017.

❖ **Award of Excellence for Christian Stewardship**

As part of the events of the General Synod, the Primate of All Nigeria, The Most Rev. Nicholas Okoh on Wednesday, 17<sup>th</sup> September gave awards of excellence for Christian stewardship to some distinguished Anglicans across the country who have contributed exceptionally to the work of the Church. Recipients of the award from our Province were Sir Ngozi Abu (Diocese of Ahoada), Sir Chief Gabriel T.G. Toby, (former Deputy Governor of Rives State {Niger Delta Diocese}) and former President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan.

❖ **2015 Annual Bishops Retreat**

The House of Bishops of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) met at Ibru Centre, Agbarha-Otor under the guidance and protection of the Holy Spirit and the leadership of the Archbishop, Metropolitan and Primate of all Nigeria, The Most Rev. Nicholas D. Okoh for its 2015 annual retreat from January 5<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup>. The theme was “21<sup>st</sup> Century – God’s Ambassadors in the Anglican Church” (2 Cor. 5:20). The retreat provided the Bishops the opportunity to address their minds to the challenges of their call at this time and the need to be God’s ambassadors within the context of the peculiar challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

❖ **Standing Committee Meeting** of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) comprising of the House of Bishops, the House of Clergy and the House of Laity as well as the meeting of the Mothers’ Union Executive Committee comprising the Bishops’ wives and women delegates from all

Dioceses took place at the Bishop Agori-Iwe Memorial Anglican Church Ovwodavwanre, (BAMACO) Ughelli, Diocese of Ughelli, Delta State from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> February, 2015. The meeting coming on the heels of the General elections in the country deliberated on the theme “Watch and Pray” (Luke 21:36).

- ❖ **Clarion Call to Prayer for the Nation:** This call dated 4<sup>th</sup> February, 2015 from the Primate, Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) requests all Anglican faithful to ‘stand in the gap’ and pray for Nigeria following the prevailing security challenges in our country. Provinces and Dioceses under them have been grouped into a monthly 24-hour prayer chain to intercede for our nation.

We in the Province of Niger Delta are in group 1 and are to pray from the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 7<sup>th</sup> day of every month. We plead with our clergy to ensure that this schedule is faithfully observed by all churches and members of our congregations. Consequently, we remind every one that our Diocese is prayer duty from today, August 1 to next Friday, 7<sup>th</sup>.

- ❖ **DIVCCON –**

The 4<sup>th</sup> edition of the Divine Commonwealth Conference took place from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> November, 2014 at the National Christian Centre, Abuja with the theme: “In times like these” (Eph. 4:13, 14; 2 Tim. 3:1-7). Our Diocese recorded an improved registration and attendance – over 110 delegates in all. Our delegates drew the attention of other Conference participants when we all appeared in our 5<sup>th</sup> Anniversary uniforms on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day of the Conference. We want to appreciate the youths of our Diocese for their improved attendance to the Conference and particularly we thank the various churches that complied with our directive to sponsor them.

The 2015 (5<sup>th</sup>) edition comes up from Monday 9<sup>th</sup> to Friday 13<sup>th</sup> November at the National Christian Centre, Abuja. The theme is “**Dare to be a Daniel**” (**Daniel 1:8, 6:4-5**).

Details of this year’s registration are as follows:

- Early Registration (July 1<sup>st</sup> to August 10<sup>th</sup>) – N2, 500.00
- Mid Registration (August 12<sup>th</sup> to September 19<sup>th</sup>) – N3, 000.00
- Late Registration (September 21<sup>st</sup> to October 31<sup>st</sup>) – N3, 500.00

We encourage every member of our Diocese to plan seriously to take part in it.

- ❖ **New Bishops**

The following were elected and consecrated Bishops in the Church of Nigeria within the last one year:

- ❖ Rt. Rev. Prince Asuquo Antai for Uyo Diocese.
- ❖ Rt. Rev. Dr. William Aladekugbe for Oyo Diocese.
- ❖ Rt. Rev. Moses Bukpe Tabwaye for Gwagwalada Diocese;
- ❖ Rt. Rev. (Capt.) Johnson Nwaohalama Ekwe for Niger West Diocese and
- ❖ Rt. Rev. Dr. Isaac Iwabi Oluyamo for the Diocese of Ijesha North.

We congratulate and wish them well in their episcopal ministry.

- ❖ **New Archbishop and Dean**

The Most Rev. Friday J. Imaekhai, Bishop of Esan was re-elected Archbishop of Bendel Province and re-presented on Sunday, 26<sup>th</sup> April, 2015 at All Saints' Cathedral, Onitsha.

The Most Rev. Christian O. Efobi, Bishop of Aguata/Archbishop of the Niger Province is now the new Dean of the Church of Nigeria, Anglican Communion. He was also presented on Sunday, 26<sup>th</sup> April, 2015 at All Saints' Cathedral, Onitsha. He replaced the Most Rev. Imaekhai whose brief tenure had expired. We congratulate the two fathers in God and also pray for their success in their new offices.

❖ **New Secretary General of the Church of Nigeria**

The Ven. Prof. Israel Okoye has been appointed the new Secretary General of the Church of Nigeria. He succeeded the now Bishop of Yewa Diocese, The Rt. Rev. Michael Oluwarohumbi.

❖ **New Secretary General of the Anglican Consultative Council.**

The Bishop of Kaduna Diocese and former Archbishop of Kaduna Province, The Most Rev. Josiah Idowu-Fearon has of his choice accepted appointment as the new General Secretary of the Anglican Consultative Council (ACC) with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> July, 2015. This is notwithstanding the existing impaired relationship between the churches of GAFCON and ACC on doctrinal and theological issues, with particular reference to the issue of homosexuality, lesbianism, bi-sexuality and same-sex marriage. Following this appointment, Bishop Idowu-Fearon has of his own volition resigned his episcopacy in the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion).

❖ **Retirements**

- ❖ The Rt. Rev. Jacob Fasipe, Bishop of Oyo Diocese.
- ❖ The Rt. Rev. Tanima S. Aduda – Bishop of Gwagwalada
- ❖ The Rt. Rev. Prof. Anthony Nkwoka – Niger West
- ❖ The Rt. Rev. Titus O.B. Fajemirokun – Ijesha North.

- ❖ Our Diocese joined the rest of the Dioceses in the Church of Nigeria to raise a **Special offering/Relief fund for Victims of Boko Haram Insurgency & other social crises** in the country. The sum of Eight Hundred and Sixty Six Thousand Naira (N866, 000) was raised by our Diocese and paid to the Church of Nigeria.

- ❖ Similarly, we raised offerings for the Church of Nigeria in support of this year's **World Leprosy Day** on January 25. The sum of Four Hundred Sixty Thousand (N460, 000) was paid to the Church of Nigeria.

- ❖ **St. Matthias Day Offering:** The annual Church of Nigeria St. Matthias' Day Offering was observed on Sunday, 22<sup>nd</sup> of February, 2015. A total sum of Eight Million, Seven Hundred and Eighty Nine thousand, Five Hundred and Ninety Nine Naira (**N8, 789, 599**) was realized across our Evo Churches and faithfully remitted to the Church of Nigeria. We commend our churches for their commitment to this annual fund raising exercise for the advancement of the work of the church at the national level.



## **WE CONGRATULATE AND REJOICE WITH:**

- ❖ The Rev. Canon and Mrs. Hosanna Naenwi on the arrival of their new baby girl.
- ❖ The Rev. Chukwujekwu Umenna on the birth of their first baby boy.
- ❖ Church Teacher & Mrs. John Eze on the birth of their baby girl.
- ❖ Mrs. Chinwe Achilefu, Church Clerk at Bethel Church, Rumuibekwe on the arrival of her baby boy.
- ❖ Rev. and Mrs. Raymond Osakwe on the arrival of their baby boy.
- ❖ Mr. Prince Weli and former Miss Hope Ohuru (Foster daughter of the Bishop & wife) on their wedding on April 25<sup>th</sup>, 2015.
- ❖ Mr. Ahamefule Jonah (Driver to the Bishop's wife) and his wife, Joy on their wedding on Easter Monday, 6<sup>th</sup> April, 2015.
- ❖ Lady Bridget Dania on her recent 60<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration.
- ❖ Prof. A.O. Ibe on his appointment and assumption of office as the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Administration) of the University of Port Harcourt.
- ❖ We congratulate HRH Eze Sir, (Hon) S.O. Worlu on his recognition as the Nyerisi-Mbam, being the 2<sup>nd</sup> Class traditional stool of Oro-Esara Kingdom by the immediate past Rotimi Amaechi-led Government of Rivers State on Thursday, 21<sup>st</sup> May, 2015.
- ❖ Sir Dr. Emeka Ihunwo on his elevation to the traditional stool of Eze Woji, Paramount Ruler of Woji Community.
- ❖ Rev. Canon Ikechukwu Godwin Anene on his successful completion of studies and award of a Doctorate Degree in African Traditional Religion (ATR) by the University of Port Harcourt.
- ❖ Mr. Best Ekenchia, the Church Teacher at Jericho Inn Anglican Church, Pre-eminence Hotel, Elelenwo on his wedding with Miss Charity Mpakasoka Idikibiebuma on Saturday, 27<sup>th</sup> June, 2015.
- ❖ Sir Dr. Sam Egwu of the Church of Epiphany, Rumuokwursi for the recent approval of his tertiary institution, Eastern Polytechnic, Rumuokwursi by the Federal Government.
- ❖ Mr. Gaius Assor (our Diocesan Surveyor) on the recent celebration of his 60<sup>th</sup> birthday and retirement from the Rivers State Civil Service as Permanent Secretary/Surveyor General of the State.

## **OUR CONDOLENCES**

We extend our condolences and those of the entire Diocese to the following:

- ❖ Rev. Favour Iroegbulem on the death of his brother.
- ❖ The Rev. C.J. Kemakolam and Mrs. Chinwendu Achilefu on the death of their mother, Mrs. Cecilia Anyeberechi Kemakolam
- ❖ The Rev. Reginald Chinweze on the death of his mother, Madam Nneokwukwe Roseline Ifeoma, Chinweze.
- ❖ Rev. Collins and Mrs. Barinem Daniel on the death of their mother in-law and mother, Madam Grace Zorkpo.
- ❖ Sir Captain and Lady Clement Ejiofor on the death of their father-in law and father, late Sir Alphonsus Ejiofor.
- ❖ The Rev. Chukwuma Anukem on the death of his mother, Lady Mabel Anukem.

- ❖ Lady Uzor Onweluzo on the death of her mother, Ezinne Christiana Okeke aged 97.
- ❖ Mr. Michael Abiona Usikalu on the death of his father, Pa Samuel Omoleye Usikalu aged 92.

## **OBITUARIES**

We lost the following persons to death:

- ❖ Lady Victoria Agbara, wife of Sir Chris Agbara and a member of the Diocesan Women Exco. Buried on Friday, 29<sup>th</sup> August, 2014 at Abia State.
- ❖ Lady Dorothy N. Worlu on 9<sup>th</sup> September, 2014 and buried on Saturday, 4<sup>th</sup> October, 2014. She was the wife of Eze Sir S.O. Worlu.
- ❖ Barrister Chief C.A.W. Chinda of St. Mark's Elelenwo Deanery.
- ❖ Mrs. Scholar Elonba Chinwo, wife of Elder Emmanuel O. Chinwo
- ❖ Madam Jemimah Nne igweh of Eliada Community in Rumuogba.
- ❖ Mrs. Chimenem Ben-Peterson, wife of the Bishop's Secretary, Mr. Benjamin Peterson.

Special thanks go to all the clergy and churches that supported through financial donation for her burial.

- ❖ Sir Chief Friday O. Onukem (KGS) of St. Simon's Church, Okporo Deanery who died on the 6<sup>th</sup> of March, and buried on 2<sup>nd</sup> of April, 2015.
- ❖ Mrs. Margret Utchay, mother of Sir Ken Utchay who died Monday, 23<sup>rd</sup> March and buried on Wednesday, 22<sup>nd</sup> April, 2015.
- ❖ Mr. E. D. Pepple who died on Tuesday, 2<sup>nd</sup> June, 2015. He was the husband Mrs. Abigail Pepple, Bishop's Nominee to the Synod.
- ❖ Sir Adele Wogu of the Anglican Church of Pentecost, Rumuogba Parish.

May their souls and the souls of all faithful departed rest in the bosom of the Lord and may He grant their families the consolation of the Holy Spirit – Amen.

## **NATIONAL ISSUES**

### **The 2015 General Elections**

The 2015 general elections in Nigeria will go down in history as perhaps the most hotly contested polls ever. For the former President, Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan and his Peoples Democratic Party which had controlled power at the Federal level for 16 years, it was a fight to finish in order to retain that power and make good its vow to govern Nigeria for 60 years. For the then opposition party, the All Progressives Congress now fully in control of government at the Federal level and in majority of the states of the country, the desire to wrest power from the PDP was a task to be achieved at all costs, whether fair or foul.

The electioneering campaigns were awash with abuses, insults, lies, unverifiable allegations, violent attacks and wanton destruction of properties, death wishes for opponents and even outright assassinations, particularly in places like Rivers State. Families, groups, traditional rulers (as in the case of Lagos) and even religious bodies were divided along political party lines; alliances, gang-ups here and there.

The nation was virtually at a standstill and the polity unduly heated up. There was panic, anxiety, fear to the extent that some persons with their families relocated temporarily to

other countries. Even some of the politicians knowing the mischief they would cause in the build-up to and during the elections relocated their families to 'safer' places.

To the glory of God the elections eventually came and the outcome is now history.

We congratulate all winners at all levels (and that is where they truly won or obtained the mandate of the people) and pray that they sincerely and selflessly render quality service to the people of Nigeria such that will bring us at par with other advanced nations of the world.

To the losers, we urge them to take heart. Politics is like the game of sports where winners and losers will naturally emerge. Some years back they won elections and celebrated while some of those who won this time around were losers. Though it pained them, they were however able to gather their losses and strategized strongly leading to their victory this time around.

In every field of life, when we work hard enough, we succeed and celebrate. If we however, lose after putting in so much effort we should resign to God and look forward to better days ahead.

Losing elections does not mean the end of life for the political office aspirant. It should not create room for bitter feelings, vengeance by raising militia groups to make the place ungovernable as we have had it in the past. It neither calls for antagonism against the winner nor defections from the losing party to the winning party as we have so far witnessed. It rather calls for sober reflection, stock taking and re-strategizing of plans for a better outing next time.

For the health of our democracy people should learn to remain in their parties. Politicians in Nigeria should try to learn from their counterparts in other countries who quickly sheath their swords after elections and begin to work collaboratively for the good of their nations and as well as strengthening their political parties for better performance in future elections.

We congratulate our President, General Muhammadu Buhari and his Vice, Professor Yemi Osinbajo on their victory and assumption of office and former President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan for his sincerity and the free hand extended to the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) then led by Professor Atahiru Jega, (whose tenure has now ended) in the conduct of the elections. We hail his concession of defeat to the winner, even before the final announcement of the results and hope that present and future political office aspirants in Nigeria and their religious, ethnic and media supporters will also be gentleman enough to accept defeat should Nigerians decide to reject them at future polls.

We wish to remind our President of his many campaign promises and of the need to urgently start fulfilling them without giving excuses of age on his part and the so called mess left behind by the immediate past administration. He and all officers around him should now separate politics and propaganda from reality. Even though we will join other well-meaning Nigerians in calling for patience with the President in getting the ship of State moving, we however feel strongly that the pace of the new government is rather too slow. For the President and his team that promised to speed up matters of governance immediately after being sworn in on May 29<sup>th</sup>, we think that what we are getting now is completely a departure from what was promised Nigerians. We appeal to Mr. President to urgently put necessary machinery in place especially the appointment of ministers and other key officers of the Federal Government so that the nation can once again start moving. While we wait for that we use this medium to remind Mr. President of some his many campaign and swearing-in-day promises and urge him to faithfully fulfil them.

He promised to be the president of all Nigerians: of those who voted for him, against him and those who preferred not to vote at all.

The President in his usual zero tolerance for corruption promised to address it headlong on coming to power. We pray that God will give him the necessary grace and courage to wage this war. The wealth of Nigeria should be used to address the problems of all Nigerians in the six geo-political zones and should not be concentrated in the hands of a few politicians and public office holders. The inflation of contracts, looting of public treasuries, wastages and governmental revelries and over bloated salaries of ministers and National/State assembly members should be seriously checked. These corrupt practices are obviously the reason for the desperation to win elections at all cost.

He had promised to light up the nation – a pledge other governments before his own had made. The president should strive to improve on the efforts of his predecessors at providing electricity for all Nigerians. We look forward to when the millions of power generators in Nigeria will become relics/monuments that will remind us of our dark days.

Transportation for all Nigerians by air, land and sea should be improved upon. The Port Harcourt International Airport which is a major entry point to the South-South should be upgraded immediately as what we have presently, is a reproach to the image of this country.

A major national challenge which actually contributed to the rejection of the immediate past federal administration by Nigerians was and still is the problem of insurgency in the North-East and general insecurity across the country. Our new president had promised to crush Boko Haram and all other militant groups in the country. Insurgency should end now and should no longer resurface even if a Christian becomes the president of Nigeria tomorrow.

Our new leader had promised to create an enabling atmosphere that will allow people go freely to schools, markets, work places, etc. without fear of attacks. However, the recent directive of Mr. President that all military checkpoints and presence be dismantled is to say the least, suspect to some of us even though some officers of government have tried to explain it away. Nigerians at different quarters have continued to give their different interpretations to the presidential directive. If the President intends to make the world believe that the country is now safer for people to freely move about, he should perhaps take a second look at it. For as things stand now, kidnappings, killings, armed robberies and bombings of persons and strategic places are still going on and we do not see how the removal of strategic military presence will suddenly bring an end to it. So it is a directive that needs to be revisited.

The President promised at his inauguration that “I belong to everybody and I belong to nobody”. Our understanding of this statement is that Buhari meant that he will defend and stand for all Nigerians irrespective of their ethnic, geo-political, religious and political background; that he will be there for the rich, the poor, the weak and the strong alike and that he will not allow any one person, ethnic, religious or political group(s) to lord it over the other. We hail Mr. President for this neutral and fatherly disposition. Consequently, as it affects non-Muslims in Nigeria, particularly in the North, we call on him to ensure that they are free to exercise their freedom of worship and association without any form of molestation or further threat to their lives and properties. The President should please protect all Christians in Nigeria. Nigeria belongs to all of us and Christians in particular should not be made to feel unsafe in a country where we all claim to have equal stake.

### **Appointments into Governmental Positions**

We urge the President to endeavour to avoid lop-sidedness in his appointments and respect the principle of Federal Character in choosing persons to serve with him in this government. Ethnic, regional or religious biases must be avoided. Merit, competence and even-spread of

positions should be considered first and foremost. Every Nigerian and groups of Nigerians are constitutionally at liberty to vote for any person or political party of their choice even if that person or party ends up losing at the polls. That preference by an individual, ethnic groups or geopolitical zone should not make them suffer marginalization in the distribution of political offices and other dividends of democracy to the various sections of the country. Nigeria belongs to all of us!

The people of the South-East and South-South did not sin against the Nigerian State by their voting pattern in the 2015 general elections. They must not be made to stand by and helplessly watch the other parts of the country scramble for key political positions in the country just because they voted differently. Once again we say, Nigerian belongs to all of us and so key offices in the land must be equitably distributed.

### **The Leadership Tussle in the National Assembly**

We are embarrassed that at a time our newly elected members of the Senate and House of Representatives should be settling down to the serious business of law making and oversight functions of the activities of the executive arm of government with a view to bringing about the much touted change in the lives of Nigerians, our distinguished senators and honourable members are shamefully soaked in the battle for who occupies what office in the National Assembly. The ugly situation is being fuelled by the hierarchy of the ruling party who in their attempt to share the spoils of election victory appear visibly to undermine the independence of the second arm of government by insisting that certain key offices be occupied by some already anointed members of both Houses. This, in our opinion is totally wrong and will not make for the healthy growth of our young democratic process. We advise the President and the leadership of the All Progressives Congress (APC) in the interest of peace and speedy progress of this new government which by the grace of God and the mandate of Nigerians they are now privileged to head, to please allow the wishes of their members in the National Assembly to stand without further interference. The National Assembly, we think, has come of age to determine who her leaders should be.

### **Rivers State**

Rivers State was for many years known for the political peace and tranquillity that reigned within her shores. Sadly however, few months to the last general elections in the country the state witnessed a near total breakdown of law and order. The two main rival political parties in the state, the All Progressives Congress (APC) and the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) were consumed in all sorts of disputes and bickering, one against the other. Citizens of the State were sharply divided along the lines of these parties, the result was that those of them who lacked self-discipline and control and respect for human lives and properties went underground and unleashed incalculable havoc on persons and properties in several parts of the State. It was so bad that quite unlike in the past, Rivers State was pencilled down as one of the flashpoints during the elections and regrettably, as things turned out, the State lived up to that prediction by the media and other observers.

The confusion notwithstanding, the elections, particularly the governorship have come and gone. A winner in the person of Chief Barrister Ezeunwo Nyesom Wike, CON has been declared by INEC, the nation's electoral umpire, though this is being hotly contested at the tribunal by the APC. We as a Diocesan community heartily congratulate His Excellency, our new governor.

Whatever the outcome of the case at the tribunal may be, we plead with all politicians in the state particularly members of the APC and PDP to give peace a chance. We have never been and are still not comfortable with the attacks, insults, abuses, lies and all manner of bickering still going on between the leaders of both political parties on one hand and officers

of the past and present governments on the other even after the elections. This is not healthy for our democratic process.

The greater wellbeing, peace and development of the state should be of primary concern to all the major actors in the on-going tensions. In our opinion, religious and traditional leaders in the state should now come together and prayerfully proffer lasting solutions to the troubles in the State rather than continue in their present aligned postures. If we allow the present crop of politicians to destroy Rivers State today, there might not be another state tomorrow for anyone to aspire to govern.

The flexing of muscles for the control of the soul of the state should stop now so we can move forward as a people and catch up with other rapidly growing states of the federation.

We think strongly that politicians of other political parties in Rivers State have a lot of moral lessons to learn from one of their own, Tonye Princewill, the flag-bearer of the Labour Party at the last gubernatorial election in the State. His peaceful, non-violent disposition before, during and after the elections deserve our commendation and those of other well-meaning Rivers people. We encourage all who lost the elections in the State to prayerfully accept the outcome and stop upsetting the peace of the State for the sake of our common good. Power comes from God and He chooses the one to give it to at any time.

We commend our new State Governor, Chief Barrister Ezebunwo Nyesom Wike, CON for the bold and pragmatic steps he is initiating in order to better the lot of Rivers people. We urge him to stay focused and committed to the fulfilment of his many campaign promises, praying also that God will guide and direct him as he seeks to offer the people of Rivers State the kind of service that focuses on excellence and integrity coupled with the fear of God. The governor should endeavour to evenly spread his developmental programmes and appointments to all the Local Governments of the State and build bridges of peace across the land. He should endeavour not to fail or betray the trust reposed in him by Rivers people. We appeal to all political opponents of the Governor to allow him concentrate on his task of governing the State.

We also commend the outgone governor, The Rt. Honourable Chibuike Rotimi Amaechi for all his achievements while in office. We however feel deeply pained by all the strife and distractions that characterized the closing period of that government. We plead with both the former and new governors – Amaechi and Nyesom with their supporters to seek and follow the path of lasting peace and reconciliation with each other and with all their political foes in the state in the interest of a greater Rivers State.

## **International**

### **Legalization of Same-Sex Marriage in the United States of America**

A few weeks ago, the United States Supreme Court legalized the sinful act of same-sex marriage across that country's 50 states. This was openly hailed by the US President-Barack Hussein Obama. This of course did not come to us as a surprise given the American leader's long standing backing for gay rights movements.

Obama, who is the first US president to support gay marriage, said, "The ruling is a victory for America. This decision affirms what millions of Americans already believe in their hearts. When all American are treated as equal, we are all more free". As night fell, the White House, the official residence and seat of government of the US President was lit in rainbow colours-a symbol of gay pride-to mark the court's ruling. What a pity!

Obama who is of Kenyan descent, had during a memorial service of the late South African leader, Nelson Mandela, in 2013 drummed support for the gay community and people around the world who still struggle for equality.

In his eulogy of Mandela on that occasion, Obama said, “Around the world today, men and women are still imprisoned for their political beliefs and are still persecuted for what they look like and how they worship and who they love”.

The US President’s opinion is that having suffered marginalization, racism and discrimination, Africa should be at the forefront of the gay rights campaign.

Only an insignificant minority of Africans across ethnic, religious and national lines will share with Obama in his ungodly philosophy. Millions of Nigerians have since risen in condemnation of this satanic gay rights campaign which is an obvious invitation of the wrath of God upon its advocates and their allies. The 7<sup>th</sup> National Assembly on the basis of our religious, cultural and African moral beliefs passed the Same-sex Marriage Prohibition Act of 2014 which the immediate past President, Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, GCFR signed into law. While Nigerians hailed the former President and the National Assembly, the United States, United Kingdom and other western powers condemned them and our country as a whole and even threatened sanctions against us. Who knows if this might have informed their lukewarm attitude towards the security problems in Nigeria caused by the activities of the Islamic sect, Boko Haram. The government and the National Assembly remained undeterred and ignored those foreign powers and that law and all the penalties for violating it still remain.

In the face of the serious security threats from Boko Haram, economic depression and many other crises now confronting Nigeria, we appeal to our ‘morally upright’ President, Muhammadu Buhari not to succumb to any form of pressure from any or all of these ungodly leaders and enemies of God’s laws to ever consider the scrapping of all existing anti-gay or anti-homosexual legislation in Nigeria. As a people, we have already and in many ways strayed from the paths of righteousness and moral rectitude like lost sheep. We should not plunge further down by introducing and legalizing this or any other abominable and debasing practice in the country.

What is happening in these so called developed countries of the world calls for concern, prayers and spiritual alertness. It is a further sign that the coming of the Lord Jesus is just around the corner. The Church more than ever before should awake from its deep sleep and intensify the preaching of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and continually call all men and women to genuine repentance before that terrible and dreadful day of God’s judgement comes upon the world.

### **COMING EVENTS**

- ❖ Niger Delta Provincial Anglican Children’s Ministry Conference to be hosted by the Diocese of Ewo at St. Andrew’s Church, Rumuobiokani Deanery from Thursday, 6<sup>th</sup> to Sunday, 9<sup>th</sup> August, 2015. St. Andrew’s church and Bishop Crowther Memorial Secondary school, Rumuobiokani will assist the Diocese in hosting the conference.

- ❖ Niger Delta Provincial Girls' Guild Conference to be hosted by the Diocese of Evo from Friday 7<sup>th</sup> to Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> August, 2015. All Saints' Cathedral will assist the Women's Ministry of the Diocese in hosting this Conference. Delegates are expected to sleep at ACMGS, Elelenwo and be transported daily to the Cathedral for the Conference meetings. Churches would be required to make available their buses for daily shuttles in the mornings and evenings from ACMGS to Cathedral and back.
- ❖ Maiden Students Holiday Camp Meeting by the Public/Private Secondary Schools Ministry, Diocese of Evo from Wednesday, August 19<sup>th</sup> to Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup>.
- ❖ Clergy and Church workers' Family Retreat – Friday, 28<sup>th</sup> to Monday, 31<sup>st</sup> August, 2015 at Ibru Centre, Agbarha-Otor.
- ❖ Diocesan Lay Readers Exchange of Pulpit in all churches on Sunday, 30<sup>th</sup> August, 2015
- ❖ Diocesan Lay Readers Conference, 2015 on Friday, 11<sup>th</sup> to Sunday, 13<sup>th</sup> September at Holy Ghost Anglican Church, Iriebe Housing Estate Parish.
- ❖ Diocesan MCA Conference, 2015 on Wednesday, 23<sup>rd</sup> to Sunday, 27<sup>th</sup> September at Church of The Holy Spirit, Elelenwo.
- ❖ 2015 Diocesan Discipleship, Prayer/Revival Conference to hold from Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> September to Saturday, 3<sup>rd</sup> October, 2015 at St. Andrew's Church, Rumuobiokani Deanery. Theme **“Standing Strong Through the Storm”**.  
Thursday, 1<sup>st</sup> October, 2015 will be a day of special prayers in the Conference for Nigeria.
- ❖ Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> November, Diocesan Harvest/end of Conference Thanksgiving Service at St. Andrew's Church, Rumuobiokani Deanery at 9:30am. Churches to send advanced parties and then close services by 11am latest to enable others join the service at Church of The Holy Spirit, Elelenwo.
- ❖ Diocesan Women's Conference, 2015 on Wednesday, 2<sup>nd</sup> to Sunday, 6<sup>th</sup> December at St. Philip's Church, Oroigwe District.

### Coming Synod Venues

- ❖ 2016 – St. Jude's Church, Oginigba Deanery
- ❖ 2017 – St. Mark's Church, Elelenwo Deanery
- ❖ 2018 – Evo South East Archdeaconry
- ❖ 2019 – Woji Archdeaconry
- ❖ 2020 – Trinity Missionary Archdeaconry

### CONCLUSION

As we conclude this address by the grace of God, we will be expecting you to do your part, which is to formally and as it is customary, appreciate it. However, permit me to say that all along, we have had and stood by our different understanding and interpretation of what it means to appreciate the Bishop's Charge. It is not an invitation to you to come and give financial support to the person of the Bishop. Rather, it is an invitation extended to you to come and give in support of the work of God through the many programmes, activities and projects of the Diocese of Evo. This



is something we believe each Parishioner should seek every avenue to do very cheerfully for a number of reasons:

1. Firstly, God commands us to give towards the advancement of His Kingdom here on earth. The Diocese of Evo is in several ways actively involved in this and so members and friends of the Diocese have every reason to support and encourage us as we continue in this path.
2. Secondly, we have by the grace of God remained steadfast in the faithful and prudent management and appropriation of the limited resources that come our way. We have endeavoured not to waste what we have. Therefore, it is only proper that if we have handled well what we have so far received, that more be given to us so we are enabled to do more things to the glory of God.

Therefore, we appeal to every person, churches, groups and our friends and invitees to generously and sacrificially give the Diocese good money to support all we are doing and plan to do in the name of the Lord in the coming months and years. God will make up to you whatever you give sacrificially.

This is not the forum to give to the Bishop. Everything here is for the Diocese of Evo. If God however touches you to do anything for the Bishop, you should be able to look out for alternative platforms to extend such goodwill to him. And so for us in Evo, launching or appreciating the Bishop's Address/Charge is about giving to the work of God. And we encourage you to do so in the spirit of excellence.

How wonderful it is when God's people take seriously the work of the ministry and give willingly and sacrificially for its support. God has endowed this Diocese with enough financially sound people to underwrite our numerous bills. We must have a heart to give! When we fail to give despite God's many blessings showered on us, it blots the reputation of the Diocese and the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Generosity generates generosity. When we open our purse strings and give liberally to God's work great things happen. If however, we lack the spirit of sacrifice, there is no hope for us as a Diocese.

Apostle Paul writing to the Corinthians had this to say:

*“Now as you abound and excel  
and are at the front in everything....  
in faith, in expressing yourselves,  
in knowledge, in all zeal, and in your love for us  
[see to it that you come to the front now and]  
abound and excel in this gracious work [of almsgiving] also”.*  
*(2 Cor. 8:7) [Amp. Version]*

We thank you all once again for coming to this synod and for patience and the attention you gave to us while we read this address. May the Lord listen to you when you call upon Him in Jesus name – Amen.

*Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling,  
and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory,  
with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour*

*be glory and majesty, dominion and power,  
both now and ever. Amen (Jude 24, 25). [KJV].*

✦ Innocent, Evo  
August 1, 2015.

## **APPENDIXES**

PROVINCE OF NIGER DELTA  
BISHOPS AND WIVES RETREAT  
HELD AT OBUDU CATTLE RANCH,  
CROSS RIVER STATE  
*From Monday, 18<sup>th</sup> to Friday, 22<sup>nd</sup> May, 2015*

### RESOLUTION

The Bishops of the Province of Niger Delta with their wives led by the Archbishop, The Most Rev. I. C. O. Kattey, JP and his wife, Mrs Beatrice Kattey resorted to the Obudu Cattle Ranch in Cross River State on a Five-Day retreat from Monday, 18<sup>th</sup> to Friday, 22<sup>nd</sup> May, 2015.

The Retreat featured talks, sessions of worship, prayers, Bible studies and a guided tour of the Ranch.

A prominent feature of the retreat was the challenge of Bishops not being able to take some moments of meaningful rest from their very busy schedules of activities – a situation that has continued to negatively affect the health and even effectiveness of many bishops.

Consequently, the Bishops of the Province have risen from the retreat resolving as follows:

- (1) Bishops should as a matter of deliberate policy set aside special days in the week during which they should retire to a quiet place to take some rest for their bodies, pray and seek God's face to be energized for greater efficiency;
- (2) Bishops in the Province should consider as it is done in some other parts of the Church of Nigeria taking a longer period of rest particularly after the annual Diocesan Synods. The various Diocesan Boards are encouraged in demonstration of their care for their bishops to set aside some funds to enable the Bishops achieve this moment of rest and medical care preferably outside the Diocese or country.
- (3) Wives of Bishops are also encouraged to devise strategies to enable their husbands achieve this much needed rest.

Signed  
Most Rev. I. C. O. Kattay, JP  
Archbishop, Niger Delta Province