

**DIOCESE OF EVO  
(Anglican Communion)**

**PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS/BISHOP'S CHARGE**

**DELIVERED BY  
THE RT. REV. INNOCENT U. ORDU, JP  
BISHOP, DIOCESE OF EVO**

**ON  
SATURDAY, 17<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST, 2019**

**AT THE  
FIRST SESSION OF THE FOURTH SYNOD  
HOLDING AT  
ST. NICHOLAS' ANGLICAN CHURCH, WOJI  
DISTRICT,  
(Woji Archdeaconry)**

## **BISHOP'S PICTURE**

## **DIOCESAN ANTHEM AND SYNOD PRAYER**

### **DIOCESAN ANTHEM**

1. O praise our Lord Creator of Evo Diocese,  
Come brethren, let us love, teach, and preach the gospel;  
Lord, grant us grace and wisdom, the strength to spread Thy Word,  
And teach us how to pray aright,  
God bless our Diocese.
  
2. O God our Father, bind us in brotherhood and faith,  
Thy will on Diocese of Evo be accomplished;  
The gains of perfection is our desire, Lord we pray,  
To know Thee more and more O Lord,  
God bless our Diocese.

### **SYNOD PRAYER**

O God our heavenly Father, Who has called us to be members of Your Church which is the Body of Your Son: Grant, we beseech You, that Your Holy Spirit may direct us now in all our concerns and deliberations in this Synod for the welfare and growth of Your Church in Evo.

We give thanks to You for all the progress and blessings of the past ten years of our existence, and for the opportunities of the present time; and we pray You, O Lord, to lead us forward into the work that lies before us that we may take heed to advance from strength to strength in the service of Your Kingdom, and ever magnify Your holy name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## PROTOCOLS AND GREETINGS

*“To Him who sits on the throne and unto the Lamb;  
Be blessings and glory and honour and power forever-Amen.”*

Your Excellency, The Executive Governor of Rivers State, Chief Barr. Ezebunwo Nyesom Wike, CON, GSSRS;  
Your Graces, The Archbishops and My Lords, The Bishops here present or represented;  
Other Guests and Local Speakers;  
Our Guest of Honour;  
Members of the National, State Assemblies and Judicial Officers here present or represented;  
The Executive Chairman of Obio/Akpor Local Government Area, Hon. Solomon Abel Eke and Members of your Executive Council;  
Other Government functionaries and captains of industry;  
The Diocesan Registrar, Sir Barr. Nlerum S. Amadi & all other Diocesan Legal Officers;  
The President of the Diocesan Mothers’ Union & Women’s Guild, Mrs. Chinyere U. Ordu, JP (Mama Evo);  
Highly respected Royal Fathers, Community Chiefs and Elders here present; Diocesan Mothers’ Union& Women’s Guild (Our Diocesan Chief Launchers for this year’s Synod;  
Venerable Archdeacons and their wives;  
Invited heads of Churches in Rivers State here present or represented;  
Other Clergymen and their wives;  
Members of the Evo Diocesan Council of Knights and their Ladies Church Teachers, Lay Readers and your spouses;  
Distinguished nominees of the Bishop to this Synod;  
Other distinguished Synod delegates;  
Members of the Diocesan and Local Synod Planning Committees;  
Our Diocesan men, women and youths;  
Members of the fourth estate of the realm;  
Our dear ladies and gentlemen;

On behalf of the Diocesan Board, accredited Synod delegates and the entire Anglican faithful of the Diocese of Evo, We greet and welcome everyone of you specially to this **First Session of the Fourth Synod** of our Diocese being hosted by the Woji Archdeaconry here in St. Nicholas Anglican Church, Woji District.

We thank all of you Synod delegates who were still able to come for this Synod this week after we had moved it from the original date of Wednesday, 31<sup>st</sup> July – Sunday, 4<sup>th</sup> August, 2019. The shift in date was due to circumstances beyond our control. We therefore, thank you for your understanding. And to all our guests, we appreciate your esteemed presence.

Thank you for finding time to come and identify with us, may the good Lord bless everyone abundantly in Jesus name, Amen.

## **OUR SYNOD HOST AND VENUE**

### **HISTORY OF WOJI ARCHDEACONRY (Our Synod Host)**

Before the year 2000, St. Nicholas (Ang.) Church, Woji town was the only Anglican Church in Woji and its environs. Today there are (10) Anglican churches constituting the Woji Archdeaconry. At creation of the Archdeaconry, it was only 6 churches with St. Nicholas as the only Parish. Woji Archdeaconry was created at the One-Day Synod of the Diocese of Evo held on 6<sup>th</sup> August, 2009 at all Saints' Cathedral Church, Rumuokwurusi, Obio, Port Harcourt by the Lord Bishop of Evo, The Rt. Rev'd Innocent U. Ordu, JP. Following the creation of Woji Archdeaconry, the Bishop preferred the then Rector of St. Nicholas', Woji Deanery, The Ven. Dr. Samuel Odubayo Odukoya as the Archdeacon of Woji Archdeaconry and the Vicar of St. Nicholas', Woji which now became a District Church. The Woji Archdeaconry Board was consequently instituted and inaugurated on the 9<sup>th</sup> of August, 2009.

**The following representatives from six churches read and signed the application requesting the Bishop to constitute and inaugurate their Churches into the new Woji Archdeaconry:**

#### **St. Nicholas' Anglican Church, Woji Deanery**

- 1) Chief Dr. Sir, Insp. (Rtd) E.O Eke
- 2) Sir Chief Dr. A.N Chuku
- 3) Sir chief A.C Wosu
- 4) Sir Dr. Chief Emeka G. Ihunwo
- 5) Sir P.W.O Owhor
- 6) Chief G.E. Chioma
- 7) Elder G.N. Igwe
- 8) Elder Allison I. Ogbonda
- 9) Ven. S. Bayo Odukoya
- 10) Mrs. E.A Odukoya

#### **Christ Anglican Church, Woji Estate**

- 1) Mr. James Ehumadu
- 2) Sir. Engr. Anwuna
- 3) Sir. C.O Dike
- 4) Mr. Sonny Iwendu
- 5) Rev. Bright Okocha

#### **Bethel Anglican Church, Rumuibekwe**

- 1) Rev. Canon J.A Elewa (Rtd)
- 2) Chief Stephen Elewa
- 3) Mr. Andrew Esiedesa
- 4) Mr. Chika Elewa
- 5) Rev. Canon Chukwuemeka E. Ogu

### **Immanuel Anglican Church, Ogbatai**

- 1) Sir Maxwell Egwuagu
- 2) Bro. Felix Anieze
- 3) Engr. Chudi Moneke
- 4) Mrs Juliana Orakwe
- 5) Rev. C.J. Kemakola

### **Anglican Church of the Pentecost, Ahia Wojji**

- 1) Mr. kingsley Enyinda Anyaogwu
- 2) Engr. V.K.T Lafus
- 3) Evang. Ifeoma Anaemena
- 4) Senibo Igoni Toby
- 5) Rev. Samuel Ejekwu John

### **Christ Harvest Anglican Church, Faith Avenue, Woji**

- 1) HRM King Frank Eke, JP. Ksc
- 2) Madam Sylverline Eke
- 3) Sir Reginald Waboso
- 4) Mr. Frank Onu Okoro
- 5) Rev. Charles Ibe

At the inaugural Board meeting, the following officers except the Archdeacon were elected to pilot the affairs of the New Archdeaconry for a term of 3 years at the first instance. They are:

- |                             |                              |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1) Ven. Dr. S. Bayo Odukoya | - Archdeacon                 |
| 2) Rev. Canon C.E. Ogu      | - Clerical Board Secretary   |
| 3) Mr. Promise Minimah      | - Lay Board Secretary (SNAC) |
| 4) Sir. P.W.O. Owhor        | - Treasurer (SNAC)           |
| 5) Mr. James Ehunadu        | - Auditor (CACWE)            |

**Other officers of the Archdeaconry were as follows:**

**Archdeaconry Representatives to the Evo Diocesan Board**

- 1) Ven. Dr. S. Bayo Odukoya
- 2) Rev. Canon Chukwuemeka E. Ogu
- 3) Barr. Kingsley Chuku
- 4) Mrs. Sophia Ojiakor

#### **Archdeaconry Representatives to the Evo Finance Board**

- 1) The Archdeacon
- 2) The Treasurer

#### **Archdeaconry Representatives to the Evo Diocesan Location/Appointment Board**

- 1) The Archdeacon
- 2) Sir Chief Dr. Emeka G. Ihunwo, Jp.

The Archdeaconry Inauguration Thanksgiving was celebrated on the 20<sup>th</sup> of September, 2009 at the Archdeaconry Headquarters, St. Nicholas' Church, Woji District. 700 persons attended this great service. Bishop Ordu graced the occasion as well as dignitaries from far and near, sister churches and the Woji community.

**From the time of the inauguration of Woji Archdeaconry in August 2009 to date (August 2019), the following ministers have led the Archdeaconry:**

1. **The Ven. Samuel Odubayo Odukoya, FNIM (August 2009–October 2009)**  
Ven. Odukoya was the Pioneer Archdeacon of the Archdeaconry. He inaugurated the Archdeaconry Board and instituted a solid framework for the take-off of the Archdeaconry.
2. **The Ven. Fyneface N. Akah, JP (October 2009–June 2010)**  
Ven. Akah as the Rector of Elelenwo Deanery doubled as the Supervising Archdeacon of Woji. He sustained the legacies of Ven. Odukayo. He also introduced roll call dues to churches at Archdeaconry Board Meetings.
3. **The Ven. Alex Usifoh (June 2010–February 2014)**  
He consolidated the achievement of his predecessors. He also expanded the size of the Archdeaconry with the planting of Cornerstone Anglican Church Rumurolu.
4. **The Ven. Fyneface N. Akah, JP (February 2014 – January 2015)**  
Ven. Akah who was the Rector of St. Jude's Oginigba Deanery doubled as the Archdeacon of Woji Archdeaconry on a second missionary work in Woji. He sustained the legacies of past administrations and introduced Evensong in St. Nicholas', Woji which brought together members of the Archdeaconry to solemn Sunday evening worship at the Headquarters.
5. **The Rt. Rev. Innocent Uchechukwu Ordu. JP (January 2015 – March 2016)**

The Rt. Rev. Innocent. U. Ordu, Bishop of Evo, doubled as Archdeacon of Woji Archdeaconry. His administration witnessed presentation of written reports from Churches, chaplaincies and all Committees and prepared resources for the take-off of the new Archdeaconry House.

**6. The Ven. Sunday Opara (March 2016 – April 2018)**

The Ven. Sunday Opara was Rector of St. Jude's Church, Oginigba Deanery and doubled again as Archdeacon of Woji Archdeaconry. He started the one-storey Archdeaconry building which also houses the Bishop's lodge to the roofing level.

**7. The Ven. Chris Chike Chukwumati (April 2018 to Date)**

The Ven. Chukwumati is currently the Rector of St. Jude's Church Oginigba Deanery and doubles as the Supervising Archdeacon of Woji Archdeaconry. His Administration had further strengthened the Archdeaconry. He worked hard to ensure the completion of the Archdeaconry House which was dedicated by the Bishop on Saturday, 3<sup>rd</sup> August, 2019.

#### **Four Additional Churches Planted After the Inauguration Of Woji Archdeaconry**

The number of churches in Woji Archdeaconry has increased from the original six at its inception to ten presently with the planting of the following churches:

- 1) Cornerstone Anglican Church Rumuolu
- 2) Ebenezer Anglican Church Trans Woji Road, Woji
- 3) Kind David Anglican Church Iriebé
- 4) Beulaland Anglican Church Nvuigwe, Woji

#### **List of All Clerical Board Secretaries (2009-2019)**

Rev. Canon Chukwuemeka E. Ogu,

Rev. Canon Roland Benjamin

Rev. Canon Cephas Okarefe

Rev. Canon Ozioma Iheanatu

Rev. Canon Godfrey Onyemelukwe

#### **Lay Board Secretaries (2009 – 2019)**

Mr. Promise Minimah, Mrs. Rebecca Ozuzu and Evang. Felix Anieze

#### **Treasurers (2009 – 2019)**

Sir. P.W.O Owhor, Mr. Ebuka Onyekwelu and Lady Felicia Derek-Iyo

Woji with 10 churches is one of the thriving and viable Archdeaconries in our Diocese. The Archdeaconry has the newest Archdeaconry House and Bishop lodge in the Diocese. The church in Woji has greatly impacted on the community making Woji appear as a bride in the Committee of Towns in Rivers State. Woji is blessed with a good number of companies both local and international, and other viable business outfits, government and privately-owned schools, hospitals, etc.

Woji Archdeaconry produced the first Diocesan Men's Christian Association (DCMA) President in the person of Sir. Reginald Waboso.

The Archdeaconry has produced two indigenous Anglican Priests, The Rev. Canon J. A. Elewa (rtd) and The Ven. Chidi Worgu.

The Church and by extension, the community, has produced great personalities and notable politicians like His Excellency, the late former Deputy Governor of Rivers State and Eze Ohna-Evo II, Sir Dr. Frank Adele Eke, JP, CON, HRH Eze (Sir) Emeka Ihunwo, Paramount Ruler of Woji Community, Hon. Chief. G.C. Ogbonda, Hon. Chief Dr. Lawrence Chuku, Hon. Prince Solomon Abel Eke, the current Executive Chairman of Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State, and Hon. Justice Uche Kingsley Chuku.

### **The History of St. Nicholas Anglican Church, Woji District (Our Synod Venue)**

The good news of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ came to Woji through the instrumentality of Late Mr. Jack Habenuchi Ibeonye and others in the year 1909. These men who included Messrs Thomas Oriekwu Samuel Chinwo and Nyekwe Ijinwere, to mention a few; got the inspiration through their contact with the people of Okujagu-Ama, Okrika, during their trading and fishing activities.

The Church at that period operated as an appendage of the Okujagu-Ama Church. Sunday Worship and Church meetings were conducted in the private house of one of the early pioneers, Thomas Oriekwu, adjacent to the present Church site. Records also have it that Samuel Dakoroma's house at Nvuwigwe, Woji was also used occasionally for the church activities. It was not until 1910 that the church moved to its first permanent site at Onu Mini Otudor, Woji. The movement and choice of site was necessitated by two main factors. The first was to vacate Thomas Oriekwu's house in response to his mother's protest that "the church constituted a nuisance" and a violation of her right to a quiet living. The second was apparently to make it easier, by reducing the distance covered by their brethren and leaders from Okujagu-Ama, who worshiped with them occasionally. Brethren like Thomas Okujagu, Samuel Amanie and one Abeipeleari all of Okujagu Village, Okrika, who were friends of the founding members assisted in nurturing the early members and also helped in conducting church services and prayer meetings in turns, before the church became autonomous towards the end of 1910, wherein Mr. Abbey Cole of Abeokuta parentage was posted as a Church Agent and the Church became officially named and called Saint Nicholas' Church, Woji.

The first permanent Church building, which also doubled as a school, was built in 1912 and was situated at about 30 meters east of the present church building. Mr. Caleb of Kalio Village, also of Okrika, succeeded Mr. Abbey Cole in 1912. In 1914, Africanus Dakar took over as the church Agent and school Teacher. Mr. JohnBull Dakar succeeded him in 1915 while Mr. Paul Ogudire served between 1917 and 1918.

Within this period, the church of God suffered a lot of setbacks world-wide and the Woji was not an exception. Its members particularly the women folk were harassed and persecuted for holding strongly to the church faith. Early worshippers and members, of this church like Miss Florence Ogunka, Miss Hannah Eke and Margaret Ogunka were very committed and equally bold to speak out against certain customary practices and beliefs adjudged to be inconsistent with Christian doctrines. These women were persecuted for daring the custom.

The church, in spite of these distractions, continued to wax strong and thrive as it continued to grow from strength to strength and ascended to greater heights. With the remarkable increase in its membership over time, the need to build a bigger place of worship arose. The result of this was the decision to start a new church building. This led to the foundation stone-laying ceremony performed by The Rt. Revd Y.A. Fubara in 1977 at the present site of the church. The Ibeh Anyaogwu Family/Compound in Woji Town donated to St. Nicholas' (Ang.) Church, Woji Town, the present site measuring 13, 725.85 square meters. This was regularized by a DEED OF GRANT between Chief Promise Nnamdi Ibeh – DONOR (for himself, and on behalf of the Ibeh Anyaogwu Compound of Woji community) witnessed by Elder Abel Nyebuchi Ibeh, and Comrade Kingsley Uchechukwu Ibeh And St. Nicholas' Anglican Church (SNAC) Woji represented by the Rector, The Ven. Samuel Odubayo Odukoya – (DONEE) witnessed by Sir, Chief Dr. Emeka Ihunwo and Sir Promise O. Owhor. The Deed of Grant was duly registered with Stamp Duty BIR/R720/INRVO/0920090019/09 of 1/9/2009.

Within 1978 -1980, Chief Samuel Adiele Nwanoro (the first son the late Catechist A.N. Wosu) was involved in a shipwreck when he was coming back from overseas. In gratitude to God for saving his life, he took over the building of the old church to completion. The electrification of the church was sponsored by HRM King Amb. Prof. Dr. Frank A. Eke, CON, K.S.C, JP, who was then Deputy Governor of Rivers State.

The completed church building was dedicated on Saturday, 31<sup>st</sup> March, 1990 and the Station inaugurated as a Parish the same day by the then Bishop of the Diocese of Niger Delta, The Rt. Rev. Samuel O. Elenwo.

The rise in the number of worshippers necessitated the need for yet another bigger auditorium. Consequently, on the 19<sup>th</sup> April, 2002, the foundation stone for the proposed new church building was laid by the then Bishop of the Diocese of Niger Delta North, The Rt. Rev. Ignatius C.O. Kattey JP.

With the creation of deaneries by the Diocesan Board and Synod of Niger Delta North in 2002, St. Nicholas' Church, Woji was chosen among the 8 initial deaneries and was subsequently so inaugurated on the 18<sup>th</sup> of December, 2002 with The Ven. E.C. Eleazu as the first Rector.

On 5<sup>th</sup> December, 2010, the new church building which started in 2002 was completed and dedicated by His Lordship, The Rt. Rev. Innocent U. Ordu JP, during the administration of The Ven. Alex Usifoh as Vicar. The church also marked her centenary celebration from the time it was planted (1910-2010) together with the new church dedication.

## **CHURCHES PLANTED BY ST. NICHOLAS WOJI**

### **Immanuel Anglican Church Ogbatai (IMACO)**

In response to the spiritual responsibility to spread the Gospel to all nations, Matthew 28:16-20, St. Nicholas (Anglican) Church Woji Deanery on Sunday, 28<sup>th</sup> March, 2004 planted Immanuel Anglican Church, Ogbatai at the premises of Christ International School. Two (2) plots of land were later purchased for the church building. Mr. M.C.A Egwuagu, Mrs. Sharon E. Chinwo and Bro. Felix Anieze were dispatched from St. Nicholas', the mother-church by the Rector, The Ven. Bayo Odukoya on missionary assignment to assist in growing the new church Station (IMACO). The Church has since grown to attain a Parish status on 23<sup>rd</sup> November, 2014.

### **Anglican Church of Pentecost Ahia Woji (ACOPA)**

The second church planted was the Anglican Church of the Pentecost Ahia-Woji popularly called ACOPA. This was achieved by the instrumentality of the Woji Council of Chiefs and elders led by His Royal Majesty King Professor Dr. F.A Eke JP, CON that donated 3 plots of land at the Woji old market site for the church to commence. The first worship was held in the house of Mr. Victor Jaja near the church land on Sunday 26/3/2006.

In the same vein, Ven S. Bayo Odukoya dispatched Engr. VKT Lafua, Bro. M. Jeremiah and Evang. Ifeoma Anaemena on Mission to ACOPA, while Bro. Victor Jaja now (Revd.) became the church teacher and was assisted by Ord. Christopher Omenkeoma from Diocese of Niger Delta North.

### **Christ Harvest Anglican Church, Faith Avenue (CHACFA)**

In order for the church and gospel of Jesus Christ to spread to all nooks and crannies of Woji town, the then vicar of St. Nicholas, Ven. S. Bayo Odukoya approached the Paramount ruler of the town, His Excellency, King Dr. Frank Eke, JP and Founder of the Christ Harvest Chapel International Incorporated Faith Avenue Woji to consider returning back to the Anglican Church 30 years after he left as a member and also to relinquish his Pentecostal church established 19 years earlier to the Anglican communion. King Frank Eke agreed to happily handover his Christ Harvest Chapel to the Anglican Church. This was received with great joy by The Ven. Odukoya and the then Bishop of the Diocese of Niger Delta North, The Rt. Rev. I.C.O Kattey, JP. Full takeover by the Anglican Church took place on Sunday, 18<sup>th</sup> March, 2007. Ord. Prince Charles Ezeanochie, (now Reverend), was posted to serve in the church while Sir Reginald Waboso and Elder Israel Nwachukwu were dispatched from St. Nicholas, Woji to CHACFA on missionary assignment.

### **Cornerstone Anglican Church, Rumurolu**

This fourth church planted by St. Nicholas was done during the administration of Rev. Can Alex Usifoh as Vicar, who later became the Archdeacon of Woji Archdeaconry. The Church was planted on Sunday, 15<sup>th</sup> July, 2012 with then Ordinand Chukwudi Evans Theophilus posted to take care of it. We, The Bishop of Evo later christened the Church **Cornerstone Anglican Church, Rumurorlu** on Sunday, 23<sup>rd</sup> June, 2013. Early worshippers at the Church were Mr. Fortune Amadi (now Chief), Mr. Ogundu Ogbonda, Mrs. Felicia Derek Iyo, (now lady).

### **King David, Iriebe**

The planting of the fifth Church was by the Anglican Youth Fellowship of St. Nicholas, Woji District. This took place on Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> May, 2016. The Rev. Ozioma Iheanaetu (now Revd. Canon) was the Vicar. We, The Bishop of Evo later christened this Church **King David Anglican Church, Iriebe** on Sunday, 21<sup>st</sup> October, 2018. Ordinand Donatus Ngah, (now Reverend), was the first Church Teacher posted to this Church, and was succeeded by

Evangelist Ndukauba Freeborn Cherechi who is still there as at date. Under him, the Church has moved from a temporary place to its permanent building. Early worshippers were Mr. Uduak U.D, Sis Oluebube, Bro Chisom Ezenwanne, Mr. Chimzi Amechule and St. Nicholas Anglican Church AYF Executives, God's arm Onukwufor and Joy Opike.

### **Church Workers since Inception**

S/N	Name	Year
1.	Late Mr. Abbey Cole (Church Agent)	1910
2.	Late Mr. Celeb Omubo (Church Teacher)	1912
3.	Late Mr. Africanus	1914
4.	Late Mr. Johnbull Daker	1915
5.	Late Mr. Paul Ojudire	1917-1918
6.	Late Mr. Adda	1927-1930
7.	Late Mr. M.N. Nwafunume	1931-1936
8.	Late Mr. R.O. Madume	1937-1938
9.	Late Mr. David Uwewe	1938-1940
10.	Late Mr. C.N. Igwuillo	1940-1950
11.	Late Mr. Nwagbara	1951-1953
12.	Late Cath. A.N. Wosu	1953-1959 (1 <sup>st</sup> Term)
13.	Late Cath. Ikenga	1960-1964
14.	Late Cath. Onunwo Church Teacher)	1965-1968
15.	Late Cath. Uranta	1969-1872
16.	Late Cath. I.W. Epelle	1973-1975
17.	Late Cath. A.N. Wosu	1976-1978 (2 <sup>nd</sup> Term)
18.	Late. Cath. F. Iwe	-
19.	Late Rev. J.A. Tasie (Vicar)	1985-1986
20.	Cath. C.N. Anamoji (Now Venerable)	1987-1988
21.	Rev. G.O. Wodi (Now Archdeacon) VICAR -	1989-1990
22.	Cath. A.A. Nyenke (Now Rev) Catechist	1990-1991
23.	Rev. Canon S.O. Elea (Now Retired) Vicar	Sept. 1991- July1996
24.	Ord. Joseph Ihejirika (Now Rev Can) Ordinand	July 1996 – Oct. 1996 Apostolic Work
25.	Rev. Sam. Ozi Eze (Now Archdeacon) Priest	Jan. 1998 – Oct. 1998
26.	Rev. Canon S.C. Dick (Vicar)	March 1998-June2000
27.	Rev. Dr. E.C. Ndu (Now Arch.) Curate	Feb. 1999- July 2000
28.	Rev. T. Wali (Now Canon) Vicar	July 2000-June2001
29.	Rev S. Nwinnee (Now Archdeacon) Curate	July 2000-August 2001
30.	Ord. Emma Odunze (Now Canon)	March 2001-Oct.2001
31.	Rev E. Mgbeahuruike (Now Canon) Vicar	June 2001-Aug.2002
32.	Ven. E.C. Eleazu (Rector)	Aug. 2002 - 2003
33.	Ven. Dr. B.C. Enyindah (Now Bishop) Rector	Nov 2003 – Nov 2004
34.	Rev S.L.L. Nna (Now Canon) Curate	Dec. 2001- Nov 2004
35.	Ven Dr. S. Bayo Odukoya Rector/Vicar	Nov 2004 – Dec 2009

36.	Rev S.C. Enuari Missionary Ordinand	Nov 2003 - 2007
37.	Rev C. Okoli Priest	2006 – July 2009
38.	Rev S.O. Obialor (Now Canon) Priest	Jan 2008 – Oct 2008
39.	Rev J. Akpan Curate	Nov 2004 – Oct 2008
40.	Rev Dr E. Ugwu, Priest	Jan 2009 – Oct 2009
41.	Rev. G. Onyemelukwe (Now Canon), Curate	Oct. 2008 – Dec. 2009
42.	Rev. G. Onyemelukwe (Now Canon), Vicar	Dec. 2009 – Feb. 2011
43.	Rev S.J. Ejekwu, Priest	Feb 2009 – Feb 2011
44.	Rev Can Femi Igbamerun, Curate	Dec 2010 – Feb 2014
45.	Rev B.A. Nwaoha (Now Canon), Priest	Dec 2010 –Feb 2013
46.	Rev. Can. Alex Usifoh (Now Archdeacon), Vicar	Feb 2010 – Feb 2014
47.	Rev Cephas Okarefe (Now Canon), Vicar	Feb 2014 – Jan 2015
48.	Rev Rowland Benjamin (Now Canon), Priest	Feb 2013 – Jan 2015
49.	Ord. Poni Tukabari (Now Revd.), Priest	Jan 2014 - Date
50.	Rev Ozioma Iheanaetu (Now Canon), Vicar	Jan 2015 – April 2018
51.	Rev Tim Ofuka – Curate	Jan 2015 – April 2018
52.	Rev Can K. Ohajianya – Vicar	April 2018 - Date
53.	Rev. C.J. Kemakolam, Curate	April 2018 – Feb 2019
54.	Rev Dr E. Chinweze,Priest	Feb 2019 - Date

### Lay Readers

1	Late Samuel Chinwo	11	Mrs. R.C. Eleazu
2	Late Chief Gabriel Adele	12	Evang. (Mrs) Chinwe Nwimo
3	Late Mr. James Eke	13	Edna Adagogo Brown Assoc Prof
4	Mrs. B.E. Minimah	14	Mr. Felix Anieze
5	Mr. S.M. Chioma	15	Sharon Chiwo Lady
6	Mrs. C.N. Chuku	16	Mrs. Mercy Nweke
7	Mrs. Patience Omachi	17	Mercy Opike Barr
8	Mrs. I.J. Wosu	18	Evang. (Mrs.) Charity Ogbonda
9	Mr. S.W. Elewa	19	Mrs. Elizabeth A. Odukoya
10	Mrs. May Njoku George	20	Mrs. Precious Sonny Amadi
21	Dame Augusta I.Ouwujie.Jp	24	Mrs. Henrietta Nwaolisa
22	Chf. Mrs.May E. George	25	Lady Lolo Gladys E. Ihunwo
23	Engr Matthew Oladeran	26	Mrs. Maureen A. Chuku
		27	AOS-ta Valerie S. Fubara

### Pioneer Members

1	Late Jack Habinuchi Ibeonye	19	Esther Chinwo
2	Late Thomas Orekwu	20	Peter Ogunka
3	Late Samuel Chinwo	21	Fred Njo Chuku
4	Late Nyekwe Ijiwere	22	Ihebinadike Aka
5	Late Chief Gabriel Adele	23	Simeon Wosu
6	Peter Woriji	24	Athnasius N. Wosu

7	Francis Wosu	25	Chief J.W. Eke (Late Hrm)
8	Chief William Aka	26	Walter Chuku
9	Philip Eke	27	Diana Eke
10	Enyi Omachi	28	Appolos Chukumgba
11	Silas Ihunwo	29	Matthew Iyo
12	Moses Chinwo	30	Johnson Obioha
13	Titus Nyekwe	31	Wellington Iyo
14	Mary Chinwo	32	Ebenezer Aka
15	Mary Ibeonye	33	Alfred Anyaogwu
16	Hannah Eke	34	Abraham Chioma
17	Florence Ogunka	36	Eunice Chinwo
18	Matha Ogunka	37	Caroline Omachi

<b>Choir Masters</b>		<b>Treasurers</b>	
1.	Late Mr. S.C. Chioma	1.	Late Chief Gabriel Adele
2.	Late Mr. B.A. Eke	2.	Late Elder James O. Eke
3.	Late Mr. I.Y.O.Chioma	3.	Elder Simeon M. Chioma
4.	Late Mr. George Aka	4.	Elder Alison I. Ogbonda
5.	Mr.P.W.O. Owhor	5.	Chief A.N. Chuku
6.	Mr.Harbert Owhor	6.	Late A.N. Eke
7.	Rev.Echi Ukpabi	7.	Mr P.W.O. Owhor
8.	Senibo T.I.Dappa	8.	Sir Chf Azubuike Elewa
9.	Mr. Paul Epelle Setima	9.	Mr Ebuka Onyekwalu
10.	Mr.Given Asi Ebenezer	10.	Mr Kingsley Ogbonda
11.	Mr. Sampson Job	11.	Lady Sharon Chinwo
12.	Evang. Benjamine Peterson	12.	
<b>Recent Church Secretaries</b>		<b>Recent Assistant Secretaries</b>	
1.	Charles Daniel	1.	Promise Minimah
2.	Sir Chf. Ernest Chinwo	2.	Lady Precious Amadi
3.	Assoc. Prof. Edna A. Brown	3.	Seun Ijaware Mrs
4.	Promise Minimah	4.	Barr. Mercy Nweke
5.	Lady Sharon Chinwo	5.	Barr. Lydia Ogbonda
6.	Prince Justice E. Ihunwo	6.	Mrs. Winnefred Anyim
<b>Recent Church Wardens</b>		<b>Recent AYF Presidents</b>	
1.	Elder G.N. Igwe	1.	Sir P.W.O. Owhor
2.	Omoba Joseph Olaseni	2.	Mr. Winston Chinwo (Late)
3.	Mr. Promise Minimah	3.	Mrs. Ibim Tepikor
4.	Elder G.N. Ogbonda	4.	Evang. Felix Anieze
5.	Engr. Adolphus Chuku	5.	Mr. Osita Okpalaukeje
6.	Uche Osiogwu	6.	Mr. Wale Olajide
7.	Surv. Chituru Obowu	7.	Sis. Joy Opike
8.	Engr. Emeka Ajere	8.	Mr. God's arm Onukwufo

9.	Mr. Chidi Anyanwu	9.	Mr. Chuks Uzochukwu
10.	Mr. Chidi Umeokona	10.	Sis. Jennifer O. Wobo
11.	Mrs. Angela Owuamanam		
12.	Engr. Uduanochie Azozie		<b>Recent Clerks</b>
13.	Comr. Kingsley Ibeh		Joy Olumgwe
14.	Surv. Kingsley Chioma	1.	Mr. Daniel
15.	Sir Emma Ogbonda	2.	Justina Amadi
		3.	Gloria Boms
<b>Recent CMF Presidents</b>		4.	Mr. Chika
1.	Sir Reginald Waboso	5.	Ibim Tepiekor
2.	Omoba Joseph Olaseni	6.	Rosemary Chiejine
3.	Sir Barr. Chf Kingsley Chuku	7.	Mr. John Wenyi
4.	Sir. Chief. Ernest Chinwo	8.	Mrs. Mercy Egbule

### **Other Churches of the Archdeaconry**

#### **1. Christ Anglican Church, Federal Housing Estate Parish, Wojji:**

- Planted by The Rev. Emenike C. Ndu (now Venerable Prof.) and about 8 other lay persons on Sunday, 10<sup>th</sup> September, 2000 at initial location at Estate Road 6, opposite Winners Chapel. Later moved to permanent site at Estate Road 26 by Kumonis Secondary School.
- Christened by The Rt. Rev. I.C.O. Kattey, JP
- Foundation Stone of new Church laid on Saturday, 23<sup>rd</sup> September, 2017 by The Rt. Rev. I.C.O. Kattey, JP.
- New Church building was dedicated on Sunday, 27<sup>th</sup> June, 2010 by We, The Rt. Rev. I.U. Ordu, JP, Bishop of Evo. It was also Inaugurated a Parish the same day.
- New vicarage dedicated on Sunday, 29<sup>th</sup> June, 2014 by us.
- Past and present Church workers:
  - Ordinand Andy Nonyelum (now Rev. Canon), 2000 – 2003
  - Rev. Dumnyie Nkane, 2004 – 2005
  - Rev. Gift Chigozie Emesiobi (now Venerable), 2006 – April, 2007
  - Rev. Maxwell Anachuna, May, 2007 – August, 2009
  - Rev. Bright Okocha (now Canon), 1<sup>st</sup> Vicar August, 2009 – December, 2012
  - Rev. Chukwuemeka Okonkwo (now Canon), 2<sup>nd</sup> Vicar 2012 – October, 2016
  - Rev. Can. Ahamuefula Olluor, 3<sup>rd</sup> Vicar October, 2016 – April, 2018
  - Rev. Collins Daniel, 4<sup>th</sup> /current Vicar April, 2018 – date

#### **First set of Lay Readers**

Mr. Friday Richard  
Mr. James Ehumadu  
Engr. Richard Uzorhu  
Mr. Lucky Amadi and  
Mr. Mathew Elisha

**a. Beulahland Anglican Church, Nvuigwe, Woji:**

- Planted on Sunday, 5<sup>th</sup> July, 2015 at No. 67 Nvuigwe Road (Good Shepherd Academy premises of the Retd Ven. & Mrs. Lazarus Nwafor).
- Moved to No. 2 Simon Eke Street (still a temporary site) on Sunday, 23<sup>rd</sup> September, 2018 and was christened by us on Sunday, 17<sup>th</sup> February, 2019.
- **Church workers so far:**
  - Mr. Henry Ordu (now Rev.)
  - Mr. Christian Tasie (now Rev.)
  - Evang. Columbus
  - Mr. Ogochukwu Ogini and
  - Mr. David Wopara (current Church teacher)

**2. Bethel Anglican Church, Rumuibekwe Parish:**

- Planted by St. Andrews Church, Rumuobiokani Parish on Sunday, 28<sup>th</sup> January, 2001 under The Rev'd Canon E.C. Eleazu (Now Venerable)
- Christened by The Rt. Rev. I.C.O. Kattey, JP then Bishop of Niger Delta North Diocese on Wednesday, 18<sup>th</sup> April, 2001.
- Foundation Stone for the present permanent Church building was laid on Saturday, 13<sup>th</sup> July, 2002 by The Rt. Rev. I.C.O. Kattey, JP.
- Worship at the new Church building (though not completed and dedicated) began on Sunday, 28<sup>th</sup> July, 2008.
- Church inaugurated a Parish Sunday, 26<sup>th</sup> September, 2010 by us.
- New Church building was dedicated by us on Sunday, 1<sup>st</sup> July, 2012.
- Pastors who have served in Bethel are:
  - Ord. Napoleon Onuegbu (now Venerable), 2001 – 2003
  - Rev. Samuel Abuoma Ajoku, 2003 – 2005
  - Rev. Can. B.C. Eke, 2005 – 2008
  - Rev. Can. C.E. Ogu (now late), 2008 – 2011
  - Rev. Cephas Okarefe (now Canon), 2011 – 2014
  - Rev. Can. Hosanna Nnaewi, 2014 – 2016
  - Rev. Can. Samson O. Abada, October 2016 – date.

### **3. Ebenezer Anglican Church, Slaughter Road, Woji:**

- Planted by the Diocesan Men's Christian Association (DMCA now CMF) on Sunday, 21<sup>st</sup> July, 2013 as Anglican Worship Centre.
- Christened by us on Sunday, 16<sup>th</sup> March, 2014 as *Ebenezer Anglican Church, Slaughter Road, Woji*.
- First Church Teacher, Mr. Emmanuel Legbosi.
- Present Church Teacher, Mr. Nwabueze Ndukwe

## **OUR SYNOD SPEAKERS**

### **THE REV. CANON SAMSON OKECHUKWU ABADA**

The Rev. Canon Samson Okechukwu Abada, was born on the 5th February, 1963 in Nsukka, Enugu State. He hails from Enugwu Ukwu in Anambra State

#### **Academic Qualifications:**

He has a Master of Arts Degree in Mass Communications from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka; Bachelors of Arts in Education, Religion, from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka; Diploma in Theology, from St Paul's College, Awka.

#### **Ordination:**

He was Ordained as a Deacon, on the 18th of July, 2004, Priested, on the 5th of December, 2005 and Preferred a Canon, on the 24th March, 2018.

#### **Churches Served:**

He served in St. Mark's Church, Elelenwo Deanery from 2008 – 2004; Anglican Worship Centre, New Covenant, Eliminigwe Housing Estate, Elelenwo, 2007 – 2008; St. Philip's Church, Oroigwe, 2008 – 2009; Church of the Holy Spirit, Elionzu Parish, 2009 – 2010; St. Andrew' Church, Rumuobiokani Deanery, 2011 – 2013; Church of the Epiphany, Azumini, Rumuokwurusi, 2014 – 2016; Bethel Anglican Church, Rumuibekwe Parish, 2016 - Date

#### **Chaplaincies:**

He was the Chaplain for Diocesan Prayer Ministry from 2009 – 2013 and Sunday School, Discipleship, Literature & Publications Ministry, 2013 - Date

He is married to Mrs. Amarachukwu Abada, and blessed with children.

Canon Abada took us on Bible Study 1 of this Synod on Thursday, 15th August on the topic: "Take Heed to yourself: strive for the crown of glory". We are very grateful to him.

## **THE REV. CANON DR. CEPHAS OKAREFE**

The Reverend Canon Dr. Cephas Okarefe hails from Oghara in Ethiope West Local Government Area of Delta State. He is a graduate of the University of Benin, and holds a PhD in New Testament from Crowther Graduate Theological Seminary, Abeokuta, Ogun State (in affiliation with Ekiti State University).

He started ministry in 1992/93 when he worked as a Missionary with the Scripture Union Nigeria as an Associate Travelling Secretary at Uturu, Isouchi and Isuikwuato in Abia State, then as a Youth Corps member on National service. Thereafter, he worked with the Scripture Union Nigeria for fifteen years, first as a substantive Travelling Secretary, and later as Regional Coordinator in charge of Rivers and Bayelsa States.

He got ordained as Deacon on September 30, 2001, and later as Priest on July 14, 2002 by the Rt. Rev. Peter I. Onekpe, the then Bishop of the Diocese of Ika.

Since joining our Diocese in 2009 he has served as the pioneer Chaplain of the Diocesan Sunday school and Discipleship Ministry (SSDM). Indeed he has been an important part of the Developmental strides of the Diocese, especially in the establishment of the Printing Press, Trainings, writing/publishing, Chaplaincy oversight, and serving as priest in a number of Churches in the Diocese. In July 2014, he was honoured with an award of Excellence in Discipleship during the 5th anniversary of the Diocese.

The Rev. Canon Dr. Cephas Okarefe subscribes to Evangelical instruments of the Amsterdam 2000 Declaration; the Scripture Union Shield of Righteousness and the Cape Town Commitment, and he is passionate about pursuit of Revival and a truly spiritual leadership in the Church (with zero tolerance for unsound gospel), His core values are excellence, truth and honesty.

He is a Teacher, Preacher and Trainer by gifting (especially on Christian leadership), with the vision to be a Bible Scholar that is able to stand in defence of the faith of Christ; and be able to teach others to do same. His core values are excellence, truth and honesty, just as he dislikes mediocrity, falsehood and doing violence to scripture.

He is married to Remi, a Mathematician, Research and Statistics expert, and also a teacher of God's word; and the marriage is blessed with children.

Canon Okarefe took us on Bible Study 2 of this Synod on Friday, 16<sup>th</sup> August on the topic: "Take Heed to yourself and to your doctrine". We are equally very grateful to him. We also use this medium to congratulate him once again on his recent award of a Doctor of Philosophy Degree (PhD) in New Testament from the Crowther Graduate Theological Seminary, Abeokuta, Ogun State (in affiliation with Ekiti State University).

## **The Rev. Collins Okachukwu Daniel**

Rev. Collins Okachukwu Daniel was born on 7<sup>th</sup> May 1972 to the family of Chief and Mrs. Christian Ogbonda Daniel from Rumuroba village in the Rumuobiokani Community of the Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State. Rev. Collins Okachukwu Daniel is a graduate of Business Administration and Management and a holder of Diploma in Theology. He is a member of the John Maxwell international Leadership team and holds a certificate in Leadership from the John Maxwell Online University.

The Rev. Collins Okachukwu Daniel has held several positions some of which are:

- President Nigeria Fellowship of Evangelical Students (NIFES) 1996-1997
- State Prayer Secretary Nigeria Christian Corps' Fellowship (NCCF) 1998
- Associate Training Secretary (ATS), Nigeria Fellowship of Evangelical Student (NIFES) 1999 till date
- President, Anglican Youth Fellowship, St. Andrews Anglican Church Rumuobiokani 1999-2002
- President Global Word Outreach Frontiers (GWOF) a non-denominational outreach Organization 2003-2010.
- Pioneer Pastor, Holy City Anglican Church New Jerusalem 2010-2013
- Adviser to Student Union Government, Trinity Theological College Umuahia, 2011-2012.
- Youth Chaplain, Anglican Youth Fellowship, Diocese of Edo 2013-2015
- Chaplain, Diocesan Corps members Fellowship, Diocese of Edo 2016 till date.

Rev. Collins Okachukwu Daniel is an Evangelist by call and a passionate preacher and teacher of the word of God. He is currently involved in:

- ❖ Leadership Training
- ❖ Church Management
- ❖ Church Growth
- ❖ Life Coaching
- ❖ Youth Empowerment
- ❖ Public Speaking
- ❖ Management consultancy
- ❖ Outreaches Etc.

Rev. Collins Okachukwu Daniel is happily married to his sweet heart Mrs. Barinem Dorine Daniel who is a worthy support to him in life and ministry. They are blessed with three children: Chioma, Onyinyechi and Chimbroma. The Lord has also graciously blessed them with several other spiritual sons and daughters.

Rev. Collins Daniel will take us on Bible Study 3 of this Synod tomorrow Sunday morning, 18<sup>th</sup> August on the topic: “Take Heed to your conduct”. We thank him in advance.

### **THE VENERABLE FYNEFACE N. AKAH**

#### **SFIAMN, DMCLI (Doctoris Ministerio, Pax Justitia) EXECUTIVE CHAIRMAN**

Dr. Akah embarked on proficiency studies in Journalism, English language, Business Communication and Advance Writing and obtained Diploma in Journalism/Business Communication in 1984. He proceeded to the then Rivers State College, today Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rumuolumeni, Port Harcourt, finished as one of the best graduating students in Religious and Moral Studies in 1990; he became the first graduate to be offered a teaching faculty by his department from 1992-1997. He later became a Master of Arts in Ecumenical History, University of Port Harcourt in 1995 and earned from Wisconsin, United States, the famous Nashotah House Theological Seminary Doctorate, stressing in Anglican Spiritual Tradition, Liturgy and Catechesis.

He trained for the priesthood at Trinity Theological College, Umuahia, graduated in 1992, was made Deacon and in 1993, priested by the late **Right Reverend Samuel Elenwo** and was given a minor canonry charge at the Cathedral Church of Saint Stephen, Grand Bonny, Niger Delta Diocese in 1992. Dr. Akah earned, by preferment, the honorary and Residentiary Canonry in 1995. Upon the creation of Niger Delta North Diocese, he was appointed pioneer Cathedral Administrator/Canon Residentiary of the Cathedral Church of Saint Paul, Diobu in 1996 and pioneer Anglican Provost of Port Harcourt in the same Cathedral from 1997-2002.

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

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

This Archdeacon had also served on the River State Council on Prerogative of Mercy as a Member.

This Senior Fellow, Institute of Administrative Management of Nigeria, Discussion Member Canon Law Institute, Justice of the Peace, practical and process theologian, academic, teacher, preacher, consultant, author of ten published titles, columnist on educational themes, ecumenist, educationist, psalmody, hymnodist, liturgist, husband of his cherished darling, **Joy** and father of seven baptized children currently holds a national charge in the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) as the sitting Rector and Director of the Institute of Theology Seminary, Paul University, Awka, Anambra State, is the incumbent Executive Chairman Rivers State Universal Basic Education Board.

The Ven. Dr. Fyneface N. Akah, JP presented a talk to the People's and Pastor's wardens attending this Synod on Thursday, 15<sup>th</sup> August. We thank our dear Venerable Archdeacon and Chairman of the Rivers State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) for finding time out of his crowded engagement to minister to us. May the Lord bless you Sir and your household.

### **VENERABLE UDOBATA RUFUS ONUNWA**

Udobata was born to a very strong Christian Parents, Late Pa R.E. Onunwa and Ezinne Dr. Mrs. Irene Ogo-oma Onunwa (who died a few months ago). He grew up in the village as a young faithful Anglican school 'boy' in the Choir, Youth Fellowship and Boys Brigade before leaving for the Grammar School where he gave his life as a Christian through the Ministry of the Scripture Union.

He became a very strong Christian Union member and Bible study Consultant in the Universities. served as EFAC & NIFES Bible Study Consultant for many years in Nigeria. He was ordained December 15, 1974, Priested April 1975, Canon November 1985, Archdeacon – 1991; Served as Vicar/Parish Priest in the Diocese of Oweni, Enugu, Okigwe/Orlu, Calabar, Birmingham and Chester (UK).

Lectured in the;

- University of Nigeria Nsukka
- University of Calabar
- University of Birmingham UK

Served as the Visiting Professor to over 20 African, European and American Universities and has published over fifteen University peer reviewed text Books and 250 cited academic Articles & Journals in Europe, Asia, Africa, USA and the Oceania. He is a widely travelled public speaker and research expert.

Udobata is a member of many Learned and Professional Academic Association in Africa, Europe and the United States.

- He is Cadbury Professor of Old Testament Exegesis and Theology, University of Birmingham.
- Fellow of American Association for Advancement of Science.
- Africana-Marbungenesia Professor of African Traditional Institutions, Culture and Development (Munich Germany).

He is widely travelled and holds the;

- BA (Hons) First Class Degree, University of Nigeria,
- BA (Hons) First Class, University of London (SOAS),
- MA Nigeria, MA (Harvard), PhD Nigeria,
- PhD (London), Dip.Th. London,
- Full Bright Scholar University of Harvard.
- Served as the Theological Consultant to the Archbishop of Canterbury and Her Majesty the Queen.
- Is a Biblical Scholar who reads and writes Hebrew, Greek, German and Aramaic
- Is a believer of the Gospel and a practitioner of the Christian Faith;
- Currently the Rector of Trinity Theological College, Umuahia

The Ven. Prof. Udobata Rufus Onunwa presented a talk to us on the Essence of Synod on Thursday, 15<sup>th</sup> August. We thank our dear Venerable Professor for finding time out of his crowded engagements at Trinity College, Umuahia to minister to us. May the Lord bless you Prof. with your household.

### **The Rev'd Canon Gospel E. Onuchuku**

The Rev'd Canon Gospel E. Onuchuku was born on 19<sup>th</sup> April, 1971 in Rumuohia, Emohua. He hails from Emohua Local Government Area, Rivers State.

He is married to Mrs. Peace Onuchuku and blessed with three children, Obirizi, Chimbueze and Homachi.

#### **Ordination:**

He was Ordained as a Diaconate on 20<sup>th</sup> July, 2008, Priestly Ordination on 13<sup>th</sup> December, 2009, Preferment 24<sup>th</sup> March, 2019 and Installation on the 10<sup>th</sup> of June, 2019.

#### **Churches Served:**

He has served in Church of the Epiphany, Azumini Rumuokwurusi (Missionary) from 2003 – 2005; All Saints' Church Rumuokwurusi District, July, 2008 – September, 2008; St Simon's Church, Okporo Deanery September, 2008 – November, 2008; New Wine Church, East West Road, Okporo, November, 2008 – January 2011; Anglican Church of Pentecost Rumuogba Parish, January 2011 – January 2015; New Covenant Church, Eliminigwe Parish, Elelenwo, January, 2015 – Till Date

#### **Ministry Portfolios :-: Diocese of Evo**

He was the Acting Chaplain Youth Ministry from 2009 – 2010; Chaplain, Ministry to NYSC Members from 2013 – 2015; Chaplain, Acting Clerical Synod Secretary 2016 – 2018; Director of Ecumenism, Interfaith and Inter Diocesan Affairs 2015 – Till Date; Clerical Synod Secretary 2018 – Till Date

#### **Educational Qualifications:**

He attended Holy Trinity School, Rumuapara where he obtained his First School Leaving Certificate in 1982; then Western Ahoada Community High School, Ahoada, for his WASC/GCE, in 1990; River State College of Education Port Harcourt where he obtained his NCE, in 1994; River State College of Education Port Harcourt for his Bachelors in Education, Political Science, 1998; University of Port Harcourt for his Masters in Science, Sociology, 2005; Trinity Theological College Umuahia, Diploma in Theology in 2007.

#### **Work Experience:**

He is a Lecturer in the Department of Sociology Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port Harcourt from 2005 till date.

The Rev. Canon Gospel Onuchukwu will be taking the pulpit tomorrow, Sunday, 18<sup>th</sup> August, to deliver the Synod Thanksgiving Service sermon. We thank him also in advance.

## **OUR SYNOD THEME**

Our Synod theme for this year is “***Take Heed To Yourselves***”. It is drawn from the 34<sup>th</sup> verse of the 21<sup>st</sup> Chapter of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ as recorded by Saint Luke. Before we go into details of the lessons to be drawn from this theme, let us undertake an analyses of the Gospel according to Saint Luke.

### **LUKE’S GOSPEL**

#### **Background to this Gospel:**

Both the style and language of writing of this book offer convincing evidence that the same person wrote Luke and Acts of the Apostles. “*The former accounts*” of Acts 1:1 is obviously a reference to the third Gospel- Luke - as the first of a two-volume series; and the fact that the writer dedicated both books to Theophilus also strongly argues for common authorship. Since Church tradition attributes those two works to Luke the Physician, a close associate of Paul (Col. 4:44; Phil. 24; 2 Tim. 4:11), and since the internal evidence supports this view, there is no reason to dispute the traditional view that Luke the physician is the author.

#### **Date of Writing:**

The date of writing is disputed– An early date and a much later date. Some are of the view that it was in AD 59-631; some say AD 59- 622. The prediction of Christ that the Jerusalem Temple would fall in chapter 21:20-24 was fulfilled in AD 70 (a

typology of wider trouble for the nation of Israel, and by extension, the unfaithfulness of the Church – a period that would ultimately lead up to eschatological consummation). This being so, Luke must have written this gospel a date earlier than AD 70, making between AD 59-63 the likely date.

### **Purpose of the Book:**

Luke was a traveller, gentile, and historian (Acts 1:3). He was also said to be well-educated as a medical doctor said to have trained in Tarsus, the home town of Paul the Apostle, and a place reputed to be a centre of learning. Over 800 words which do not occur elsewhere in the New Testament are said to be contained in Luke and Acts4. He, that is Luke, clearly states that his purpose for writing this Gospel was to present “an orderly account” (1:3) “of all that Jesus began both to do and teach” (Acts 1:1), so that Theophilus may have historical evidence of the teachings he had received (1:4). While the Gospel is specifically addressed to one individual - apparently a high official, its intent is to give all believers the assurance that Christianity is not one of many speculative systems searching for theological or ethical values, but that this involvement is bound up with an event in history.

A distinguishing feature of Luke’s Gospel is its emphasis on the universality of the Christian message. From Simeon’s song praising Jesus as “*a light...to the Gentiles*” (2:32), to the risen Lord’s commission “*to preach to all nations*” (24:47), Luke stresses the fact that Jesus is not merely the Jewish Deliverer, but the Saviour of the entire world.

### **A summary of his message include but not limited to:**

1. The Holy Spirit as agent of power for effective Christian living and witness (24:49)

### **2. Concern for relegated people like:**

A. Women whom he gave much prominence as only him recorded: • the Prophetess Anna (2:36-38); the widow of Nain (7:11-17); the sinful woman (7:36-50); the ministering women (8:2-3); Martha and Mary (10:38-42); the woman whom Satan had bound for 18 years (13:10-17) and the daughters of Jerusalem who wept (23:27-31)

B. The sick: The widow of Nain’s son - 7:7-17; The crippled woman healed in the synagogue – 13:10-17; The man with leprosy – 14:1-4; Ten lepers – 17:11-19; The miraculous healing of Malchus’ ear, severed by Peter’s sword – 22:50ff, etc.

C. The ‘unclean’: Like lepers (5:13; 17:11-19); Samaritans (he alone records the good Samaritan’s story – (10:25-37); Jesus’ forgiving response toward the Samaritan’s customary hostility –(9:52-56); and the Holy Spirit is poured on them in Acts 8:14-17. He also demonstrated his penchant for drawing attention to the unclean by his commentary on “tax collectors and sinners gathering to hear Jesus while the Pharisees complain of his welcoming of ‘sinners’ and even going so far as to eat with them (15:1-2). Luke alone, for instance records the story of Zacchaeus who welcomes Jesus into his home (19:9-10; and the story of the Pharisee and the tax collector who went into the temple to pray (18:9-14). Moreover, angels break the news of Jesus birth to outcasts in the mould of shepherds who were classed as hopeless sinners (2:10-14). The point of Luke’s message was clear: “*you hate and*

*reject these people whom you regard as unclean – but God loves them.*" Thus, John the Baptist preaches to them (3:12ff); Jesus calls one to join His disciples (5:27ff). He gave what seems to summarize his message well in 5:27-32 – "*I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.*"

D. Even concern for both the rich and the poor. He mentions Zacchaeus and Joseph of Arimathea, for instance. In other words, in Luke's theology, both the rich and poor are accepted by God without any disparity.

**3. Concern for Prayer** – 3:21; 5:16; 6:12; 9:18, 28ff; 11:1; 22:32; 22:40, 44; 23:34, 46: This emphasis of Luke continued in the Acts of the Apostles, his second volume.

**4. The plan and will of God:** For Luke, God's plan was what unfolded – the story did not just happen. John Stott, quoting John Squires listed five ways in which Luke underlines this theme:

A. *God is in charge of history right from creation* (3:38) through to the final judgment (17:31). This point rings through chapter 2:1 as God moves the mind of the Roman Emperor to issue a decree which culminates in Mary delivering in Bethlehem;

B. *God is in charge of the Church.* Luke makes this point by his frequent use of "it is necessary..." a phrase he used more than forty-two times.

C. *God directly intervenes to steer events.* For instance, He often did in ordering the course of events in the evangelistic mission, especially in Acts. (Acts 16:9ff; 23:11; 27:23ff)

D. *Scripture has been fulfilled, supremely in Jesus but also in the life of the Church.* He constantly brings to focus the fulfilment of prophecy, and this underlines the accomplishment of God's plan. He makes this point forcefully in the story of Jesus' appearance on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35)

E. *God has foreordained certain vital events* and these events take place, the opposition notwithstanding (Luke 21:22). For instance in Acts 2:23, Peter accused his audience of murdering Jesus this way: "*This Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men*" (RSV).

## **5. Instructions about the Last Days:**

Apart from Matthew, Luke the evangelist shared this concern. The theme for this synod is drawn from the long discourse of Jesus with His disciples as He answered their questions on when the temple of Jerusalem would be destroyed. They had just admired with pride the magnificence of the temple building. Christ explained however that the days of the building were numbered. Enemies of Israel would destroy it in the near future. However, this destruction would be within the context of a wider divinely prearranged plan of the revelation of God's kingdom which was coming in instalments – as already here; as in the near future and in the distant future when Christ would reappear or come again, but would be unannounced and sudden. However, a wide range of events (or signs) shall herald this. To this end, Luke emphasized the need for readiness at all times so as to not be caught unawares.

**It was in this context that Christ cautioned the disciples on a wide range of issues:**

A. *Deception* (v8): False messengers have caused a lot of havoc to the body of Christ. They appear to have mastered the art of ridding the gospel of its offense and power, which is the cross, “*the emblem of suffering and shame*” according to the hymn writer. They teach that a believer cannot go through suffering or hardship, presenting the kind of gospel that makes no demand on its adherents. In the quest to appear relevant and popular, many of these false prophets have entered into all manner of covenants with their master, the Devil, in order to fake the miracles of Jesus Christ, thus fulfilling a key prophesy of our Lord Jesus, that “false Christ’s and false prophets will arise and show great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect” (Matt. 24:24).

B. Troubled Times and Natural Disasters (verses 9-11): Christ referred to this as some of the ‘signs’ of the times as it draws near. These signs are all over us today – wars, rumours of wars, commotions, nations rising against nations, kingdom against kingdom, earthquakes in diverse places around the world, famines, pestilences (strange diseases), etc. Right now, there is a general sense of fear in the land driven by a pervasive sense of insecurity fuelled by criminality, banditry, militancy, wide spread discontentment and agitations. The search for peace is on.

C. *Persecution* (verses 12-18): Here is another of the ‘signs’ that will precede the final consummation and the coming of the Lord – widespread persecution of the disciples of Christ. This commenced with the early Apostles, and has continued to this present day. According to *Christianity Today*, an online news medium, of the top fifty countries where persecution is most prevalent, **Nigeria ranks 14th**. Out of these fifty countries, there are three countries where it is most dangerous to practice Christianity today due to violent persecution, **Nigeria ranks 2nd**, in between Afghanistan and Central African Republic. In Nigeria, persecution, violence and physical elimination of Christians is a well thought-out and orchestrated plan to wipe out the faith of Christ in the Country and impose the Islamic principles of sharia and of course annex the god-given wealth and resources (particularly land) for the further propagation of the Islamic faith. We must take heed to guard against this move with every instrument of resistance at our disposal.

D. *The fall of Jerusalem* (verses 22-24). This already happened in AD 70, and in the center of the one-time magnificent Temple Mount, an Islamic Shrine, the Dome on the Rock) said to have been built 691-692, 55 years after Muslim armies captured Jerusalem, then a predominantly Christian City, sits today.

E. *Climate Change* (verses 25-26). Long before the popularization of ‘climate change’ by world leaders, Christ predicted it. We see this in the change in weather conditions like rainfall patterns, devastating floods and heat occasioned by depletion of the ozone layer

F. *Impending eschatological fulfilment* (verses 27-33). All else is leading to this – the world as presently constituted will be taken over by our Lord, and all Governments shall fail and ultimately fall (cf. the dream of Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 2:26-46). To be safe and not be caught unawares, five precautionary measures were put forward by the text, thus: 1) *Watchfulness* (verses 20,36); 2)*Patience* (verse 19) 3)*To take off*

*our minds from the ephemeral and earthly and flee for safety* (verses 20-21)  
4)Constant readiness (verses 34-36) 5)Regular teaching of scripture (verse 37).

Our synod theme for this year is drawn from number four above – **CONSTANT READINESS**. The constant readiness here is pertinent because the time of the eschatological fulfilment is uncertain and is like a trap (verse 35). The King James Version of the Bible renders it like this: “*And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares*” (Luke 21:34).

In this text, Christ warns of two dangers:

1. The danger of the heart being taken over by surfeiting - excessive indulgence - which could be as a result of food, drink or sex). Today, Satan has engaged mankind with all manner of pleasure-seeking thereby distracting them from seeking God.
2. The danger of cares of this life. In the days of Noah and Lot, it was this tactics that the devil used to make mankind not heed God’s warnings. Consequently Christ warned,

*“As it was in the days of Noah, so will it be in the days of the Son of Man. They ate, they drank, they married, they were given in marriage until the day when Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. Likewise, as it was in the days of Lot – they ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built, but on the day when Lot went out from Sodom, fire and sulphur rained down from heaven and destroyed them all – so will it be on the day when the Son of Man is revealed” (Luke 17:26-30).*

It is interesting to note that some of the things the people in the passage above were doing were actually legitimate. It is neither a crime to marry nor be given in marriage. It is also not a crime to attend the parties that follow the weddings. However, it does appear that the people’s attention was so attached to these ceremonies to the point they had no ear for the messages being preached; thus, Jesus had to cite the example of Lot’s wife: “*Remember Lot’s wife!*” (18:32). Obviously, Lot’s wife was carried away by the events of her day; her mind must have been rigidly set on these events that she had to look back and eventually, turned into a pillar of salt.

However, all the things that attract and trap our attention are temporary- they give no lasting satisfaction! In other words, Christ is here saying, “Guard against anything in your own lives that will not give you lasting satisfaction”, as they will all perish! Christ is saying “Do not indulge yourself in anything” as such will only halt your advance into the Kingdom of God. At stake therefore is the matter of the Kingdom of God, and our eternal destiny. The implication of Jesus’ statement is that nothing is worth sacrificing the kingdom of God for, so we must be careful. The damage these two dangers do to a person is making him to be taken unawares; and the only remedy in the text is **TAKE HEED TO YOURSELVES!** In other words, be on your guard; be on the lookout or simply ‘shine your eyes!’

## Lessons from History

Romans 15:4 says, “*For whatsoever things were written afore time were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of scriptures might have hope.*” A cursory glance through the scriptures reveals examples of great personalities like Noah, Lot, Moses, David and a host of others who had at certain points in their lives distinguished themselves spiritually, morally, emotionally and otherwise, and who eventually caved in to some undue pressures and experiences of life that so grievously blemished their hard earned reputations. J. C. Ryle sounded a strong note of warning in this regard; “There is no saint so great but he may fall into a great sin.” Instances abound in the Bible of men of impeccable character whose powerful testimonies were suddenly tainted by vestiges of sin incurred in brief moments of weakness. Recall that Noah's pre-flood imposing character became tarnished when “he was afterwards overtaken by drunkenness.”

Moses so distinguished himself in his walk with God that in Numbers 12:6ff, God Himself, addressing his siblings, Aaron and Miriam, testified thus concerning Moses;

*“Hear now My words: If there is a prophet among you, I, the Lord, make Myself known to him in a vision: I speak to him in a dream. Not so with My servant Moses; he is faithful in all My house. I speak with him face to face.....and he sees the form of the Lord. Why then were you not afraid to speak against My servant Moses?”*

Yet, this same Moses goofed at a most inauspicious moment of his life and had all those lofty testimonies swiftly overruled, so that all he was granted as reward for his years of sacrificial labours for Israel's sake was mere sighting of the Promised Land, all because of a momentary loss of self-control. And this can happen to just anybody.

Lot's wife lost out as she failed to heed a simple instruction to not look back; just as Lot after being saved by God, got seduced by his wayward daughters in a moment of being ensnared by a habit he probably found difficult to conquer—drunkenness - and the result was Ammon and Moab – two arch-enemies of Israel in later years.

David, the man after God's heart, suffered a similar fate. He fell into a most abominable adultery, and, in a bid to cover his amorous tracks, set up Uriah for execution, and he had to pay dearly for it. Therefore, to avoid sliding down the same ignoble path, the call to “take heed to yourselves” must not be ignored or made light of.

## **OTHER AREAS THE CHURCH MUST TAKE HEED TODAY**

**1. Doctrine:** Paul admonished his son in the faith, Timothy, “*Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine, continue in them, for in doing this, you will save both yourself and your hearers*” (1 Tim 4:16). This warning is very apt to all of us today. In view of the nearness of the coming of the Lord, we must be on our guard on what we believe. Earlier in that chapter, Paul had told Timothy that “*in the latter times, some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons*” (4:1). A lot of teaching coming from many pulpits today could be best described as “Doctrine of demons.” Not only are they not rooted in the Bible, they have no capacity in bringing one closer to God.

Paul further said: “*For the time will come, when [people] will not endure sound doctrine, but having itching ears, they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own likings, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander into myths*” (2Tim 4:3-4). That time is here! It is so evident that many are not interested in anything called sound doctrine today. They are only interested in the things that will excite and entertain them. Some even bring in comedians to the Sacred Altar of the Most High God just to entertain the people! They will climb the podium and abuse the name of the Lord, abuse the Bible, wash pastors down, ridicule all that are sacred and the congregation will hail them. It is bad enough that outside the church, these people centre their jokes on God, the Church and the Bible. Now, they are brought right inside the church and are given all the backings from ministers to corrupt the Gospel. They dare not say anything about Islam or the Koran; yet, they boldly sweet-talk and ridicule the body of Christ without fear, and at the end, they are paid handsomely from church coffers as a reward for this sacrilege. What an insult!

No wonder Paul cautioned the Ephesians elders to take heed therefore unto themselves and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost had made them overseers, to feed the flock of God, which He has purchased with His own blood (Acts 20:28).

Take heed to your doctrine, brethren. Be careful of what you believe because it determines how you live your life here on earth and your eternal destination. For the clergy and those in charge of running the affairs of the church, we must heed the admonition of Jude verse 3, lest we drift away from the apostolic and evangelical tradition. Many are already destroying this wonderful heritage by surrendering to cheap aggrandizement and copying whatever they see from outside, even though such may not necessarily be sound. This is what Jude says,

*Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ (Jude 3-4).*

There is no better time to heed this warning by Jude than now. It is critically important that as Christian leaders, we must be watchful over the messages that flow out from our pulpits and other channels of communication in our Churches as more and more gullible Christians are wading headlong into deadly doctrinal errors which are increasingly gaining unjustifiable acceptance. Abominable heretical doctrines are enjoying unbridled popularity, especially among the youth. So much violence is being done to the Word of God in our churches, and the perpetrators need to be called to order, otherwise, the future of our faith will be in jeopardy. The doors to our pulpits must be shut against all unsound doctrine, no matter how sweet-sounding or how eloquent. Quality time and resources should be committed to teaching and discipleship programmes for both old and new believers. We should no longer compromise the preaching and teaching of the sound word of God; for by it our souls are nourished.

**2. Our Distinctiveness, Our Uniqueness:** We have what makes us unique as evangelicals in the Anglican Church - those things that make us who we are- and we must be determined not to trade them for anything. The fact is that you cannot copy someone else and hope that somehow you will beat that person. We expose our inadequacies if we try to copy others blindly. Unknown to some of us, the people we are trying to copy either derive their foundation from us, or are secretly using our liturgy! This church has come a long way. We must never forget that it was through this same church that the gospel came and spread through the dark corners of this country and beyond, when none of these New Generation movements were there.

**3. Our Holy Calling:** ‘Take heed to yourselves’ is a call to watchfulness, sobriety and Christian duty. It was originally addressed to Peter and his fellow Apostles who were obviously perceived to be the spiritual heavy weights at the time as they had a close relationship with the Lord. It was not addressed to unbelievers or carnally minded spiritual misfits! All Christian leaders must be watchful so they may not fall victim to the many tempestuous allurements to immortality which presently threaten the very fabrics of our faith. The social media is awash with disturbing reports of the most heinous sexual crimes being daily perpetrated by some very bad people. Sadly, some of these go by the label, "Pastor." It is therefore a call on all Christian leaders and those looking up to them to always humbly remember that sin is a snare, and that anybody, irrespective of spiritual status, can fall prey to it. It is a call to take seriously, Paul's timeless admonition: "***Let him who thinks he stands, take heed lest he fall,***" (1Cor. 10:12). Moreover, Pastors and leaders should carefully eschew every iota of contradiction that may exist between their teachings and how they actually live. Otherwise, their hypothetical life may have disastrous consequences, both for themselves and their followers. There are very strong indications that large numbers of youthful Christians have derailed, and many more are daily derailing from the path of sincere faith because of the growing contradictions that have become the bane of Christian leadership.

Moreover, the warning here in Luke 21:34 is clearly against the natural human penchant for a life of ease and merriments - "***feasting, drinking and worrying about so many things***" - an inclination that easily dulls expectation about Christ's imminent return. Sadly, a good number of Christians are so strongly inclined to Churches, Ministries and messages that are reduced in quality and soundness. This segment of the Church craves for the temporal, usually employing motivational rhetoric's, and quite often, they mindlessly shun or resist any that is not inclined to their watered-down version of biblical Christianity. Consequently, some Churches and Christian leaders, especially those of the old stock, whose labour in God's vineyard had been propelled by a sense of the glory of eternity, have come under intense pressure to either join the bandwagon or risk the agony of regressing to irrelevance. To such as these, the Lord warns of the danger of caving in to this unholy pressure, ***take heed to yourselves so you are not caught off guard.***

**4. Daily Walk with God:** Christians must take heed to themselves what they get involved in, like who their friends are, how much time they spend on things of less value, as well as maintaining a close relationship with the Lord in their daily walk with Him. We have to grow up spiritually, as well as develop daily godly character. Hence, we need to take heed in our prayer lives, our professional aspirations, the attitude with which we go about the service of God, as well as heaving a firm grip on our emotional make-up and having solid self-control in all things.

## **How should we take Heed to ourselves?**

**1. Scripture:** God has shown us the way to live through the scriptures. Jesus said, "***Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God***" (Matt.22:29). By scripture here, we mean God's Word, correctly translated and honestly interpreted. Great care should therefore be taken to making the daily, systematic and diligent reading and study of scripture an uncompromised habit.

### **2. Abiding in Christ** (John 15:4-7)

**3. Watchfulness/Prayers:** Verse 36 of Luke 21 says, "***Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.***" Daily quiet time, family devotions, personal/corporate occasional retreat are vital to surviving spiritually and living victorious Christian lives.

**4. Involvement in genuine Christian Fellowship:** The unknown author of Hebrews correctly admonished us to not forsake the fellowship of Christians, as is the habit of some (Heb.10:25)

### **5. Engagement in genuine fruitful service for the Lord** (John 12:26)

**6. Sound teaching and nurture by those whose calling it is to do so.** If someone discovers that he is not sound enough or cannot competently handle the word of God, or if it is discovered that someone is like that, such a person should help himself, or be helped by having him placed under the tutelage of sound Ministers for the sake of the Church of God.

**CONCLUSION:** The call by our Lord to take heed can only be ignored to our detriment. In this synod, we charge all to take a pause and examine their lives, and should any be already missing it in any area of his/her life, such a one should without shame, humbly retrace his/her steps. ***Eternity is too long for anybody to make a mistake.***

## **NEW OFFICERS OF THE DIOCESE**

At the end of our 2018 Diocesan Synod a new election was conducted at the floor of the Synod in keeping with our Constitution. Those who emerged from the exercise include the following:

### **1. Synod Secretariat**

- |                                  |                               |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| ➤ Clerical Synod Secretary       | - Rev. Canon Gospel Onuchukwu |
| ➤ Asst. Clerical Synod Secretary | - Rev. Theophilus Chukwudi    |
| ➤ Lay Synod Secretary            | - Sir Barr. Emmanuel Izuehie  |
| ➤ Assistant Lay Synod Secretary  | - Lady Lale Aminobirien       |
| ➤ Treasurer                      | - Sir P. W. O. Owhor          |

### **2. Auditors**

- Mr. Godwin Ikechi Chinda
- Mr. Gershon Amaewhule

- Mr. Emmanuel Umeohana
- Mr. Ovunwo I. Princewill
- Mr. Mike Chukwumati
- Mrs. Ebele Okafor
- Hon. Chidum Chinda
- Ms. Orlu Joyce Adanne (now Mrs. Ben Peterson)

**3. Church of Nigeria General Synod**

- The Rev'd Canon Gospel Onuchuku
- The Ven. Alex Usifoh
- Sir Barr. Nlerum Amadi (The Diocesan Registrar)
- Sir Gilbert Chuku
- Dame Meg Orianwo

**4. Church of Nigeria Standing Committee**

- The Rev'd Canon Gospel Onuchukwu (Diocesan Clerical Secretary)
- Sir Barr. Nlerum Amadi (The Diocesan Registrar)

**5. Niger Delta Provincial Council**

- The Bishop
- The Rev'd Canon Gospel Onuchuku (Diocesan Clerical Secretary)
- Sir Barr. Nlerum Amadi (The Diocesan Registrar)
- Dame Priscilla Nosiri

**6. Church of Nigeria Advisory Committee for the Election of the Primate**

- The Rev'd Canon Bright Okocha
- Sir Reginald Wagboso

**7. Niger Delta Provincial Advisory Committee for Election of the Archbishop**

- The Rev'd Canon Godfrey Onyemelukwe
- Sir Paul Chukwumati

**8. Diocesan Advisory Committee for the Election of the Bishop of Ebo**

- The Rev'd Canon Femi Igbamerun
- The Rev'd Canon Chukwuma Anukem
- The Rev'd Canon Ahamefule Olluor
- The Rev'd Samuel Ejekwu
- Sir Christian Obidi
- Barr. Mrs. Mercy Nweke

- Mr. Uche Emenayom
- Sir Victor Iyalla

## **OUR NOMINEES TO THE 4<sup>TH</sup> SYNOD (2019-2021)**

Having come to the end of our 3<sup>rd</sup> Synod (2016-2018) and in view of our commencement of the 4<sup>th</sup> which will last from this year 2019 to 2021, we are pleased to announce the following persons from across the Diocese as our special nominees to the Synod of the Diocese for the next three years. They are:

### **1. Cathedral Bloc**

Sir Chief Alex Orakwue, JP  
Mrs. Ibinabo Obuoforibo  
Dr. (Mrs.) Joy Ugwu  
Lady Bridget Dania  
Dame Patricia Orakwue

### **2. Rumuomasi Deanery**

Sir Obele Poloamina  
Dr. Henry Ngari  
Mr. Williams Adele  
Mr. Mgbo'waji A. Isiokop  
Hon. Charles Amadi

### **3. Rumuobiokani Deanery**

Mr. Gabriel Amadi  
Mr. Edwin S. Pepple  
Dame Akudo Nnadozie  
Mr. Kennedy Uzuegbunam  
Mr. Obi Azubuike  
Sir Barr. Mike Epelle  
Engr. George Iwoh  
Dame Lauretta Enwezor

### **4. Elelenwo Deanery**

Dr. Azubuike Weli  
Lady Prisca Weli  
Pharm Ijeoma Okey-Ewurum  
Elder Edward Ike-Chinda  
Mr. Mike Mukoro  
Lady Josephine Enwukwe  
Mrs. Joy Madume

## **5. Woji Archdeaconry**

Lady Gladys O. Ihunwo  
Hon. Prince Solomon Abel Eke  
Mr. Stanley Onwuchi  
Sir Chief Brain Ogbonda

## **6. Evo South-East Archdeaconry**

Mr. Osita Okoh  
Mr. Kingsley Chinda  
Engr. Festus Edeawe  
Lady Ngozi Adminora  
Sir Adulphus Opara  
ESV (Mrs.) Ann Kanu  
Engr. Isaac Kolo  
Mr. Frank Nwoke

## **7. Oginigba Deanery**

Eze Sir J. E. Amadi  
Chief Ted. Fenibo Oko  
Comrade Nyema Amadi

## **8. Okporo Deanery**

HRH Eze Sir Morgan Amadi  
Mrs. Edith Ordu  
Sir Chief Friday Nwanwa  
Lady Wobiandu Morgan Amadi

## **9. Oroigwe/Eliogbolo Archdeaconry**

Sir Hon. Ike B. S. Chinwo  
Hon. Martin Chike Amaewhule  
Sir Dr. Moses Idehen  
Mr. Clinton Amaewhule  
Mr. Bishop Anderson Nwanekwu

## **10. Trinity Missionary Archdeaconry**

Engr. Eddy Emeka Wopara  
Mrs. Onyinyechi Enwuzuruuke Nnah

## **11. Diocesan Churches**

Mr. Mukoro Akpojobare  
Chief Emenike Onubogu  
Chief Chekwas Godspower Nnata Ordu  
Sir Prof. W. O. Igwe  
Engr. Godwin Aronu  
Lady Chibuzo Anyabele  
Mr. Igochukwu Onukem

## **12. The Youth**

Mr. Chika Amadi  
Miss Sonia Ariolu  
Mr. Graham Elendu  
Mr. Rufus Eziamara  
Bro. Daniel Okwuchukwu  
Sister Lois Adele

## **13. Friend of the Diocese**

Sir Richard Chike-Ehie

As appointees of the Bishop, these nominees to the Synod in particular have automatically become members of their local CSC, Archdeaconry Boards, Deanery/District/Parish Church Council(s) and Station Church Steering Committees respectively for the life of this Fourth Synod (2019-2021). It is not in the power of any Archdeacon, Rector, Vicar, Supervising Priest or Church Teacher to deny any of them, including other duly elected Diocesan Officials, this privilege conferred upon them by either us, the Bishop or the Diocesan Constitution. We shall not take it lightly with any priest who decides to act with impunity regarding this matter. Henceforth, all elected/appointed key officers of the Diocese should freely attend the meetings of their local Church/Administrative Blocs Councils/Board whether invited or not.

## **PROGRESS REPORT OF THE DIOCESE SINCE THE LAST (2018) SYNOD**

### **New Diocesan Policy Decision on Sponsorship of Students in Theological Schools**

The Diocesan Board decided at its meeting of Tuesday, 25<sup>th</sup> September, 2018 in the All Saints' Cathedral, Rumuokwurusi, that henceforth the Diocese will be responsible for the training of her (sent) students (postulants) in approved theological institutions within the country. To be able to adequately fund this, all churches of the Diocese will as from 2019, remit to the Diocese 100% of

all offerings generated during the week up to the Anniversary Sunday. 50% of all income will be dedicated to the upkeep of our students while the remaining 50% will be left for the support of other Dioceses and local welfare needs. Additionally, the Bishop is mandated to seek financial assistance from willing members of the Diocese for the sponsorship of the students. Churches already sponsoring students should continue with their goodwill but in the name of the Diocese.

To this end, we used the occasion of the Post Vestry Meeting leadership Training to appeal for financial support from members of the Diocese and also during the 2019 annual Diocesan Endowment fund drive in churches. Pledges made by leaders during the Post Vestry Meeting Training and from the endowment fund drive in churches came to Three Million, Nine Hundred and Ninety Nine Thousand and Twenty Naira (₦3,999,020) only. We shall be adding this to the 50% of total offerings realised during the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Sunday remittances from churches for the upkeep of our postulants. We appreciate all who made pledges and have redeemed them and hereby appeal to others who are yet to do so to redeem their commitments as Theological Schools are resuming in September.

## **DIOCESAN CONVOCATIONS**

### **1. Independence Day Carnival/Evo Prays and Church of Nigeria 3 days of prayer and fasting for the Church and Nation**

This was held at the Cathedral on Monday, 1<sup>st</sup> October, 2018 and in all our churches on Tuesday, 2<sup>nd</sup> and Wednesday, 3<sup>rd</sup> October. The Diocese raised prayers for the leadership of our church at all levels, the various flashpoints within the Church of Nigeria, the political activities and the 2019 General elections and for the release of all under Boko Haram captivity, especially Sister Leah Sharibu and the remaining Chibok girls.

### **2. Annual Cathedral Lecture 2018**

This took place on All Saints Day, 1<sup>st</sup> November, 2018 at All Saints Cathedral, Rumuokwurusi. The topic was “The role of the Church towards the emergence of a credible national political leadership in Nigeria”. This was part of our efforts at sensitising and mobilising the diocesan community towards the 2019 general elections in Nigeria. The lecture was ably delivered by our versatile priest, The Rev Canon Chuka Opara. We commend him very highly.

### **3. The 2018 Diocesan Discipleship/Revival Conference**

This annual conference of the whole Diocese was held from Wednesday, 28<sup>th</sup> November, to Saturday, 1<sup>st</sup> December at St. Michael’s, Rumuomasi deanery. The conference theme was “I will build my Church” (Matt. 16:18). Speakers included the Bishop of Lango, Uganda, The Rt. Rev. Prof. Alfred Olwa who handled the exposition of the theme; The Bishop of Aguata, The Rt. Rev. Samuel Ezeofor who spoke on identifying a dangerous religious group/church; “Jesus builds His church through its leaders” and a session of revival hour; We, the Diocesan spoke on “How

to recognize a good church”; Ven. Azubuike Ugoha took us on a session of Revival hour and Bro. Kiki Briggs took the Bible studies.

The Conference also featured seminars on Marriage by Rev. Ogbonna Akujuobi; Making money in a Depressed Economy by Chris Onyemaizu; Making our weekly programmes and activities attractive by Us, the Bishop.

A panel discussion was also a part of the conference with the following: Mrs. Chinyere Ordu, Mama Diocese, Canon Chuka Opara and Barr. Chinedu Ogbona speaking on Persecution and the Christian response, Christian involvement in Politics as a service to God and Character flaws that hurt the Church, respectively.

The 2018 conference was preceded by a 2-Day Miracle Crusade with Evang. Sunday Oguchie, from Monday, 26<sup>th</sup> to Tuesday, 27<sup>th</sup> November and concluded on Saturday, 1<sup>st</sup> December with a musical night tagged “Evo Advent Praise”.

We commend the efforts of the Conference Planning Committee at the Diocesan level led by The Rev’d Canon Kinsley Ohajianya, the St. Michael’s, Rumuomasi Local Organising Committee Chairman, the Priests and members of the Deanery for all their efforts in creating a beautiful and enabling environment which greatly contributed towards the success of the programme. May God bless them richly.

#### **4. The 2018 Diocesan Harvest Thanksgiving Service**

The 2018 edition of our Annual Diocesan Harvest Thanksgiving Service took place at St. Michael’s Anglican Church, Rumuomasi Deanery, on Advent Sunday, 2<sup>nd</sup> December. The Chairman of Obio/Akpor Local Government Area, Hon. Solomon Abel Eke, a parishioner of our Diocese read the First Lesson from Genesis 4:1-7 and also doubled as our Chief Harvester. He addressed the congregation on the need to maintain a clean environment. The Second Lesson which was taken from the Epistle of Matthew 25:14-30 was read by Dame Akudo Nnadozie. The Guest Preacher of that event was The Rt. Rev’d Prof. Alfred Olwa of the Diocese of Lango, Uganda.

Our appreciation goes to the Rector and the entire faithful of Rumuomasi Deanery as well as the community, our guests, the Diocesan Harvest Committee and every member and non-members of this Diocese whose presence and generosity led to the success of the last Diocesan Harvest. Part of the proceeds from the Harvest was used on charity visits to special homes and the retired clergy and others.

#### **5. Diaconate/Priestly Ordination Service**

The 2018 Diocesan Service of Ordination was held on Sunday, 28<sup>th</sup> December, 2018 at St. Andrew’s Church, Rumuobiokani Deanery. Those ordained Priests were The Reverends Richard Omoni-Alete, ThankGod Amadi and Frankincense Chukwuma while Uchechukwu Chinda, Gift Chukwumati, Anointed Onyeme, Moses Anyatonwu, Christian Tasie and Donatus Ngah were Ordained Deacons. We

congratulate these brothers and their wives and pray that the Lord will grant them the life of fruitful service in His Vineyard.

The ordination service sermon was ably delivered by The Rev. Canon Cephas Okarefe. We thank him.

#### **6. 2019 Diocesan Rededication Service**

We held the 2019 Diocesan Rededication Service on Sunday, 20<sup>th</sup> January at All Saints Cathedral, Rumuokwurusi. The service was well attended by parishioners of our Diocese. We had as our guest Preacher, The Rt. Rev. Jolly Oyekpen, Bishop of the Diocese of Akoko-Edo who joined us and our priests in handling the Rededication prayer sessions.

### **DIOCESAN ACTIVITY GROUPS/CHAPLAINCIES**

#### **Diocesan Christian Men's Fellowship**

The 2018 Diocesan Conference of the Diocesan Christian Men's Fellowship was held at St. Jude's, Oginigba Deanery from Thursday, 20<sup>th</sup> to Sunday, 23<sup>rd</sup> September. The theme was "The Man That Pleases God" (Acts 13:22). It featured worship, prayers, Bible studies, health talks, expositions, etc; and the conference address delivered by the then President, Mr. Bishop Anderson Nwanekwu.

An entirely new Diocesan Executive Committee emerged following the elections held at the end of the Conference. The new officers are:

- President – Sir Engr. Sunny Worlu
- Vice President – Mr. Osita Oko, JP
- Secretary General – Bro. Ken Anonye
- Treasurer – Mr. Chukwuka Okere
- Financial Secretary – Mr. Mike Mukoro
- Public Relations Officer – Mr. Iriah Edeghere
- Welfare Officer – Mr. Faithful Chuku
- Evangelism Officer – Mr. Princewill Ovunwo
- Provost – Chief Okechukwu Akparanta

We congratulate the new Executive members and pray God to guide them in their endeavours.

The Conference ended with a Thanksgiving/Harvest Service on Sunday, 23<sup>rd</sup> September.

We inaugurated the new officers on Monday, 1<sup>st</sup> October, 2018 at the Cathedral.

#### **2019 Father's Week/Sunday**

This year's fathers week of activities were observed in all our Churches from Monday, 10<sup>th</sup> to Saturday, 15<sup>th</sup> June, 2019 with the theme "The Man That Pleases

God” (Acts 13:22). Sunday, 16<sup>th</sup> was celebrated as Father’s Day with Thanksgiving Services in all the Churches. We worshiped at Holy Trinity Church, Elimgbu where the men of the Parish presented us with a Leadership Award. We appreciate them for the honour.

## DIOCESAN WOMEN AND GIRLS MINISTRIES

• **The 2018 Diocesan Women’s Conference/ Harvest Thanksgiving Service** was held from Thursday, 6th – Sunday, 9th December, 2018 at All Saints’ Cathedral, Rumuokwurusi with the theme: “**Becoming a Jewel of the LORD**” (Mal. 3:16-18). It featured evangelism, outreaches/visitations, talks on the theme, as well as talks on Women in Politics, Bible Study, special presentations, etc. ). In attendance at the reading of the Bishop’s Wife’s Address on Friday, 7<sup>th</sup> December were the Archbishop of our Province, The Most Rev. Tunde Adeleye, wives of Bishops including Dr. (Mrs.) Chinyere Oko-Jaja of Niger Delta West and Guest speaker, the Chairman of Obio/Akpor Local Government Area, Hon. Prince Solomon Abel Eke and Hon. Justice (Mrs.) Uche Kingsley Chuku. The Conference came to a close on Sunday, 9<sup>th</sup> December with the Diocesan Women’s Harvest/Conference Thanksgiving Service.

The 2019 Diocesan Women Leadership Training/Workshop was held from Wednesday, 5th – Thursday, 6th June, 2019 at New Wine Anglican Church, Okporo. The theme was **Stewardship** (Matt. 25:14-30, 1 Cor. 4:1-5). It featured Talks, Bible Study, Group discussions on the different Women Executive Offices for greater effectiveness etc.

•**Clergy/Church Teachers’ Wives:** The wives of our Ministers continued with their weekly prayer meetings. A 4-Day Retreat/Training Workshop for all Wives of Clergy/Church Teachers was held from Wednesday, 22nd – Saturday, 25th May, 2019 at Archbishop Akinola Retreat Centre, Rumuobiokani Deanery with theme: **The Ministers’ Wife as a Steward**(Matt. 25:14-30; 1 Cor. 4:1-5), among other activities.

•**Diocesan Girls’ Guild (GG):**The Diocesan GG in their Conference held from Friday, 17th –Sunday, 19th August, 2018 at Bishop Crowther Memorial Secondary School, Rumuobiokani, had, in addition to other activities, Seminars, Bible Study, Craft and visit to Jesus Orphanage. The Conference recorded over 300 girls in attendance.

•**Widows’ Fellowship:** The Diocesan Widows’ Conference was held from Friday, 28th to Sunday, 30th June, 2019 at Anglican Church of Advent, Rumuewhara, with a good number of widows across the Diocese in attendance. The widows received gifts from us donated by the CMF and MU/WG through the Diocesan 10th Anniversary Committee. The economic Empowerment from the Diocesan Council of Knights to some needy widows in the Diocese is hereby acknowledged and commended by us. Perhaps, more notable here is the fact that the widows have joined to empower their fellow members.

•**Sisters’ Forum (SF):** The Diocesan Sisters’ Forum Conference held in September, 2018 at St. Simon’s Anglican Church, Okporo Deanery, with over 120 girls in attendance. It was a very rewarding and refreshing time of fellowship for the girls. A One-Day Retreat which featured prayers, Bible Study, Talks and Election of new

officers of the Forum held on Saturday, 16th March, 2019 at Church of Epiphany, Pipeline, Rumuokwurus. The theme was “**The Pacesetter**” drawn from 1Timothy 4:12-13. In addition, the Diocesan Sisters’ Forum was duly represented at the National Sisters’ Forum Prayer Retreat held from Thursday, 3rd – Sunday, 6<sup>th</sup>, January, 2019 at St. John’s Anglican Church, Ogbagi, Akoko in Akoko Diocese, Ondo State and Thursday, 6th – Sunday, 9th June, 2019 at St. Andrew’s Anglican Church Kabba, Kabba Diocese Kogi State, respectively.

•**Clergy/Church Workers’ Children:** This Unit had its annual Diocesan Conference on 24th and 25th August, 2018 at Bethel (Ang.) Church, Rumuibekwe Parish with the theme: **A living sacrifice for the living God** (1 Peter 4:11-13). Key events included: Talks, Bible Study, health talk, interactive session on Relationship Management, godly engagement and marriage, individuals’ responsibility in managing a Christian home, personal appreciation, the difference between wedding and marriage and practical cooking competition in which the boys distinguished themselves in cooking full meals. Also a One-day Prayer Retreat was held in all the Administrative Blocs on Saturday, 9th March, 2019 which featured interactive sessions, Bible Teachings, Seminars, etc. A One-day Easter Retreat was also held on Saturday, 18th May, 2019 at St. Philips’ Anglican Church, Oroigwe.

•**Women World Day of Prayer:** The Women World of Prayer Day was observed in all our Churches on Friday, 1st March, 2019. The theme was “**Come for all things are ready**”- Luke 14:17

•**Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary:** This was observed in all Churches in our Diocese alongside the Mothering Sunday Week of Celebration on Monday, 25th March, 2019. It featured fellowship with the young ladies, girls and children of the Diocese with focus on the importance of chastity and virginity.

•**Mothering Sunday Celebration:** This was held in all Churches in the Diocese from Monday, 25th – Sunday, 31st March, 2019 with the theme: “**Sing to the Lord a song of triumph**”(Exodus 15:21). Activities of the week included outreaches/visitations to notable individuals in addition to several other events at all levels of the Diocese.

## **YOUTH AND CHILDREN’S MINISTRIES**

### **Anglican Youth Fellowship (AYF)**

Few weeks running up to the synod of last year, the Diocesan AYF held their elections earlier than we had initially scheduled with them and without our knowledge, prompting our cancellation of that election. We however fixed a new date for a proper election with our supervision. Below is the list of those who emerged as leaders from that election:

S/N	NAME	OFFICE
1	Bro. Chima Okekem	President
2	Sis. Chile Ariolu	Vice President
3	Barr. Kinikachi Chinda	Secretary
4	Sis. Doris Odoyi	Assistance Secretary
5	Bro. John Iheanacho	PRO

6	Bro. Clement Onwubiko	Financial Secretary
7	Bro. Iruoma Nwachukwu	Treasurer
8	Bro. Temple Elenwo	Prayer/Evangelical Secretary
9	Sis. Chidinma Oriaku	Ass. Prayer/Evangelical Secretary
10	Mrs. Hope Ernest Amadi	Sisters' Forum Coordinator
11	Sis. Lois Adele	Asst. Sisters' Forum Coordinator
12	Bro. Francis Weli	Youthstar Coordinator
13	Bro. ThankGod Akubuiro	Asst. Youthstar Coordinator
14	Miss Chidera Chima	Youthstar Ambassador
15	Bro. Chibuike Anyanwu	Welfare(male)
16	Sis. Blessing Albert	Welfare (female)
17	Sis. Inyie Epelle	Provost I
18	Bro. Nelson Nwosu	Provost II
19	Bro. Daniel Okwuchukwu	Sports Coordinator
20	Bro Henry Chuku	Asst. Sports Coordinator

### **AYF Nigeria Annual General Meeting (AGM)**

Our Diocese hosted the annual general meeting of the Anglican Youth Fellowship, Nigeria, from Friday, 1<sup>st</sup> to Sunday, 3<sup>rd</sup> February, 2019 at St. Andrew's, Rumuobiokani Deanery. The meeting attracted leaders of the youth fellowship from the various Dioceses of the Church of Nigeria including The Rt. Rev. Jolly Oyekpen, Bishop of Akoko-Edo who supervises the AYF at the National level as Chaplain.

### **The 2019 National Bible Study**

The 2019 National Bible Study Conference was held at the Diocese of Asaba in Delta State from Wednesday, 7<sup>th</sup> to Sunday, 11<sup>th</sup> August under the theme “*The God of All Possibilities*” (Luke 18:27). 49 delegates who went from our Diocese were led by the President, Brother Chima Okekem.

### **Anglican Communion Brigades (ACB)**

The Diocesan ACB held her first Bible Study Conference with the theme: “*Stewardship*”(1 Cor. 4:7) at St. Mark’s Church, Elelenwo Deanery, from Wednesday, 29<sup>th</sup> August to Sunday, 2<sup>nd</sup> September, 2018.

We noted the poor turnout of the boys to this conference despite holding during the long vacation. We gathered that most churches denied the boys the needed sponsorship and transportation required by them for the conference. This ought not to be so. The clergy in charge of churches must do everything possible to encourage the youth groups/arms of our church. They are the future of the church. We cannot afford to persistently discourage them by our attitude of indifference to things that affect their spiritual growth and active participation in the life of the church. We charge the clergy and their church Councils to give necessary support from henceforth to the Boys Brigade and other arms/units in the church to enable them fulfil their ministry.

Some members of our Diocese were inducted as State Patrons of the Boys Brigade, Nigeria, Rivers State Council on Sunday, 23rd September, 2018 at Holy Trinity

Anglican Church, Rumuapara, Diocese of Niger Delta North. They are Dame Loretha Enwezor, Sir Raymond Elenwoke, Sir Chief Okoli and HRH, Eze, Sir Simeon C. Wokoma.

We congratulate them and pray for the good heart and divine grace to carry out their duties to the Boys.

#### **Crusade at Atali:**

The Diocesan ACB held a 4-Day Open Air Crusade at St. Matthias Church, Atali, from Thursday, 4<sup>th</sup> – Sunday, 7<sup>th</sup> October, 2018. The Theme was “**Fear not, for I am with you**”(Isaiah 41:10). The preacher was Evangelist Isaiah Orji.

#### **State Banquet and Charisms Carol**

The 2018 Rivers State Council of the Boys Brigade, Nigeria, State Banquet and Service of Christmas Carols and 9 Lessons was hosted by us in the Bishop’s Court on Sunday, 16<sup>th</sup> December, 2018 in our capacity as the Grand Chaplain of the State Council and the Chosen Icon for the year 2018. The event attracted a cross section of officers and boys, patrons, patronesses and dignitaries from the Diocese and the State.

The boys presented us with an Award of Honour.

#### **Anglican Corps’ Fellowship**

The Anglican Corps’ Members’ Fellowship of our Diocese has grown from a fellowship of thirty corps members to forty. In pursuit of her vision to raise corps members for the work of evangelism and discipleship, who will maintain their faith and Anglican roots, the fellowship mobilised her members to go to five of our churches at Rumuogba, Eliozi, Mini-Ewa, Woji and Rumuobiokani for publicity and visitation. The fellowship also held street outreaches twice on the streets of Rumuomasi in the year under review.

We are aware that there are many corps members serving in organisations within our Diocese and in our own institutions. It is the duty of the clergy of the churches and principals of our institutions to identify and encourage such corps members to join the Corps Members Fellowship of our Diocese.

#### **Anglican Children’s Ministry**

The Diocesan Anglican Children Ministry took part in a number of Provincial and Church of Nigeria-organized programmes during the year under review. These include the Niger Delta Provincial Teachers’ Conference/Children Bible Quiz/Singing Competition which was hosted by the Niger Delta Diocese at St. John’s Anglican Church, Port Harcourt from Thursday, 16<sup>th</sup> to Sunday, 19<sup>th</sup> August, 2019. Our children took the first position in the Quiz contest and second position in the Singing Competition; the Church of Nigeria ACM Train-The -Trainers Course held at St. Matthias Anglican High School, Alagbaka, Akure, Ondo State, from 27<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> August, 2018 while the National Teachers’ Conference held at David’s Cathedral, Ijomu, Diocese of Akure from 30<sup>th</sup> August to 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2018. At

the National Quiz Competition, our Province emerged second with one of our children in the Provincial team.

At the Diocesan level, the ministry organized the Annual Children's Praise and Worship programme: "**Evo Children Rejoice**" on Saturday, 20<sup>th</sup> October, 2018 at St. Nicholas, Woji; Diocesan Teachers Training held at the Church of the Holy Spirit, Elelenwo, from 12<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> April, 2019. The 5<sup>th</sup> edition of the Diocesan Teenstar Conference held at Archdeacon Crowther Memorial Girls' School, Elelenwo, from Sunday, 14<sup>th</sup> to Thursday, 18<sup>th</sup> April, 2019 with the theme: "**Fidelis in minimis ... You are a leader**" (Luke19:17; 1Timothy 4:12).

As part of this year's Children's Week and the celebration of the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our Diocese, the Anniversary Committee in conjunction with the Diocesan ACM organized a Quiz Competition on Saturday, 25<sup>th</sup> May, 2019 at St. Michael's, Rumuomasi for children from all the Administrative Blocs of the Diocese. The results are as follows:

- |                            |                             |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1 <sup>st</sup> position – | Diocesan Churches           |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> position – | Rumuomasi Deanery           |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> position - | Evo South/East Archdeaconry |

## Council of Knights

The Annual Retreat/First Quarter Meeting of the Diocesan Council of Knights was held at St. Philip's Church, Oroigwe District from Friday, 15<sup>th</sup> to Sunday, March, 2019 with the theme "**Knighthood: A vessel unto honour**" (2Tim. 2:21). At the end of the retreat, new officers were elected for the Council. They are:

S/NO	NAME	OFFICE
1	Sir Dr. Emenike W. Amobi	President
2	Sir. Chuks Onwuchekwa	Vice President
3	Sir Chidi Osuji	Secretary
4	Sir Prince Daniel	Assistant Secretary
5	Sir Festus Adegbuji	Treasurer
6	Dame Akudo Nnadozie	Financial Secretary
7	Sir. Obele Poloamina	P.R.O
8	Sir Enyioma Onuoha	Protocol Officer 1
9	Sir Okechukwu Nyeche	Protocol Officer 2
10	Sir Ike Chinwo	Immediate Past President (IPP)
11	Lady Uzo Onweluzo	The President of the Ladies

They were commissioned by us on Wednesday, 20<sup>th</sup> March, 2019 in the Cathedral during the annual Diocesan Post Vestry Meeting Leadership Training/Workshop.

Scholarship grants to the tune of N100,000.00 (One Hundred Thousand Naira) only, was given to each of 20 indigent students of our Diocese who qualified for the award after going through screening. The annual Charity Launching was held on 21<sup>st</sup> June, 2019 at All Saints Cathedral, Rumuokwurusi, to raise funds for the Council's flagship charity

outreaches. The event was chaired by the retired Chief Judge of Rivers State, Sir, The Hon. Justice Iche N. and his wife, Dame Ngozi Ndu. The Bishop of Niger Delta North Diocese, The Rt. Rev. Wisdom B. Ihunwo was the Guest Preacher.

### **Diocesan Council of Knights' Ladies:**

These wives of our Knights have continued to wax stronger and stronger in their resolve to distinguish themselves in the service of God through monthly prayer meetings, well-attended power-packed Conferences, Welfare through their visits to the Prisons, Orphanages and prompt response to the needy as the need arises. The 2018 Ladies Conference with the theme: "**Mending the broken bridges of our family relationships with eternity in view**"(2 Cor. 5:18-19) was held on Saturday, 22nd and Sunday, 23rd September, 2018 at St. Andrews' Anglican Church, Rumuobiokani Deanery. It featured Pre-Conference vigil, visitation to the Prison, talk on the theme, Bible Study, etc.

### **Diocesan Lay Readers Association**

#### **1. The Annual Diocesan Lay Readers Conference:**

This took place at St. Nicholas', Woji from Friday, 14<sup>th</sup> to Sunday, 16<sup>th</sup> September, 2018. The Conference theme was "**Preach the Word, be instant in season and out of season**" (2Tim. 4:15).

A new Diocesan Executive was elected by members at the Conference with Dame Meg Orianwo emerging as the new Diocesan President of the Association, bringing an end to the 6-year tenure of Sir Paul Chukwumati as President. Other officers elected were:

- Sir Friday Nwanwa – Vice President
- Evang. Silas Ekezie – Secretary General
- Mrs. Eucharia Wali – Assistant Secretary
- Lady Felicia Derek-Iyo – Treasurer
- Mr. Frank Okonkwo – Financial Secretary
- Mr. Ken Anonye – PRO
- Mrs. Maureen Chuku – Welfare officer 1
- Sister Stella Nyeche – Welfare officer 2
- Evangelist Emmanuel Vuraebel – Prayer Coordinator
- Evangelist Mrs. Happiness Elewa – Prayer Coordinator 2
- Mr. Faithful Chuku – Provost 1
- Mr. Lucky Amadi – Provost 2

This new Executive was dedicated by us on Monday, 1<sup>st</sup> October, 2018 at the All Saints Cathedral, Rumuokwurusi.

#### **2. Beginning-of-the-Year Ministry Retreat and Service of Renewal of Vows of License**

This event was held from Friday, 1<sup>st</sup> to Sunday, 3<sup>rd</sup> February, 2019 with the theme: "**Consistence in Service**" (Luke 9:62). It was held at the Holy City Anglican Church, Pipeline, Rumuokwurusi and was the first under the new leadership of Dame

Meg Orianwo. The retreat featured talks, prayers, question-and-answer session, fundraise for the Lay Readers Parsonage Building at Holy City as well as service of renewal of vows of license as Lay Readers.

### **3. New Lay Readers**

We licensed 53 new volunteers into the Lay Readers Ministry of the Diocese on Saturday, 6<sup>th</sup> July, 2019 in a service held at St. Jude's, Oginigba Deanery. The Rev. Canon Chukwuemeka Okonwo delivered the sermon at the service. The new Readers were taken through a strenuous period of screening, selection and training under the supervision of The Ven. Dr. Ikechukwu Godwin Anene, The Rev. Canon Ahamefule Olluor (Chaplain) and Dame Meg Orianwo (Diocesan President) before being finally licensed. However, the training of these new Readers considered by us as **Diocesan Lay Readers** will continue for at least four more months after now. This is intended to equip them more adequately for some very serious Diocesan roles that we shall be assigning them in due course.

The Lay Readers Annual Diocesan Pastoralia – the Ministry of Service and lesson reading, leading of Intercessory Prayer Sessions and preaching of sermon in other Stations and Parishes away from where they are domiciled took place on Sunday, 21<sup>st</sup> August, 2019.

Both the old and newly licensed Lay Readers of our Diocese took part in this experience-enhancing Ministry exercise.

### **Parsonage Building Project at Holy City Anglican Church**

Work on the Parsonage building project being embarked upon by the Diocesan Lay Readers Association at their Mission Station – the Holy City Anglican Church, Pipeline, Rumuokwurusi, has reached advanced stage. The Building was roofed in April this year.

We commend the efforts of those who have continued to donate money and materials for the completion of this project. We appeal to all Lay Readers to ensure the speedy completion of this edifice by our next year's Synod.

### **REORGANIZATION OF THE LOCAL CHURCH MEN (CMF), WOMEN (MU/WG) AND YOUTH (AYF) PRAYER GROUPS**

We have reorganized the prayer groups of Men (CMF), Women (MU/WG) and Youths (AYF) in all local churches. The aim of this exercise is to achieve a uniform, purposeful, impactful and mission-oriented service to God.

The Lord Himself impressed this Prayer Group Plan on us in 2017 and consequently we held a series of meetings and consultations with the Clergy and their wives, the Laity, leaders of the men, women and youth ministries of the Diocese, the Diocesan Board and lastly the Synod. These meetings and consultations were truthful and marked the beginning and gradual sensitization of the entire Diocesan Community.

Following these consultations and the Diocesan Board meeting of Tuesday, 19<sup>th</sup> December, 2017 held at Archdeacon Crowther Memorial Girls' School (ACMGS), Elelenwo, we expressed our Vision thus: "To make the prayer groups assume a Diocesan outlook as well as become more ministry-focused or centred. By this we meant that all Churches (where possible) would have prayer groups of CMF, MU/WG and AYF that bear the same names across the Diocese and each group would be responsible for a specially assigned ministry at the Diocesan level under the supervision of a Chaplain and a Diocesan Co-ordinator."

We thereafter appointed a nine (9) man Committee for the re-organization of the Prayer Meeting Groups. It was headed by the Ven. Chidi S. Worgu with Barr. (Mrs.) Chidinma Otuka as secretary.

The Committee was saddled with the following tasks:

- To suggest common names for all prayer groups in all Churches in the Diocese;
- To assign material duties to each of them;
- To suggest their modes of operations comprising leadership style, funding, meetings etc.;
- To carry out any other assignment that will enhance their work and to ensure the actualization of the vision.

The Committee, under our supervision, produced the operational handbook for running these newly reorganized prayer groups. Under the new framework, the maximum number of prayer meeting groups in a Church shall be Ten (10) for the Christian Men's Fellowship (CMF), Twelve (12) for the Mothers' Union/Women's Guild (MU/WG) and Eight (8) for the Anglican Youth Fellowship (AYF). These new groups are to operate under and are accountable to their parent bodies. The contents of the handbook are to serve as guide to everyone, particularly the leaders and members of the various prayer groups, so that the original purpose of their establishment is upheld in their operations. The names for the men and women groups were picked from Bible characters, while those of the youth were picked from the fruit of the Spirit.

The maximum number of members in a group at the Local level shall be 30 persons for each of the men and women groups and 20 persons for each of the youth groups. However there is room for addition. The groups are to meet at the local church level once a month on the last Sunday and at most thrice a year at the Diocesan level. Also, each prayer group at both local and Diocesan levels are mandated to have only 8 selected officers; a Leader, Assisted Leader, Secretary, Asst. Secretary, Treasurer, Financial Secretary, Prayer Secretary and Provost/Welfare Officer. All groups are expected to generate and manage their funds for the achievement of their ministerial tasks at both local Churches and Diocesan level.

These prayer groups were assigned ministerial focus or assignments to encourage them to have purposeful and specific mission tasks. The ministerial assignments were divided into ten(10) categories namely: Support to struggling churches; Church-Planting, Local/External Missions; Welfare of Church members, Visitation/Follow-up/Discipleship ; Job Placement and Economic Empowerment of Church members; Ministry to the Bishop, Pastors, Church Workers and their

Families; Ministry to Families, Communities and the Diocesan Educational Institutions; Ministry to the Sick and Health Institutions; Ministry to Special Persons (The Destitute, Cult groups, Drug Addicts, Commercial sex workers (CSW), Prisoners and the Physically Challenged; Ministry to Widows, Orphans, Retired Clergy and the Aged; and Ministry to the Teens and Youths.

The Clergy are encouraged to support these prayer groups as they exist to help their ministries at the local Church levels. The attention of group leaders and members should constantly be drawn to the provisions of the Handbook and they should be encouraged to abide strictly by the guidelines as contained in them.

## **PRAYER GROUP COORDINATORS/ASSISTANTS**

### **Diocesan Men's Prayer Group Leaders**

S/N	GROUP	COLOUR	DIOCESAN CO-ORDINATORS
1	Peter	Red	Mr. Oko Osita, JP/Engr. Kasim Chiedu
2	Paul	Wine Red	Mr. Princewill Ovunwo
3	David	Purple	Sir Festus Adegbuji/Engr. Clinton Amadi
4	Daniel	Ash	Sir Barr. Mike Epelle/Sir Chidi Osuji
5	Samuel	Cream	Sir Vincent Ikoko/Bro Ken Anonye
6	Joshua	Sky Blue	Sir Sunny Worlu
7	Luke	Yellow	Dr. Henry Ngari
8	Joseph (The Prime Minister)	Lemon	Mr. Iriah Edeghere/Mr. Mukoro Akpojobaro
9	Barnabas	Royal Blue	Mr. Clinton Amaewhule
10	Timothy	Green	Surv. G. Assor/Mr. Stanley O. Onwuchi
11	St. John (The Apostle)	Pink	
12	Emmanuel	Royal Blue	
13	Nehemiah	Purple	

### **Diocesan Women Prayer Groups Co-ordinators and Supervisors**

S/N	GROUP	COLOUR	DIOCESAN CO-ORDINATORS	SUPERVISING ARCHDEACONS'WIVES
1	Sarah	Ash	Dame Priscilla Nosiri	Mrs. Precious Ugoha
2	Blessed Virgin Mary	Yellow	Pharm. Ijeoma Okey-Ewurum	Mrs. Goodluck Anyasodo
3	Elizabeth	Lemon	Barr. (Mrs.) Mercy Nweke	Mrs. Joy Owhonda
4	Deborah	Red	Barr. (Mrs.) Chidinma Otuka	Mrs. Happiness Worgu
5	Esther	Orange	Lady Josephine Enwukwe	Mrs. Nkeiru Onyewuotu
6	Hannah	Pink	Mrs. Rosemary Tasie	Mrs. Ada Mordi
7	Dorcas	Royal Blue	Mrs. Angelina Orianwo	Mrs. Patricia Ike Anene
8	Priscilla	Purple	Mrs. Christy Laguda	Mrs. Joy Nwachukwu
9	Lois	Green	Mrs. Lois Oke	Mrs. Augusta Chukwumati

10	Joana	Cream	Mrs. Joy Madume	Mrs. Nkeiru Onyewuotu
11	Lydia	Wine Red	Mrs. Blessing Ogu	
12	Abigail	Sky Blue	Dame Forstina Aririsukwu	Mrs. Priscilla Alex-Usifoh
13	Phoebe	Gold		
	Ruth	Peach		

### **Diocesan Youth Prayer Groups Co-Ordinators**

S/N	GROUP	COLOUR	DIOCESAN CO-ORDINATORS
1	Love	Red	Bro. Chima Favour Chinonso, JP
2	Peace	Sky Blue	Chief Innocent Adele
3	Joy	Cream	Miss Igechi Ogbonda
4	Faith	Yellow	Mr. Chukwunyelum Samuel Okoye
5	Goodness	Wine Red	Bro. Temple Elenwo
6	Kindness	Lemon	Sister Lois Adele
7	Excellence	Pink	Mr. Rufus Eziamara & Bro. Eze Wodi
8	Fidelity	Ash	Bro. Daniel Okwuchukwu & Bro. ThankGod Akubuiro
9	Success	Royal Blue	
10	Pleasant stone	Purple	
11	Olives	Green	
12	Victory	Yellow	

### **Chaplains**

GROUPS	MINISTRY FOCUS	DIOCESAN CHAPLAINS
RED/GOLD Groups	Ministry to Struggling Churches	The Ven. Chidi Worgu
WINE RED Groups	Church Planting, Local/External Missions	The Ven. Alex Usifoh
PURPLE Groups	Welfare of Church members, Visitation / Follow-up / Discipleship	The Ven. Okey Owhonda / The Rev. Canon (Dr.) Cephas Okarefe
ASH Groups	Job Placement and Economic empowerment	The Ven. Azubuike Ugoha
CREAM/ORANGE Groups	Bishop, Pastors, Church Workers and their Families	The Canon Chimaobi Chieme
SKY BLUE Groups	Families, Communities and Education Institutions	The Ven. Charles Mordi
YELLOW Groups	Ministry to the Sick and Health Institutions	The Rev. Dr. E. Owhor
LEMON Groups	Ministry to Special Persons	The Ven. Dr. I. G. Anene / The Rev. Raymond Osakwe
ROYAL BLUE Groups	Teens and Youth	The Rev. Canon Hossana Naenwi / The Rev. Collins Daniel
PINK Groups	Children and Pregnant Women	The Rev. Canon O. Igbamerun

## **COUNCIL FOR CLERGY, LAITY CONTINUING EDUCATION**

The Council for clergy, laity Continuing Education was born out of our deep yearning to raise godly and committed leaders in our Diocese through training and re-training of members for capacity-building by organizing, mobilizing and enrolling participants for the following programmes:

- The quarterly School for Diocesan clergy, church teachers and their wives;
- Bishop and Archdeacons/Wives Retreat;
- Special Training for Church Teachers, Ordinands, Postulants and other local helpers;
- Trainings for Lay Readers, on request;
- Training for Parish Clerks, Treasurers, Secretaries, Auditors and other staffs and
- Post Vestry Meeting /Leadership Training;
- Organizing and representing the Diocese in Provincial, National and Diocesan trainings, seminars and conferences.

It is also the work of this Council to assess the performance of students of the Diocese at the Seminary/Theological Colleges. Presently, we have ten (10) students at the Trinity Theological College, Umuahia; one graduated this year and we pray for the success of the others.

Between August 2018 and June 2019, several trainings were organised in the Diocese, most importantly the Post Vestry Meeting Leadership Training/Workshop that held from 20<sup>th</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> March, 2019 at the All Saints Cathedral, Rumuokwurusi with the theme: “*Fidelis In Minimis*”(Luke 19:17). The Keynote Speakers included The Rt. Rev Augustine Omole and We, Your Bishop.

### **International Christian Leadership Conference 2019**

Some of our Clergy and other leaders of our Diocese took part in this year's International Christian Leadership Conference which took place at St. Paul's Cathedral, Diobu, Port Harcourt from Monday, 29<sup>th</sup> April – Friday, 3<sup>rd</sup> May, 2019. It was organized by the Evangelism, Leadership and Missions International Institute (ELMI) of the Great Anglican Revival Team (GART) based here in Port Harcourt. The theme of the Conference was “*Occupy till I come*” Luke 19:13. The Rev, Can, Cephas Okarefe ably took the Bible Study 2 – *Problems and power (manifestation) in occupying* on our behalf. We thank him.

### **Distinctive Leadership Course London**

We, your Bishop and wife, (The Rt. Rev. & Mrs. Innocent U. Ordu, JP) participated in the Distinctive Leadership Course organized by the Leadership College, London from Monday, 29<sup>th</sup> April – Friday, 3<sup>rd</sup> May, 2019 and were each presented with Certificate of attendance.

### **Bishop's Discipleship and Leadership Training Programme**

We have started running a weekly discipleship and leadership development training programme every Thursday in the Bishop's Court Chapel. We invite those interested in being a part of this training particularly all who were recently confirmed, licensed

lay readers or intending to go through these processes to join us in this specialized training sessions.

### **Diocesan Clerks Association**

We are happy to inform the Synod that the Diocesan Clerks Association (DCA) had in their meeting held on Thursday, 25<sup>th</sup> of April, 2019 at St. Jude's Anglican Church, Oginigba, elected new officers to run the affairs of the group. Those elected to serve for the next three years are:

S/NO	NAME	OFFICE
1	Mr. Ifeanyi Nwaiwu	Chairman
2	Lady Charity Chuku	Vice Chairman
3	Miss. Chime Eke	Secretary
4	Miss. Elfreda Nwaigwe	Assistant Secretary
5	Mrs. Mercy Egbule	Treasurer
6	Miss. Roseline Obia	Financial Secretary
7	Miss. Nora Uzoma	Provost
8	Miss. Abigail Onyedimma	Prayer Secretary/Welfare
9	Mr. John Wenyi	Auditor 1
10	Sis. Stella Nyeche	Auditor 2

### **The Guild of Stewards (Ushers)**

The Diocesan Guild of Stewards had their own election early in the year and the following emerged as their leaders:

- |                           |                             |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Mr. Momoh Michael      | Co-ordinator                |
| 2. Lady Glory Nwachinyere | Assistant Co-ordinator      |
| 3. Mr. Faithful Chukwu    | General Secretary           |
| 4. Mr. Jonathan Nzewike   | Assistant General Secretary |
| 5. Mr. Clifford Okechukwu | Treasurer                   |
| 6. Mr. Daniel Okwuchukwu  | Financial Secretary         |
| 7. Mr. Daniel Douglas     | Prayer Secretary            |
| 8. Miss Peace Okorie      | Assistant Prayer Secretary  |
| 9. Mrs. Edith Uche        | Welfare Secretary           |
| 10. Mr. Ifeanyi Kanikwu   | Provost I                   |
| 11. Mr. Chidi Ogbodo      | Provost II                  |
| 12. Mr. Daniel Nwugba     | P.R.O.                      |

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

In the previous Synod year, the Adult Sunday School, Discipleship, Literature and Publications Ministry made notable efforts to further equip Sunday School teachers in the Diocese through many training programmes in order to ensure that they are more effective in their teaching ministry.

The Ministry held a 2-Day Sunday School Teachers Conference at St. Nicholas, Woji, from Friday, 24<sup>th</sup> to Saturday, 25<sup>th</sup> August, 2018 with 91 persons in attendance.

### New Executive

An Eight-man Executive Committee for the Ministry was elected to assist the Chaplain in piloting its affairs in the Diocese. The members are:

1. Diocesan Co-ordinator	Barr. Chibuzor Iheme
2. Assistant Co-ordinator	Brother Uche Nwachukwu
3. Secretary	Sister Grace Jaja
4. Assistant Secretary	Brother Iheanyi Nwachukwu
5. Financial Secretary/Treasurer	Sister Ann Utchay-Unigwe
6. Prayer Secretary	Sister Patricia Maduwuba
7. Assistant Prayer Secretary	Brother Chukwuka Okeke
8. Publicity Secretary	Brother Newman Ogbona

The Ministry held a Diocesan Bible Week from 22<sup>nd</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> October, 2018 in all our churches with the theme: "**Unveiling the Supernatural through the Ministration of the Word of God**" (Luke 4:18-19). The Bible week featured: Symposium involving teachers, seminar, talk shows and quiz competition at church levels. At the Diocesan Bible Week Quiz held at St. Philip's (Ang.) Church, Oroigwe District, Evo South East Archdeaconry, Elelenwo Deanery and Oroigwe/Eliogbolo Archdeaconry came 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> with 65%, 60% and 52.5%, respectively.

The Ministry also held a two 2-Day Teachers' Conference at St. Simon's Anglican Church, Okporo Deanery with the theme: "**Growing up to the stature of Christ**." The Diocese sponsored some members of the Ministry to attend the Church of Nigeria Publications Writers' Workshop at the Ibru Centre, Agbara-Ator where they went through practical sessions in writing and editing of Bible Study Outlines and the *Daily Fountain* (the Devotional of the Church of Nigeria).

The Chaplain and his team have successfully undertaken the review of the Diocesan Discipleship and Confirmation Manual as well as a new one on baptism. These will shortly be available for use in all our churches. We commend their efforts.

It is therefore the responsibility of our clergy men and teachers to harness these resources and materials of the ministry for the spiritual benefit of our parishioners. We hereby reiterate our long standing and unwavering position on the all-important place churches should accord the Sunday School (teaching) Ministry in their weekly divine services. Adequate time (at the least one hour) should be allotted to Sunday School every Sunday. Clergy men who fail to carry out this directive will be sinning against the church and shall consequently be regarded as enemies of the church's growth in this Diocese. Such defaulters will no longer be unpunished.

### Diocesan Prayer Ministry

This unit of the Diocese with the Rev. Canon Kingsley Ohajianya as Chaplain has so far endeavoured to actualize its Vision, which is to make Evo a praying Diocese.

Members of the team drawn from various Churches of the Diocese have faithfully stood in the gap as spiritual watchmen in prayer over the Diocese.

We appreciate their prayer and fasting programmes, retreats, major and mini vigils which they organize both for themselves and the entire Diocese from time to time. They have also been faithful in their participation at the Provincial and Church of Nigeria Prayer Convocation. May the Lord continue to answer them on our behalf as often as they meet to pray.

We charge all our clergy, church teachers and leaders to endeavour to give prayer its well-deserved place in the regular worship/meetings of their Churches. Efforts should be made to establish strong prayer teams (where they do not presently exist) and strengthen those already in place. It is in our best Spiritual, material and physical interests that we pray.

***“And He spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray and not to faint” (Luke 18:1).***

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

In line with the vision of the Public and Private Secondary Schools Ministry which is to take the gospel of Christ to all students in secondary schools within Evo Kingdom, the PPSSM undertook weekly school visitations to preach the gospel to both students and teachers.

The Ministry successfully held a Variety Day hosted by DOMA Group of Schools in which 150 participants from 14 schools participated. The variety day featured a talk on “**The Nigerian Youth and His future**”, drama, dance and a brainstorming debate. DOMA Group of Schools which opposed the topic: “**Nigerian Youths are lazy**” won the overall trophy. The Ministry also held two schools quizzes centred on Mathematics, English Language, Christian Religious Knowledge, General Science and Current Affairs at FAASAA Comprehensive College, Rumuodara and Peter Akinola Retreat Centre Rumuobiokani with twelve and seven schools participating respectively. Archdeacon Brown Education Centre (ABEC), Woji won at the first while Paternoster Schools, Iriebe carried the day at the second.

Also, in order to reach out to the youths, the Diocese procured and distributed 1,000 copies of the Church of Nigeria-published *Youth Dynamite* (the youth version of the Daily Fountain) at the cost of N400,000.00 (Four Hundred Thousand Naira) only to the students. The Ministry also published the second edition of its yearly magazine *Christo-Intellectual* (targeted at developing the youth) and distributed 1,000 copies to the publication free of charge.

Amidst the difficulties of penetrating government schools, PPSSM’s coverage has now extended to 46 schools apart from our Evo Diocesan Schools. The latest additions include Government Secondary School, Eliozi and Government Secondary School, Rumuomasi. The Diocese has also began running a full-time Anglican Chaplaincy at PAMO University of Medical Sciences (PUMS), TAP, Elelenwo and

Archdeacon Brown Education Centre, (ABEC), Woji. The students worship population at PUMS has grown from 18 to 40. ABEC now runs an independent, fully liturgical service for the Anglicans in the school every Sunday as well as other weekly activities.

### **Industrial, Business and Workplace Chaplaincy**

Our ministry to industries, business outfits and workplaces was sustained throughout the Synod year through the activities of the Chaplain, The Rev. Canon Ugochukwu L. Nwahaghi and members of the Chaplaincy. Old fellowship Centres were upheld and new ones opened. The Chaplaincy also distributed copies of the Holy Bible and our Hymn Book: The Ancient and Modern, to some of these ministry centres.

In addition, the Chaplaincy gained access into the following new places for outreaches:

- Surgarland Supermarket, Rumuodara Junction, East/West Road,
- City Roller Transport company, East/West Road, Eliozu
- TBN Transport Company, East/West Road, Eliozu
- Philimore Supermarket, Rumuodara Junction, East/West Raod.

In all, the Chaplaincy conducted weekly fellowships in 18 companies/establishments, visited 4 Markets and won 47 souls.

We commend their efforts and hereby invite members of the Diocese who are strongly led to do ministry in this area to freely identify with this unit.

### **Family Life and Home Fellowship Ministry**

This unit of the Diocese exists to encourage all Diocese of the Edo family members to become more fruitful disciples of Jesus Christ through their active participation in the home fellowship ministry; in instituting godly families from their very inception and remain so ever after. This unit which has Mrs Ijeoma Anagbogu as Diocesan co-ordinator and The Ven. Okechukwu Owhonda as the chaplain achieved quite a lot for the Diocese during the period under review. These include;

- The preparation of a new Home Fellowship Manual;
- The hosting of the second edition of Family Life and Home Fellowship Fair at St. Mark's Elenlewo Deanery on Saturday, 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2019, which attracted participants from churches of the Diocese.

Talks presented at the occasion included;

- "Making the Home Great " by Us, The Bishop;
- "God's Plan for Marriage" by Barr. Benard Dienye;
- "Bridging the Gap between the Parents and their Children" by The Ven. Chidi Worgu.

Prior to this fair, the ministry had conducted a survey across the Diocese on the expectations of parents (spouses) from each other and those of youths and children from their parents. The responses gathered which were many and varied were examined in detail during the fair. Also at the fair, there was a parade of the Home Fellowship Centres of churches in the Diocese. The breakdown of centres per the various administrative blocs is as follows;

Cathedral	16 centres
Rumuomasi Deanery	12 centres
Rumuobiakani	16 centres
Elelenwo	14 centres
Woji Archdeconary	15 centres
Evo South East	5 centres
Oroigwe/Eligbolo	7 centres
Oginigba Deanery	1 centre
Okporo Deanery	8 centres
Trinity Missionary Archdeconary	7 centres
Diocesan Churches	8 centres

From this breakdown, it is become very obvious that not all churches in the Diocese have complied with our Directive and Resolution of Synod that every church should compulsorily establish House Caring fellowships in the neighbourhoods where they live. This, we must say, is regrettable and it means that pastors and churches that are yet to comply are running their churches with a vision that is completely different from that of the rest of the Diocese. We will definitely not accept this.

The Home Fellowship and Family Life Ministry remains a highly strategic tool by which we hope to grow our churches and build up the spiritual life of our members. After this synod, we shall sanction any pastor whose church is discovered not to be operating the home fellowship and family life ministry. We charge the Diocesan Co-ordinators, Mrs Ijeoma Anabogu and the Chaplain, to immediately carry out a verification exercise across churches of the Diocese to determine those that are yet to commence the Home Fellowship Ministry several years after the directive was given and submit their findings to us latest, by the end of October this year.

### ***The Go-Tell Magazine***

In 2010, exactly one year after the creation of our Diocese, we set up the Diocesan magazine, *The Go-Tell*. The magazine, published three times a year – Easter Edition, Synod Edition and Christmas Edition- has its motto as “Creatively Communicating Christ.

After the first two editions, the magazine went into a form of hiatus but bounced right back with greater verve and consistency. Since then, it has consistently hit the news-stands on schedule and with precision. It has also greatly improved in terms of packaging, graphics, colour, style and overall appearance. Recent titles include: *The*

*Church: Leaving our roles to roll around* (2016 Synod edition), *Discipline in the Church: Does God actually insist on it?* (Synod 2017 edition), *Christmas: What Child is this?* (2017 Christmas edition); *Easter: What is the Mind of Christ!* (2018 Easter edition), *When Exactly is a Church said to be Growing* (Synod 2018 edition), *Celebrate Christmas... No! Don't Celebrate! Who is right?* (2018 Christmas edition), *Easter: What Demand Does Jesus' Sacrifice Place on us?* (2019 Easter edition).

Of particular note is that though *The Go-Tell* is a Christian print medium and is committed to projecting the Anglican heritage, it has expanded its scope in terms of content to appeal to a wider strata of Christian readership as well as even non-Christians. In fact, over the past 10 years, *The Go-Tell* has grown to have something for every reader. For instance, such columns as: *From the Bishop's Court*, *News Flash*, *Poems* (for Children and for each Christian Seasons like Easter and Christmas), *The Go-Tell Chormaster* (For lovers of music), *The Health Desk* (For Health tips and creative interpretation of health-related issues), *The Business Executive* (strictly for business and entrepreneurship), *The Go-Tell Woman* (Dealing with women-related issues), *Go-Tell Kitchen* (To teach recipes for lovers of food and cooking), *Youth and Teens* (For youth affairs), *Kiddies Affairs* (For children), *Go-Tell Tourist* (Detailing Tourist Sites for vacation and relaxation), *Back of the Book*, (for indepth analysis and teachings on technical issues), etc., make *The Go-Tell* a storehouse of information.

Apart from the above-named columns, the magazine has continued to document the journey of the Diocese through its “*The Diocese in Pictures*”, a photo gallery which displays pictures of events in the Diocese every three months.

We urge all Churches and Evo faithful to continue to buy, read and keep every single edition of this magazine carefully for posterity. Church Pastors who have been in the habit of dumping copies of this magazine without passing them on to the congregation should forthwith desist from this practice. We also commend all writers, reporters, contributors and columnists and urge them to strive to make *The Go-Tell* even better in the next 10years. There's still more to be done.

## **BOARDS, DIRECTORATES, INSTITUTIONS AND COMMITTEES**

### **Missions, Evangelism and Church Planting Board**

Missions/Evangelism is the primary reason for the Church's existence here on earth. We must take heed to ourselves to be found faithful in this area.

The renowned German Evangelist, Reinhard Bonnke, once said: “A Church that does not save the lost, that Church is lost itself.” It is to our shame that in some of our Churches, much emphasis is placed on the development of physical infrastructure, members'/pastors' welfare, social activities while so little or nothing at all is done in the area of drawing men unto Christ. This explains the reason for the scanty congregations we have here and there. Clergymen who also do not work hard to grow their Churches with more worshippers should not be expecting the Bishop to post them to bigger or more populous congregations. If we do so, such Churches may suffer the loss of souls under them.

Deliberate, calculated and strategic efforts must be made by every Church to increase her membership and retain those that the Lord adds to us.

We commend New Wine Church East/West Road Parish, Okporo for their last year's Christmas Day Special Evangelism along the Igwuruta-Elele highway during which members ministered God's word and prayed for Policemen on duty and also gave them Christmas gifts.

We began the year 2019 with the staging of crusades and revival services in all Administrative Blocs of the Diocese. The Archdeacons, Rectors and the Vicar of the Cathedral were directed to liaise with their other clergy and church teachers to organize this event in their areas of Ministry.

We commend those who complied with this directive. We are aware that some Archdeacons preferred to honour external invitations rather than mobilize their Ministers to hold this outreach in their assigned jurisdictions.

We also commend the Lay Readers Association for staging a successful Crusade at the Great Physician Church, Atali, as part of their first quarter general meeting which held from Friday, 5<sup>th</sup> to Sunday, 7<sup>th</sup> April, 2019.

Members of Christian Men's Fellowship (CMF) of the Chapel of Grace and Knowledge, ACMGS, Elelenwo responded to our call for planting of more Churches. The only new church planted within the Synod year across the entire Diocese was carried out by the men of the Chapel. The new Station now Christened "**GOOD TIDINGS ANGLICAN CHURCH**", **NEW HAVEN ESTATE, RUMUOKWURUSI (OFF IGBO-ETCHE)**, took off on Sunday, 16<sup>th</sup> December, 2019, at the site of a recently acquired piece of land by the Diocese. We commend the Vicar of the Chapel, The Rev. Canon Samuel Obialor and the men of the Parish for this heartwarming Missionary step.

## **Diocesan Investment Board**

The activities or programmes of the Board are funded by the Diocese through the provision of operational grants. The Board meets quarterly to deliberate on various issues and sometimes undertakes visits to project sites to acquaint itself with the status of investments.

## **The Printing Press**

The Investment Board has made good progress with the reorganization of the Printing Press Management for improved performance. The Board has reviewed the 2017 audit report of the Printing Press while the implementation of far-reaching decisions in the Press is awaiting the outcome of a Management Review process

which began in February 2019 with the hiring of VITAL SOLUTIONS CONSULTANTS (a business clinic firm). This is to help diagnose the problems with the Press and proffer solutions that will lead to revamping and repositioning of the organization for improved operations and profitability. The consultants have submitted their report comprising of observations, recommendations and action plan. The management review report has highlighted a couple of flaws and indictments on the operational processes of the Press and also shown more than 50% of our churches in the Diocese consistently flout the Diocesan directive of using the Press for all programmes of the church. The consultants also highlighted that there has been a persistent diversion of jobs by the operatives of the Press which led to dismissal of one of the affected staff. The Board is working with Vital Solutions Limited to implement an action plan towards revamping the Press.

### **The Diocesan Farm at Atali**

The batches of the plantains (planted last year) are doing very well in the farm. The clearing of the greater portion of the land for completion of the second phase of plantain cultivation has been accomplished. An additional two thousand (2000) plantain suckers have been purchased from IITA Ibadan and were fully planted by the second week in July, 2019.

### **The Stationery/Printing Materials/Clergy Robes Shop**

The Stationary/Printing Materials/Clergy Robes Shop began business on Saturday, 23<sup>rd</sup> March, 2019 when the Bishop and the Diocesan community commissioned it. Prior to the commissioning, the Investment Board employed a staff and took stock of materials purchased for the Books/Stationary/Clergy Robes and Vestment shop.

The location of the shop at the second floor of the Cathedral Hall has been a setback as many are complaining of the challenge to climb to the second floor and are therefore discouraged. This calls for speedy construction of the Printing Press/Stationary Shop at BCMSS premises at Rumuobiokani to enable the relocation of the shop for enhanced and effective business.

### **Directorate of Social Welfare**

The Directorate of Social Welfare, Diocese of Evo, embarked on several welfare-oriented visits to her parishioners and some community-based groups in the state who are in dire need of social welfare.

Notable among the many welfare visits wherein food items and other harvest items from the Diocese were distributed; include visits to Iriebe Rehabilitation Centre, Remand Home Borikiri, and the Old People's Home, Harbour Road.

Also, as part of the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations, the Directorate, in conjunction with the members of the 10<sup>th</sup> Committee, visited the Rivers State University Hospital (RSUTH),

University of Port Harcourt Teaching Hospital (UPTH) as well as Inmates of the Port Harcourt Prison.

## **Directorate of Civic & Political Affairs**

This Diocesan Directorate has as its Mission: “To create a conducive environment for good governance and responsible citizenship.” In readiness for the 2019 general elections, the Directorate carried out a number of public enlightenment campaigns and mobilization of the masses with the goal of leading the people to vote rightly. In further promotion of the mission of the Directorate, We, the Bishop, appointed its Diocesan Chairman, The Rev. Canon Chuku Opara to deliver the 2018 Annual Diocesan Cathedral Lecture on All Saints’ Day, 1<sup>st</sup> November based on the topic: 2019: The role of the Church towards the emergence of a credible national political leadership in Nigeria. The Rev. Canon Chuka was excellent in his presentation. We deeply appreciate that effort.

The Directorate also carried out public enlightenment outreaches to some designated schools and colleges ion Port Harcourt – interacted with Staff and students of such institutions like Federal Government Colleges at Rumuokoro and Abuloma as well as Brainfield Education Centre. The outreaches focused mainly on the causes, effects and cures of such vexing issues as drug and addiction, pornography, premarital sex and homosexuality.

The Directorate needs more volunteers to join them in their activities.

## **Evo Diocesan Education Board and Schools**

We thank God for the steady progress being made by the three existing Diocesan Schools; Archbishop Crowther Memorial Girls School (ACMGS), Bishop Crowther Memorial Secondary School (BCMSS) and Word of Faith Group of Schools (WOFGS) under the leadership of the Education Board and the Principals and staff of the Schools.

Towards improving the general and personnel management of the Diocesan schools, the Education Board is progressing on three specific initiatives, namely:

- To attain accreditation by Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI);
- Implementation of Personnel & Organisational Management Systems which will govern and streamline the way the schools are run; and
- Information & Communication Technology (ICT) -enhanced Operations, which aim to make the operations and management of the schools electronic and online.

To oversee and ensure continuing focus on these three key improvement strategies, the We have reassigned the Rev. Canon Olufemi Igbamerun, erstwhile Vice Principal of ACMGS as the Diocesan Schools Performance Improvement Coordinator.

The Education Board, in keeping with one of the ACSI requirements for accreditation, has also restructured the governance of the 3 Diocesan Schools by establishing a separate Governing Council for each school. Each Council consists of 3-4 members of the Education Board (one of whom is the Chairman), the Principal of the School, the School Chaplain, and a representative each of the Alumni Association, the PTA and the host community.

The Education Board has also initiated the process of supervising and regulating all Parish Schools in the Diocese. So far, the following Parish Schools have been inspected by the Board:

- All Saints' Nursery/Primary School, Rumuokwurusi;
- St. Michael's School, Rumuomasi;
- St. Mark's School, Elelenwo;

The initial impression after the first round of inspections is that much work needs to be done to bring the schools up to the standards stipulated by the Rivers State Government for privately-owned educational institutions, and to the quality standards of the Diocese of Evo. The Schools need to do a lot more in the areas of administration, quality of teaching staff and environmental sanitation, and they have all been advised to improve in those areas or face closure.

Holy City Anglican Church which applied to open a Nursery School/Primary School has been advised to start with a Crèche, Day-care, and Pre-Nursery until they have the facilities for Nursery/Primary schools.

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

To the glory of God, the Diocesan schools are growing in numerical strength. The Schools now have a combined population of 1,582 students at all levels, compared to last year's 1,514, while staff population has marginally increased from 254 to 261.

After the steady improvement over the 2015/16 and 2016/17 academic sessions by the 3 schools, we regret to report the rather disappointing results at the WAEC external certificate examinations this last session for ACMGS and BCMSS. The percentage of students with credits or better in at least 5 subjects, including Mathematics and English in WAEC was 58% for ACMGS and 50% for BCMSS. The Principals and staff of both schools have been challenged to get the performances in external exams back on the upward trend.

However, it is noteworthy that ACMGS students achieved a remarkable 79% credits in Mathematics this year, compared to 13% and 44% in the previous two years. We are believing God that our prayers and the various interventions by the Board and the School have successfully addressed the phobia for Mathematics and paved the way for sustained success in the subject.

Further on the positive side, WOFGS performance in WAEC has continued to improve with 100% of students attaining credits in 5 or more subjects, including English and Maths, in the 2017/18 session. The school also recorded 100% Credits in 11 out of the 19 subjects offered. We wish to commend the Principal and staff of WOFGS on this sustained performance, and to encourage them to aim for 100% Credits in all subjects.

We enjoin the Principals and Staff of all the Diocesan Schools to continue striving towards achieving our Vision for them to be "Schools of first choice for parents, students and staff."

In extra-mural areas, we are pleased to report the notable achievements of our students:

- ❖ Master Cassius Ejekwu of BCMSS emerged 3<sup>rd</sup> out of 490 other participants in the Einstein Science Challenge;
- ❖ Students of ACMGS came first in the debate competition organized by the International Federation of Female Lawyers (FIDA) in May, 2018.
- ACMGS students also came out tops at a Quiz competition organized by Rumuokwuta Old Girls' Association on 31<sup>st</sup> July, 2017 with a cash prize of ₦50,000.
- ❖ WFGS marked the Founder's Day in memory of the Late Dame Beatrice Eke, the founder of the school, at Christ Harvest (Ang.) Church, Faith Avenue, Woji

## **Staff Development**

The Education Board in its commitment to the training of staff has continued to support their attendance of both internally-organised and 3<sup>rd</sup>-party retreats, seminars and conferences. To this end, our staff participated in the following major training programmes, among others:

- Regular pre-resumption retreat and training at the beginning of every term;
- There was a Capacity Training for Staff of our Schools by the Kingdom Schools Institute (KSI), USA in Lagos, from Monday, 6<sup>th</sup> to Wednesday, 8<sup>th</sup> August, 2018. In attendance were the 3 principals of our schools; 10 staff of ACMGS, Elelenwo; 6 from BCMSS and 10 from Word of Faith, Woji.
- Training for Anglican School teachers organized by the Cambridge University Press on 25<sup>th</sup> April, 2018.
- We, the Bishop, the Education Board Chairman and the Principal, ACMGS attended the ACSI Africa Round Table Conference 3 (ART 3) in South Africa from 19<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> February, 2018 with the theme: African Development and Partnerships.
- We, the Bishop, the Principals and the Diocesan Schools Performance Improvement Coordinator also attended the West African (Anglophone) Summit for Christian Education, 2018, held at Ogun State from 9<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> May, 2018 with the theme: Called to Rebuild, Repair and Restore (Isaiah 58:12b).
- A two-day training session on Biblical Integration was organized for the teaching Staff of the three schools on 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> June, 2018.
- Our Mathematics teachers participated in a One-Day workshop titled: "Contemporary Mathematics: Methods for effective teaching" on 17<sup>th</sup> April, 2018.
- World Teachers Day: This is a day dedicated by UNESCO since 1994 to appreciate, evaluate and enhance those in the teaching profession. The occasion offered us the opportunity to host all teachers in our Evo Diocesan Schools to a lunch at ACMGS, Elelenwo. It took place on Friday, 5<sup>th</sup> October, 2018. The 2018 theme was **"The Right to Quality Education Means The Right to a Qualified Teacher."**

## **Infrastructural Development**

In addition to building the academic, spiritual and moral standards of our schools, we also embarked on the following and other infrastructural developments that will improve the overall standards of the Schools.

❖ BCMSS:

In the preceding year, we witnessed the Dedication of BCMSS, Rumuobiokani Laboratories, Library, Offices and Classrooms Complex. This epoch-making event took place on Wednesday, 3<sup>rd</sup> October, 2018. The dedication and commissioning ceremonies were performed by His Grace, The Most Rev. Tunde Adeleye, Archbishop of Niger Delta Province and the Deputy Governor of Rivers State, Dr. (Mrs.) Ipalibo Harry Banigo who represented the Executive Governor of Rivers State, Chief Barr. Nyesom Ezenwo Wike, CON, at the occasion. Also present at the occasion were the Bishops of Etche, Ikwerre and Niger Delta as well as the Chairman, Rivers State SUBEB, The Ven. Dr. Fyneface N. Akah as well as the paramount ruler of Rumuobiokani, HRH Eze Sir Amb. Dr. Samuel Nyeche Ejims-Wopara, Eze Ize-agwu II with some members of his Council of chiefs.

A total sum of ₦110,301,595 was spent on the construction of the project and furnishing. Inter-locking and landscaping of the hostel/classroom environment has been completed.

❖ WOFGS:

A two-storey 12-classroom block built by the Diocese was dedicated by the Primate of All Nigeria (Anglican Communion), The Most Rev Nicholas D. Okoh on Monday, 15<sup>th</sup> July, 2019 as part of activities marking the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary our Diocese. The Eze Ohna Evo III, HM King Amb. Sir, Dr. Leslie N. Eke, JP was present at the occasion with some of his chiefs. The foundation stone of this edifice was laid by us on the 27<sup>th</sup> July, 2018. We appreciate the donation of 15 doors worth ₦400,000.00 (four hundred thousand naira) only by the PTA of the school in support of this classroom project.

### **Archdeacon Crowther Memorial Girls School, Elelenwo**

1. The student's choir won the "Star prize at the last Rotary Club Music Competition for Secondary Schools in Port Harcourt on Saturday, 20<sup>th</sup> October, 2018 and were given a Yamaha Musical Key Board (PSR 450).
2. Project: A new building to accommodate the Senior Secondary School classes with 18 classrooms, 6 laboratories and offices has been completed at a cost of N105,933,894.30 (one hundred and five million, nine hundred and thirty three thousand, eight hundred and ninety four naira, fifty kobo) only. It was dedicated on Monday, 15<sup>th</sup> July, 2019 by His Grace, The Most Rev Dr Nicholas D. Okoh, Archbishop, Metropolitan and Primate of All Nigeria. Concrete Inter-lock pathways have also been constructed in different parts of the school compound to avoid dirt paths, and open drains are being covered among other improvements in compliance with ACSI's pre-Accreditation Visit Report recommendations.

The Dedication took place exactly three years after the laying of its foundation stone by us. At the same occasion, the Primate laid the foundation stone for a new 500-bed

capacity Dormitory building. In attendance were the wife of the Executive Governor of Rivers State, Her Excellency, Hon. Justice (Mrs.) Suzette Eberechi Nyesom-Wike, herself an old girl of the school, the Bishops of Mbamili, The Rt. Rev. Henry Okeke; Ikwo, The Rt. Rev. Kenneth Ifemene, the wife of former Deputy Governor of Rivers State, Dame Dr. Christie Toby, the wife of the Bishop of Ogoni, Mrs. Stella Gberegbara, wife of the late Bishop of Uyo, Mrs. Grace Obama, the Eze Elelenwo-etor, HRH, Eze Sunny Weli Chuku, Parents and other dignitaries.

On 24<sup>th</sup> September, 2018, we received a generous donation of 10 office tables and chairs for ACMGS, Elelenwo, by the 1990 set of the Old Girls' Association of the school.

There was also a Scholarship Award to Students (graduating class) of ACMGS by the Alumni of the North American Branch.

### **Special Donations and Support**

Our gratitude goes to all those, too numerous to mention, who have supported the schools with donations in one form or the other. We pray that God will continue to enrich them all. We note especially the following;

- The donation of 3 brand new Toyota Hiace buses to the schools by the Rivers State Government;
- The State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB), Rivers State donated several items of furniture and equipment including class and staff room furniture to the schools;
- The National Education Trust Fund, Abuja through the SUBEB, Rivers State donated several items of Sports equipment.

We are immensely grateful to the Rivers State SUBEB Chairman, The Venerable Dr. Fyneface Akah, JP, for his kindness in including our School as beneficiaries of these notable gifts.

- The Diocesan Board approved a soft loan of N10 million to WFGS to commence the construction of the 2-storey classroom/dormitory block, and also donations of N37 million to ACMGS and N27 million to BCMSS for their infrastructure projects.
- Different sets of ACMGS Old Girls Associations made various donations to the school. The North America Old Girls donated a Mathematics Laboratory, 22 white boards and bursaries of N35,000 to each outgoing SS3 student while the 1980 set donated 50 Science laboratory stools just as the 1991 set have embarked on construction of a modern kitchen and donation of computers and books.

- We also received a donation of 4 pieces of desktop computers for the school's I.C.T. Department by Sir Obele Polamina, the Vice Chairman of the School's Parent-Teacher Association (PTA).

On behalf of the Diocese, we wish to thank the ACMGS Old Girls for their exemplary and unwavering support of their alma mater. The BCMSS Alumni are encouraged to emulate the highly commendable initiatives of the ACMGS Alumni.

We are also grateful to the WOFGS PTA for the donation of plasma TV sets to the school for the commencement of e-learning.

The Evo schools still need a lot of support for funding of infrastructural development of our schools. We therefore continue to appeal to the Rivers State Government, the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) and to well-spirited individuals, groups and organisations to help in any of the following areas of need or as they are led:

- (a) New hostel buildings at ACMGS;
- (b) New staff quarters at both ACMGS and BCMSS;
- (c) Construction of internal roads especially at BCMSS;
- (d) Irrigation and re-grassing of the Sports Fields at both ACMGS and BCMSS, being requirements to qualify for the ACSI accreditation;
- (e) Appropriately-sized diesel generators – for full lighting of entire compounds to avoid dark spots at night in the 3 schools; and
- (f) New Girls' hostel for WOFGS.

We pray that Almighty God will bless you all, as you continue to support the Diocese to make our Diocesan Schools internationally accredited centres of academic, spiritual and moral excellence.

## **2019 WAEC/SSCE RESULT ANALYSIS FOR EVO DIOCESAN SCHOOLS**

**Below is the analysis of the performance of students in our 3 schools in the just released WAEC/SSCE results:**

**Archdeacon Crowther Memorial Girls' School, Elelenwo** recorded 100% Credit pass in English, Mathematics, and six other subjects. The remaining subjects also recorded As, Bs, and Cs. Out of the 56 Students that sat for this year's exam, 96% made five(5) credits and above including in Mathematics and the English Language. This is a significantly marked improvement on the performance of previous years.

The students in BCMSS –recorded 100% credit pass in five(5) subjects, 97% in 2 subjects, 81%, 75%, 67%, 66% and 59% in 5 other subjects respectively. Worthy of mention in this address is the performance of Master Cassius Ejekwu, son of The Rev. Samuel Ejekwu (Supervising Priest of Christ the Redeemer Church, Eliogbolo) who scored A1 in 7 subjects including Mathematics, B3 in English Language and C4 in Economics.

Before now, he had recorded the following performance:

- JSS1 – Overall best in Mathematics and the English Language, overall 2<sup>nd</sup>
- JSS2 – Overall best in Mathematics and the English Language, overall 1<sup>st</sup>
- JSS3 – Overall best in the English Language
- SS1 – Overall best in Mathematics and the English Language, 1<sup>st</sup> in SS1 B
- SS2 – Best in Mathematics and the English Language, overall 1<sup>st</sup> in SS2, 3<sup>rd</sup> runner-up Einstein Science challenge
- SS3 – Best Graduating Student, Best science student in SS3, 2<sup>nd</sup> best JAMB result in Rivers State with a score of 326 over 400.

Our students in **Woji Town Word of Faith Group of Schools** recorded 100% Credit pass in Mathematics and eight(8) other subjects; 72.2% Credit pass in the English Language. Other subjects also recorded As, Bs, and Cs.

Worthy of note in the 2019 WAEC/SSCE result is the 100% Credit pass in Mathematics by all the candidates registered for the examination by ACMGS, Elelenwo – a feat the school is achieving for the first time in 10 years. We commend the Mathematics teacher and all others for this effort and return all thanks and glory to God who made this possible.

### **BISHOP ELENWO MEMORIAL HOSPITAL (BEMH)**

Our Diocesan hospital, the Bishop Elenwo Memorial hospital recorded the following achievements during the year:

- Successful completion of its registration with the Rivers State Ministry of Health with operational certificate issued;
- Increased Patient Patronage. The hospital has hosted two free medical outreaches in recent months: One was in October 2018 and the other was during the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of our Diocese;
- Successful deliveries of babies;
- The take-off of a functional eye clinic; and
- Signing of a contract with the Obio/Akpor Local Government Health Insurance Scheme's Health Maintenance Organisation (HMOs).

Operations are billed to commence very soon.

## **ROSE OF SHARON, ATALI**

Our new approach to sustaining our Ministry at our MU/WG-planted Rose of Sharon Anglican Church at Atali (now under the Trinity Missionary Archdeaconry) which we announced at the Synod last year is steadily yielding the desired results.

From August 2018 to July this year, nearly all the Administrative Blocs including the Diocesan CMF, MU/WG, AYF, Council of Knights and Lay Readers have worshipped there during their assigned months. This compliance has however, not been without some hitches. Some Administrative Blocs and activity groups did not worship there in the full strength required of them; others tried to play smart. We are even more disappointed with members of the Diocesan Board and Synod whose worship scheduled in that Church for December, 2018 and July, 2019 was so poorly honoured.

We encourage and charge every one of us – Clergy and laity to demonstrate faithfulness in this little matter of going there to worship with others whenever we are called upon. It will surely encourage the few permanent members in that ‘wilderness’ Church. Meanwhile, we commend all who have rightly understood our vision for that Church and are faithfully running with it. God bless you all for your support so far.

## **BISHOP'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON EMPOWERMENT**

We set up a team of Advisers on Economic Empowerment to teach members how to fish by empowering them and thus leading members to prosper and be in good health even as their souls prospereth (3 John v2).

In the first phase of the empowerment scheme for 2019, forms were distributed to Eleven (11) Administrative blocs. These forms were filled and returned by applicants who indicated interest to be empowered after which twenty-six (26) candidates were selected following a rigorous interview. Out of the 26 candidates, 15 indicated interest to be trained and empowered in Catering, 4 for fashion designing, 3 for Laundry and Textile care, 2 for hair dressing, 1 for decoration and 1 for bead-making.

The graduates from the scheme are closely monitored periodically to ensure they make maximum use of the skills acquired. Churches, groups and individuals are encouraged to partner with the Empowerment Directorate and also patronize graduates of the scheme to motivate others.

## **INFRASTRUCTURAL MILESTONES OF OUR DIOCESE IN TEN YEARS**

As we continue in the celebration of our decade of existence as a Diocese, there is one area of great milestone we must not fail to highlight in thanksgiving and glory to God.

This is in the area of the development of new infrastructure in terms of new Church buildings, parsonages/church workers quarters, Bishop's lodges and new facilities in all our schools.

A very critical look at, and assessment of the state of affairs in 2009 when we took off as a Diocese will show that of all the 28 Church Buildings on ground in 2009, only about 7 of them (the old Cathedral building, St. Michael's Rumuomasi, St. Andrew's, Rumuobiokani, St. Mark's Elelenwo, St. Nicholas Anglican Church, Woji District, Church of The Holy Spirit, Elelenwo District, Church of the Epiphany, Rumuokwurusi) are still standing (though some of them have undergone serious remodelling and physical improvement from the original state as at today). The remaining congregations which were either in the process of building/completing their Churches or did not have any befitting place of worship at all have since completed them or have started and are nearing completion.

We also put on record that the number of Churches we had at inauguration has since risen to 69 and to the glory of God, we can report that a good number (if not all) of the remaining 21 (excluding the 7 detailed above), now have brand new Church edifices completed or built from scratch and dedicated or are about to be dedicated.

Also, new Parsonages, Halls and School buildings now adorn the premises of our Churches and Schools.

In all we have since 2009 to date laid the foundation stone for new church buildings, vicarages/parsonages and other facilities totalling 46. We have also laid the foundation stone for 9 school infrastructure.

In the same vein, we have dedicated **27 church buildings, 10 children/church halls, 17 vicarages/parsonages, 3 other church workers' quarters, 13 church offices 17 schools projects, 8 bishop's lodges and 1 hospital.**

We also have at this time on-going (nearing completion), **13 new church buildings, 7 vicarages/parsonages and 1 children/church hall.**

We give glory to God and greatly appreciate all our Parishioners who contributed their resources, large and small, in making these milestones possible.

We charge our Priests and Church leaders to ensure the constant maintenance of these facilities. They should not be allowed to rot in our very eyes due to lack of care. To this end, we wish to commend the Church of the Holy Spirit, Elelenwo District for sustaining the decency of their church interior in particular since after its dedication on 17<sup>th</sup> November, 2012.

We commend our labours in raising these structures. They actually have a way they encourage and motivate us when we gather together to worship God. But of what use are they if they stand in our Church compounds as mere monuments without the needed people to use them to worship God? Consequently, every minister and

faithful of our Diocese is hereby charged to work hard at converting those in the communities where our Churches are situated, bring them in and ensure to BUILD THEM UP in their most holy faith.

The sad point to note here however is that not too long from now, all these beautiful edifices shall be no more. They shall be dissolved by a fervent heat.

*“But the day of the Lord will come like as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up” (2 Peter 3: 10).*

What this means therefore is that all our physical efforts here on earth will end here. They shall not endure till eternity. The only effort that will stand till eternity is our investment in the winning of the souls that will utilize these facilities that we are putting up albeit for now.

This will please and glorify God much more!

### **Development of Church Infrastructure/Assets in the Diocese: Our recognition and appreciation**

It has always been our desire and joy to see members of our various Parishes and Church Stations sacrificially commit substantial personal resources towards the diverse developmental efforts and missions of our churches. Our heart and prayers always go to God in Thanksgiving for such persons.

On this occasion therefore, we wish to particularly acknowledge and thank:

- HRH, Eze G.B. Odum for undertaking the completion of the ceiling of the new church building of St. Jude’s, Oginigba;
- Engr. Chimenum Amadi and Engr. Vincent O. Chinda for installing the stainless handrail at the altar of same Church;
- HRH, Eze Sir Emeka Ihunwo for his enormous contributions in various ways to the completion of the new Archdeaconry House of Woji Archdeaconry;
- Hon. Solomon Abel Eke for several contributions to various churches in the Diocese;
- Chief Barr. Kingsley and Hon. Justice (Mrs.) Augusta Uche Chuku and Eze Sir Ray C. Elewa for their notable contributions to the completion of the same Woji Archdeaconry House;
- Dame Olayinka Edeghere, Mr.& Mrs. Iriah Edeghere and Eddy Emeka Wopara for their respective outstanding donations and scholarship grants to Anglican Church of Pentecost, Rumuogba Parish, and to some of her indigent members;

- We appreciate the anonymous family that roofed the new personage building of New Wine Church, East/West Road Parish as well as the individual who purchased a fairly used salon car for use by the Prayer Squad of the Parish.
  - We appreciate the donation and installation of a state of the art Public Address System, Altar rail and Wall papers in the Bishop's Court Chapel of Refuge by Engr. Somto Mbamalu, Sir Chike Okoli and others.
  - HRH, Eze (Sir) & Lady Morgan Amadi, the Paramount Ruler of Okporo Community for the building of a magnificent Church Hall at St. Simon's Church, Okporo Deanery which is still on-going.
  - The Diocesan Lay Readers Association for their on-going new Parsonage building project at Holy City Anglican Church, Pipeline, Rumuokwurusi and every other person or family whose contributions towards the infrastructural development of our Churches are not known to us.
- May the Lord reward you for all your sacrifices.

### **Weekly Financial (10% and 15%) Remittances to the Diocese in 2018: Outstanding Churches and Group**

Following the conclusion of the Annual Audit exercise of our Churches by the Diocesan Audit Team for the year 2018 and the acceptance of their report by the Diocesan Board at her June 2019 meeting, we are pleased to announce the results of the Churches that excelled the most in their weekly remittances to the Diocese.

*They are as follows:*

#### **Category (A - 15%) For the Cathedral and Deanery Churches:**

**1<sup>st</sup> Position** – St. Andrew's Church, Rumuobiokani Deanery with a total of Twenty Million, Fifty-Three Thousand, Nine Hundred and Forty One Naira, Two Kobo (₦ 20, 053, 941.02) only. This performance is greater than that of 2017 by Eight Hundred and Sixty One Thousand, Three Hundred and Ninety Six Naira and Eighty-One Kobo (₦ 861, 396.81) only. This performance is appreciated. An improved performance is however expected subsequently.

#### **Category (B-15%) District/Diocesan Headquarter - Churches:**

**1<sup>st</sup> Position** – Chapel of Grace and Knowledge, Elelenwo with a total remittance of Three Million, Seven Hundred and Eighty Thousand, Five Hundred and Fifty-Seven Naira, Two Kobo (₦ 3,780,557.02) only. This performance beats that of 2017 by Two Hundred and Sixteen Thousand, Five Hundred and Eight Naira, Forty-Two Kobo (₦216,508.42) only. This

performance is appreciated. An improved performance is however expected subsequently.

#### **Category (C-10%) Parish Churches:**

**1<sup>st</sup> Position** – New Covenant Church, Eliminigwe Parish, Elelenwo with a total remittance of One Million, Eight Hundred and Two Thousand, Seven Hundred and Eighteen Naira, Eighty-Four Kobo (₦1,802,718.84) only. This performance is lower than that of 2017 by Six Hundred and Four Thousand, One Hundred and Eighty-Seven Naira, One Kobo (₦ 604,187.01) only. We appreciate this performance and urge an improved performance subsequently.

#### **Category (D-15%) Station Churches:**

**1<sup>st</sup> Position** – Daystar Anglican Youth Church, Rumuokwurusi, with a total remittance of One Million, Three Hundred and Eighty-Three Thousand, Seven Hundred and Eighty-Five Naira (₦ 1,383,785.00) only performance higher than 2017 by Five Hundred and Seven Thousand, One Hundred and Twenty Naira (₦ 507, 120.00) only. The Priest and his congregation are highly commended. This improved performance should be sustained.

#### **Category (D-10%) Station Churches:**

**1<sup>st</sup> Position** – Church of Advent, Rumuewhara with a total remittance of Nine Hundred and Forty Six Thousand, Fifty-Three Naira, Fifty Kobo (₦ 946,053.50) only. This performance is higher than that of 2017 by One Hundred and Twenty Nine Thousand, Three Hundred and Twelve Naira, Seventy-One Kobo (₦ 129,312.71) only. This performance is appreciated. An improved performance is however expected subsequently.

#### **Category (E) Worship Centres:**

**1<sup>st</sup> Position** – Anglican Worship Centre (Now Beulah land Anglican Church), Nvuigwe, Woji with a total remittance of One Hundred and Twenty Nine Thousand, Two Hundred and Ninety Naira (₦ 129, 290.00) only. This performance beats that of 2017 by Sixty-One Thousand, One Hundred and Ninety Naira (₦61,190) only. We commend the efforts of the Church teacher and his congregation.

#### **Category (F) Diocesan Activity Groups:**

**1<sup>st</sup> Position** – MU/WG (Women’s Work) with a total remittance of Three Million, Two Hundred and Sixty-Two Thousand, Four Hundred and Forty-Six Naira (₦3,262,446.00) only. This performance tops that of 2017 by Thirty-Four Thousand, Seven Hundred and Fourteen Naira (₦ 34,714.00) only. We

seriously commend our women for their consistency in their financial performance to the Diocese in the last ten years.

#### **Category (G) Archdeaconries:**

**1<sup>st</sup> Position** – Woji Archdeaconry with a total remittance of One Hundred and Five Thousand, One Hundred and Sixty-Six Naira, Fifty Kobo (₦ 105,166.50) only. This performance is lower than that of 2017 by One Hundred and Forty-Four Thousand, Eight Hundred and Thirty-Three Naira, Five Kobo (₦ 144,833.5) only.

### **EPISCOPAL VISITS, CONFIRMATIONS/CHURCH CHRISTENING SERVICES**

We undertook the following Episcopal visits and functions during the Synod year under review:

1. Sunday, 19/8/2018 – New Wine Anglican Church, Okporo Parish, for Diocesan Girls' Guild Conference Thanksgiving;
2. Sunday, 2/9/2018 – Chapel of Grace and Knowledge, ACMGS, Elelenwo, for the Post-Ph.D Graduation Thanksgiving Service of Dr. (Mrs.) Amaka Awanye and family;
3. Sunday, 9/9/2018 –Emmanuel Church, Pipeline, Okporo, Iriebe for Eucharistic Worship;
4. Sunday, 21/10/2018 – Anglican Worship Centre (Radio Rivers Estate) for Church Harvest Thanksgiving and formal Christening of Church. New Name: ***King David Anglican Church, Iriebe***;
5. Sunday, 11/11/2018 – Upper Room Anglican Church, Eliozi for Rev. Reginald Chinweze's Doctorate Degree/Family Thanksgiving Service;
6. Sunday, 18/11/2018 – St. Nicholas', Woji District for Service of Confirmation of 58 candidates;
7. Saturday, 24/11 and Sunday, 25/11 – New Wine Anglican Church 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary: Confirmation of 24 candidates, Anniversary Thanksgiving and Harvest Service;
8. Sunday, 16/12/2018 – St. Andrew's, Rumuobiokani for Service of Confirmation of 47 candidates;
9. Sunday, 25/12/2018 – Christmas Day Eucharistic worship at the Cathedral of All Saints, Rumuokwurusi;
10. Sunday, 17/2/2019 – Anglican Worship Centre, Nvuigwe, Woji for Church Christening: New Name: ***Beulahland Anglican. Church, Nvuigwe, Woji***;
11. Sunday, 24/2/2019 – St. Matthias Day: Eucharistic worship service at St. Matthias, Atali District;
12. Sunday, 2/3/2019 – Anglican Worship Centre, New Haven Estate (off Igbo-Etche Road), Rumuokwurusi for Church Christening: New Name: ***Good Tidings Anglican Church New Haven, Rumuokwurusi***. This new church was

- planted by the Christian Men Fellowship of Chapel of Grace and Knowledge, ACMGS, Elelenwo on Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> December, 2018;
13. Sunday, 17/3/2019 - Anglican Worship Centre, Rumunduru, Oroigwe for Church Christening: New Name: ***Rehoboth Anglican. Church, Rumunduru;***
  14. Sunday, 24/3/2019 – Eucharistic worship service with the staff and students of ACMGS, Elelenwo in the Chapel of Grace and Knowledge and Bishop Crowther Memorial Secondary School(BCMSS), Rumuobiokani;
  15. Sunday, 31/3/2019 - Eucharistic worship service with the staff and students of Woji Town Word of Faith Group of Schools, Woji and Mothering Sunday Service at Christ Harvest Anglican Church, Faith Avenue, Woji Parish;
  16. Sunday, 14/4/2019 – Palm Sunday Eucharistic worship service at Chapel of Restoration, Rumuogba;
  17. Sunday, 9/6/2019 – Pentecost Day Confirmation Service of 39 candidates and dedication of Air conditioners at Church of the Holy Spirit, Eliozu Parish;
  18. Sunday, 16/6/2019 – Father’s Day Eucharistic/thanksgiving service at Holy Trinity, Elimgbu Parish;
  19. Sunday, 23/6/2019 Our Saviour Christ Anglican Church, Rumunduru for 7<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration and thanksgiving service of Station;
  20. Saturday, 6/7/2019 – St. Jude’s, Oginigba Deanery for Diocesan 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Confirmation Service of 81 candidates and licensing of 53 new Lay Readers.

### **Foundation Stone-Laying of new infrastructure**

1. A 500-capacity students Dormitory Block at ACMGS, Elelenwo by the Primate of all Nigeria (Anglican Communion), The Most Rev. Nicholas Okoh on Monday, 15<sup>th</sup> July, 2019

### **Dedications**

The following were dedicated by us within the period under review:

1. Sunday, 12<sup>th</sup> August, 2018: House of Mr. Chidum Chinda at Elelenwo;
2. Sunday, 24<sup>th</sup> March, 2019: New water borehole and tank on at Bishop Crowther Memorial Secondary School, Rumuobiokani
3. Maundy Thursday, 18/4/2019: House of Mr. Austin Chinda at Rumuoması;
4. Easter Monday, 22<sup>nd</sup> April, 2019: New Parsonage building of Christ, The Redeemer Anglican Church, Eliogbolo;
5. Saturday, 13<sup>th</sup> July, 2019: New All Saints’, Rumuokwurusi Cathedral Building by the Primate of all Nigeria (Anglican Communion), The Most Rev. Nicholas Okoh;
6. Monday, 15<sup>th</sup> July, 2019: Block of 18 classrooms, 6 laboratories and offices at ACMGS, Elelenwo by the Primate of all Nigeria (Anglican Communion), The Most Rev. Nicholas Okoh;

7. Monday, 15<sup>th</sup> July, 2019: Block of 12 classrooms at Woji Town Word of Faith Group of Schools, Woji by the Primate of all Nigeria (Anglican Communion), The Most Rev. Nicholas Okoh;
8. Monday, 15<sup>th</sup> July, 2019: Church Workers' apartments and Teenagers Worship Hall at St Andrew's, Rumuobiokani Deanery by the Primate of all Nigeria (Anglican Communion), The Most Rev. Nicholas Okoh.
9. Saturday, 3<sup>rd</sup> August, 2019: New Woji Archdeaconry House, Bishop's Lodge and Service Quarters
10. Sunday, 11<sup>th</sup> August, 2019: New 2-Storey Parsonage building with several apartments and Children's Worship hall, new marble Altar Table and Bishop's seat/desk at Great Shepherd Anglican Church, Mgbuesilaru.

### **NEW ADMINISTRATIVE BLOCS**

At the 3<sup>rd</sup> Session of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Synod held last year at the Church of the Holy Spirit, Elelenwo District (Evo South East Archdeaconry), we proposed to create new administrative blocs in the Diocese after we would have consulted with Churches to be affected, and with the approval of the Diocesan Board.

From its meeting of September 2018, up to that of the First Quarter of 2019, the Diocesan Board attended to this matter. A Committee headed by the Diocesan Registrar, Sir Barr. Nlerum Amadi was set up to visit the Churches that would constitute the Proposed Blocs with a view to sensitizing the Parishioners on the proposal, ascertain their readiness and acceptance or rejection of the new administrative structure. From the Committee's report presented to the Diocesan Board at its Meeting held at St. James, Iriebe Parish on Tuesday, 2<sup>nd</sup> April, 2019, parishioners of Churches visited overwhelmingly welcomed the new Blocs and eagerly look forward to their soon-take off.

Consequently, the Diocesan Board approved the creation of the following new Administrative Blocs which shall take off in February 2020. They are:

- 1. Elelenwo Archdeaconry to be constituted by the following Churches:**
  - a. St. Mark's Elelenwo Deanery (To serve as the Archdeaconry Headquarters) and her two Stations:
    - Anglican Church of the Passion, Rumuodani,
    - Maranatha Anglican Church, Victory Estate, Elelenwo
  - b. New Covenant Anglican Church, Eliminigwe Parish with her Station – Anglican Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary;
  - c. Chapel of Grace and Knowledge, First Fruit Parish, ACMGS, Elelenwo with her Stations: Light of the World, Eliminigwe and Good Tidings Anglican Church, New Haven Estate, Off Igbo-Etche Road, Rumuokwurusi
- 2. Okporo/Rumuogba Archdeaconry:** This new Bloc shall be constituted by the following Churches:

- a. St. Simon's Okporo Deanery (To serve as the Archdeaconry Headquarters) and two of her other Stations:
  - Faith Community Anglican Church, Eliowhani
  - Calvary Anglican Church, RD Road, Mgbuesilaru
- b. New Wine Anglican Church, East/West Road Parish, Okporo with her assigned Station – Church of Restoration, Rumuogba
- c. Anglican Church of the Pentecost, Rumuogba Parish, and
- d. The Great Physician Anglican Church, Mgbuesilaru

### **3. Iriebe Archdeaconry**

- a. St. James Church, Iriebe Parish (To serve as the Archdeaconry Headquarters)
- b. Holy Ghost Anglican Church, Iriebe Housing Estate Parish, Iriebe with her Stations:
  - True Vine Anglican Church, Abuja Estate (Off Timber Market), Iriebe
  - Anglican Worship Centre, Christy Toby Inclusive Education Centre, Iriebe
  - c. Anglican Church of the Messiah, New Haven Parish, Iriebe
  - d. Emmanuel Anglican Church, Okporo-Iriebe
  - e. The Redeemer's Cross Anglican Church, TAP, Elelenwo
  - f. The Anglican Chaplaincy, PAMO University of Medical Sciences

### **4. Church of The Holy Spirit Deanery, Elelenwo with**

- Jericho Inn Anglican Church, Elelenwo
- New Life Anglican Church, Rumuodani, Elelenwo
- New Jerusalem Anglican Church, Boskel Road (Off PH/Aba Express Way).

These new Administrative Units will by the grace of God take off from the 1<sup>st</sup> of February, 2020. They shall be hereafter inaugurated one after the other.

Those to man these Blocs should have it in mind that they are being established strictly for serious mission and evangelism activities leading to the harvest of more souls into God's Kingdom and for the growth of the Diocese of Evo. They are not new empires for power-drunk and self-seeking spiritual and other leaders to hijack and stagnate. Let this serve as advance warning to anyone who may be planning or nursing a different Vision in mind.

## **RECORD KEEPING**

Writing on this subject matter in our First Synod Address delivered on Saturday, 31<sup>st</sup> July, 2010 at All Saints Cathedral, Rumuokwurusi we had this to say:

*"We are sad to report to this Synod that our visit to churches in the last one year have revealed that a very poor culture of record-keeping and accountability prevails*

*in most places. This is most disheartening. Pastors, church clerks and wardens now find it so difficult to preserve vital church documents and records of events in the stations.*

*How can we possibly know where we are heading to if we do not know where we are coming from or even where we are? Church inventories/accounts of money received and spent are poorly kept; Preachers Books are improperly filled and in some cases, not filled at all for upwards of one year or more. Records of those baptized, confirmed and/or married in the Church, admitted or licensed into various groups are in some places none existent. This is shameful, moreso, with all our modern day education. We will continue to hold the pastors accountable for lapses if they are not checked.*

*In churches where there are more than one pastor, one of the curates should be charged with the task of keeping the Baptismal, Confirmation, Marriage, MU/WG, MCA, Lay Readers and Burial Registers and the Preachers' Book. The Pastor's Warden should equally be engaged to assist. If the pastor is alone, he and his Warden should share the responsibilities.*

*Every church should in addition set up an Inventory/Asset Committee.”*

What we just read out to you was our concern just after one year of our existence as a Diocese. It was intended to challenge us to give the issue of proper record-keeping the seriousness it ought to enjoy in every church or unit of our Diocese. The painful feedback we have for us 10 years after, coupled with the repeated calls we have made on this matter, is that not much improvement on this culture has taken place. This is giving us much cause for worry. A situation for example, where a pastor presents a brand new Visitors/Log Book to the Bishop to sign each time he visits a church, even when the Bishop himself knows that he had not too long ago, signed one that was far from being full, shows that such documents are either carelessly kept and so easily lost or that the priests carry them away when going on transfer just the same way they go with hymn books, Book of Common Prayers, etc., of their former stations even when such materials bear the warning: **“Property of ABC Church: Do not take away.”**

It is to our collective shame that in a modern age such as ours, we cannot keep records of our development/progress. This means that in the future, we shall have no story to tell as a Diocese/Church.

We shall begin at the Diocesan level to set up a Committee/Body/Office for the sole duty of collating and preserving the records of what we do.

We charge every Administrative Bloc, Church, Activity Group/Unit to do so as well without further delay.

## OUR 10<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

This year marks the 10<sup>th</sup> year of the creation of the Diocese of Evo and our episcopacy.

In our Address to Synod on Saturday, 4<sup>th</sup> August, last year (2018), we constituted a 45-man Committee for the planning of our **Diocesan 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations** under the chairmanship of Sir Ike B. S. Chinwo and inaugurated it later on 25<sup>th</sup> September at the All Saints' Cathedral, Rumuokwurusi with the mandate of organizing a colourful and elaborate 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration at a moderate cost.

To celebrate God's faithfulness upon our Diocese, the Committee in consultation with us and the Diocesan Board, proposed to lead the Diocesan community through series of events to mark the Anniversary Celebration. **The Lord: our Helper and strength** (Isaiah 41:10) was chosen by us as the Anniversary theme.

To deliver on its mandate, the Committee created the following sub - committees: Secretariat, Finance, Publicity/Protocol, Venue/Logistics, Music/Program/Sports, Welfare/Outreach, Entertainment and Security, Documentation/Publication. The committee after series of meetings came up with a proposal covering major activities and events which was presented to the Diocesan Board at its meeting on Wednesday, December 19, 2018 at the Church of the Holy Spirit Eliozi Parish and approval was given.

The 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations spanned over a period of 4 months beginning with the unveiling of the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Logo/materials/major programmes of activities, which took place on Saturday, 23<sup>rd</sup> March, at the All Saints Cathedral, Rumuokwurusi, during the Diocesan Post Vestry Meeting Training.

*Other major activities that marked the celebrations are as follows:*

1. **Bishop's Dinner with the Executives of the Diocesan Mothers' Union/Women's Guild, Christian Men's Fellowship & Anglican Youth Fellowship:** Held on Tuesday, 26th March at the Chapel of Grace and Knowledge, Elelenwo on Tuesday, 11<sup>th</sup> June at the Peter Akinola Retreat Centre, Rumuobiokani, and Sunday, 30<sup>th</sup> June at St Michael's Rumuomasi respectively. There was a large turnout of Executive members of these arms.
2. **Walk for Christ (1 & 2):** This event took place on Saturday, 20th April (Easter Eve) and on Saturday, 6<sup>th</sup> July. It commenced as the Diocesan faithful took off from different designated points, with songs of jubilation, banners and fliers and marched to the Cathedral heralding the 10th Anniversary programmes.

3. **Bishop's Excursion with the Anglican Children's Ministry (ACM) and Anglican Youth Fellowship (AYF):** On Saturday, 11<sup>th</sup> May, selected children representing the various blocs and Diocesan Churches were led by the Bishop and wife with members of the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary planning committee to both the Local and International wings of the Port Harcourt International Airport, Omagwa. The Youth also had their share of the Excursion when on Thursday, 16<sup>th</sup> May, representatives of the Diocesan AYF were led to the Port Harcourt International Breweries, Oginigba on an industrial visit by The Ven. Emmanuel Anyasodo on behalf of the Bishop with members of the Anniversary Committee. It was all quite educative and the children/youth were excited.
4. **Inter Schools Debate:** The preliminaries and finals of the debate held on 14<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> May, respectively. It was on the topic, "***ICT has lowered the standard of Education in our society***" for the preliminaries and "***The Church is to be blamed for the moral decadence in our society***" for the finals. The 3 Diocesan Schools with Archdeacon Brown Education Center (ABEC), Woji featured in the debate. At the end, BCMSS, Rumuobiokani who opposed the motion that "***The Church is to be blamed for the moral decadence in our society***" emerged the overall winner and were presented with a 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary trophy and books for keeps.
5. On Wednesday, 22<sup>nd</sup> May, a **Day of Prayers for the Bishop and the Diocese** was observed at the Cathedral, Archdeaconry and Deanery headquarters.
6. On Saturday, 25<sup>th</sup> May, the **Diocesan Children Quiz** was held at St Michael's, Rumuomasi Deanery. Of all the Blocs that took part in this Quiz, the Diocesan Churches took the overall 1<sup>st</sup> position.
7. On Monday 27<sup>th</sup> May, the **Children's Day** activities held at BCMSS, Rumuobiokani field. It featured parades by students/pupils of our Diocesan and Parish-owned schools, the Boys' Brigade and Girls' Guild, as well as Dance presentations from the children. At the end of the events, Word of Faith Group of Schools, Woji came 1<sup>st</sup> for Primary schools, ACMGS, Elelenwo took the 1<sup>st</sup> position for Secondary Schools while Trinity Missionary Archdeaconry took the 1<sup>st</sup> position for the Administrative Blocs. These winners were each presented with a 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary trophy and medals for keeps.
8. **Outreach to the Prisons:** On Sunday, 2<sup>nd</sup> June, we visited the Port Harcourt Maximum Prisons with members of the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee and some Clergy and had a glorious church service there with the inmates. We presented them with items of refreshment on behalf of the Diocese.

**9. Career/Business Seminar:** This held on Saturday, 8<sup>th</sup> June at All Saints Cathedral. There were 3 speakers namely; Dr Mrs. Chinelo Joy Ugwu who gave a talk on “Choosing a career in today’s Nigeria”, Mrs. Abiodun Olubitan who spoke on “Entrepreneurship and Business Development in a contemporary society” and Mr. Anthony Onah who also spoke on “Entrepreneurship and Business Development Opportunities and challenges for small and medium scale enterprises in Nigeria”. The talks were quite enlightening. We regret that not too many youths for whom this seminar was organised were in attendance.

**10. Visitations/medical outreach to the sick:**

On Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> May, a part of the Anniversary Committee was led by the Bishop’s wife, Mrs. Chinyere U. Ordu JP, with some clergy men on a visit to the University of Port Harcourt Teaching Hospital (UPTH) and a second team led by The Ven. Alex Usifoh went to the Rivers State University Teaching Hospital (RSUTH), former BMH, to pray with the sick in these two health institutions. The two hospitals visitation teams shared fellowship with inpatients and paid off the outstanding hospital bills for some indigent patients all of whom were very grateful and thanked God for our visitation.

Still on outreaches to the sick, a 2-Day free medical care was also carried out on Friday and Saturday, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> July at our Diocesan Bishop Elenwo Memorial Hospital at BCMSS, Rumuobiokani. A total of 431 persons presented themselves for treatment while 270 persons came for eye care. Donation of mosquito nets with some anti-malarial drugs was made by the Shell Petroleum Development Company, Port Harcourt and the 6<sup>th</sup> Division of the Nigerian Army, Bori Camp, Port Harcourt in support of the outreach.

**11. Outreaches to Orphanages, Old People’s/Special Homes:-**

This held on Wednesday/Thursday, 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> June with Different teams visiting and making gifts presentations of cash and kind to inmates of these homes. The homes visited are: Our Saviour Orphanage, Rumuokwurusi, Jesus Orphanage, Elelenwo, Priesthood Orphanage, Elelenwo, Old People’s Home, Port Harcourt and Mater Dei Girls Centre, Port Harcourt. The management and inmates of these homes expressed gratitude for our kind gesture.

**12. Sporting Events** were also carried out as follows:

Track and field events/finals of major sporting events: This held on Saturday, 15<sup>th</sup> June at BCMSS Rumuobiokani, at the end of which Rumuomasi Deanery emerged overall winner. There was also an Inter-Diocesan Clergy football match between our Evo Clergy and their Ikwerre counterparts. Our Evo Clergy team emerged victorious with a lone goal. We congratulate them.

**13. Outreach to Widows:**

On Friday, 28<sup>th</sup> June, we led a delegation of clergy and members of the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Planning Committee to fellowship with the widows of the Diocese during their 2019 Conference held at the Church of The Advent, Rumuewhara, Oroigwe. Food items and clothing donated by the men, women, youths of the Diocese, the Bishop and the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee were presented to them, thus putting smiles on their faces. The widows were full of gratitude and prayers for everyone.

**14. A Special Confirmation and Licensing of Lay Readers**

This special Diocesan service took place on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> July, 2019 at St Jude's Oginigba Deanery. We confirmed a total of 81 baptised members and licensed 53 candidates as Lay Readers. They were carefully chosen from the various Churches of the Diocese and trained for several weeks before the service.

**15. 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Crusade:** This held from Monday, 8<sup>th</sup> to Wednesday, 10<sup>th</sup> July, 2019 at All Saints Cathedral, Rumuokwurusi. The Guest Preacher was The Rt. Rev Cyril Odutemu, Bishop, Diocese of Ughelli. Souls were won to the Lord and prayers/blessings pronounced on the people.

**16. Music Fiesta:** This held on Thursday, 11<sup>th</sup> July at the Cathedral premises. It featured many gospel music artistes among them: Lily Praise, Wisdom K., Mr. Julius Nglass and Chioma Jesus. It was indeed a glorious evening as the large crowd of worshipers in attendance sang and danced to the glory of God.

**17. On Friday, 12<sup>th</sup> July, two major events took place at the All Saints Cathedral, Rumuokwurusi. The first was the Holy Communion/Thanksgiving Service to commemorate the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of our Episcopal Consecration/Enthronement as the Bishop of Evo.** Present at the service were: The Rt. Rev. Tubo Abere, Bishop, Diocese of Okrika who preached the sermon, the Bishop of Owo and his wife, The Rt. Rev. Dr. & Mrs. Stephen Fagbemi, The Bishop of Northern Izon, The Rt. Rev. Funkro Victor G. Amgbare, members of the Clergy, traditional rulers and a host of other Diocesan faithful.

The second event which held later in the day was the **10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Lecture** delivered by The Rt. Rev. Dr. Stephen Ayodeji Fagbemi, Bishop Diocese of Owo on the topic- "New Church Movements and the Growth of the Anglican Church in Nigeria: Challenges and Prospects." The chairman of the occasion was Prof Jerry Gana while the Spiritual Father of the day was His Grace, The Most Rev'd Nicholas D. Okoh, Archbishop, Metropolitan and Primate of All Nigeria (Anglican Communion) who came in with the Archbishop of Lagos, The Most Rev'd Dr. Olusina Michael Fape and other Bishops.

18. Saturday, 13<sup>th</sup> July was the dedication of the New All Saints Cathedral Building by His Grace, The Most Rev'd Nicholas D. Okoh, Archbishop, Metropolitan and Primate of all Nigeria (Anglican Communion) assisted by us and several other Bishops in attendance. Several other dignitaries graced this occasion which also featured the celebration of the Holy Eucharist, choir and solo renditions by Mr. Nduakwa Chukwu (Kaka).

There was an Anniversary Dinner same day at 6pm at the Aztec Arcum Event Centre, Stadium Road, Rumuomasi with Sir, The Hon. Justice Iche Ndu, retired Chief Judge of Rivers State as the Chairman of the occasion. The Primate, 4 other Bishops and Prof Jerry Gana were all present with us. Mr. Julius Nglass and Mr. Nduakwa Chukwu (Kaka) also ministered in songs at the evening event.

19. Sunday, 14<sup>th</sup> July, marked the peak of the celebrations with a large turnout of the Diocesan community converging on the All Saints Cathedral for the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Thanksgiving Service. In attendance were dignitaries among them the Governor of Rivers State, His Excellency Chief Barr. Nyesom Ezenwo Wike, ably represented by the Deputy Governor, Her Excellency, Dame Dr. Ipalibo Harry Banigo accompanied by a large entourage of State and Local government officials and the Legislature. The Primate, who led other Bishops in attendance, also preached the sermon. The Anniversary and the Cathedral Dedication cakes were cut in the course of the service. Special musical renditions and dances were presented by the Diocesan choir, band, Mr. Julius Nglass and All Saints Cathedral, Rumuokwurusi

20. On Monday, 15<sup>th</sup> July, the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary events continued with the Dedication of new School Buildings comprising of a Block of 18 Classrooms, 6 Laboratories and Offices at ACMGS, Elelenwo; a block of 12 classrooms at Woji Town Word of Faith Group of Schools, Woji, and a Staff Quarters Complex at St Andrew's, Rumuobiokani Deanery by His Grace, The Most Rev'd Nicholas D. Okoh, Archbishop, Metropolitan and Primate of all Nigeria (Anglican Communion), assisted by us and other Bishops present.

The Diocese through the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee, produced and distributed to our invited guests and members in attendance at the thanksgiving service different types of souvenirs ranging from customized trays, mugs, towels, note pads to pens.

From the above outlined schedule of activities carried out, you will agree with us that the celebration was such a tedious and highly engaging one. This did not come to us as a surprise, because from the onset when the Sir Ike-led

Planning Committee reeled out its plans and proposals to the Diocesan Board, we knew that it was going to require so much of our time, energy, resources and co-operation of everyone – the clergy and laity in the Diocese - to accomplish.

Whereas a good number of persons gave everything in their powers to ensure the success of the programme, several others simply preferred to sit on the fence indifferently watching events unfold.

Some grumbled, murmured and unceasingly maligned the Diocesan Administration from the moment the Planning Committee was set up to the closing hours of its assignment. The reason(s) for their posture can only be best given by them. We also noted that for a programme that supposedly enjoyed an unfettered publicity in our Churches and lasted for several months, there were some in the Diocese who even at the last week, claimed not to be aware of what was happening in the Diocese. We found it extremely difficult to comprehend what they were claiming.

Whatever posture anybody chose to adopt, the breaking and joyful news is that the activities of the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration of the Diocese of Edo have successfully come and gone to the glory of God, our Father. **Praise ye the Lord!**

We are only making these remarks being convinced that as members of the same family of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, God would expect all of us to operate with one mind and pull our diverse strengths and resources together for the progress and common good of His Church whenever there is a task or challenge at hand.

*“Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment”*  
(1 Cor. 1:10)

*“Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace”* (Eph. 4:3)

No doubt the anniversary celebration was a success but we still believe that we may have achieved more had we all from the inception embraced the idea and activities as “Our Own” and not as those of the Bishop, Diocesan Board or the Anniversary Planning Committee.

## **Appreciation**

Notwithstanding our comments above, we must use this medium to wholeheartedly express our gratitude to all who faithfully and sacrificially

served in the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Planning Committee led by Sir Chief Ike B. S. Chinwo. We **THANK YOU ALL** for your initiative, passion and perseverance in the execution of all aspects of the anniversary activities despite all odds. Sir Ike Chinwo and everyone in the Committee who made him/herself available, we thank you for making Evo proud. Thank you also for your generous donation of a **YAMAHA Keyboard (PSR, S670)** for use in the Bishop's office. May God bless you all abundantly with the rewards of faithful service in Jesus name. Amen.

We thank our Clergy, Church Teachers and all our Churches and their leaders and activity groups for your prayers and financial and material contributions for the success of the various activities.

We thank the Executive Governor of Rivers State, His Excellency, Chief Barr. Nyesom Ezenwo Wike, CON, GSSRS, POS (Africa) and his Deputy, Dame (Dr.) Ipalibo Harry-Banigo for their massive moral, financial and logistic supports to us as we celebrated our moment of double *karis*. His Excellency, the Governor of Rivers State has never hidden his love and commitment to the causes of the Body of Christ in the State. He has steadily supported Dioceses of the Anglican Communion in the State and beyond and even other denominations. We in Evo are eternally grateful to the Governor and his wife for always listening to our cry and identifying with us. May God always remember them and reward all their sacrifices in Jesus Name. Amen.

We are immensely thankful to Our Archbishop, Metropolitan and Primate of All Nigeria (Anglican Communion), The Most Rev'd Nicholas D. Okoh, MA, FSS, MSS, LLD, DD, for giving us a full dose of his fatherly milk and meat fellowship and overall spiritual covering as we in Evo (his ten-year old child) celebrated our 'birthday' and dedicated our graceful All Saints Cathedral, Rumuokwurusi.

We thank His Grace and all the Archbishops, Bishops of the Church of Nigeria and dignitaries who graced our anniversary from Monday, 8<sup>th</sup> to Monday, 15<sup>th</sup> July in company of the Primate for finding us worthy to play host to them.

Of special mention are the Rt. Rev'd Cyril Odutemu, Bishop of Ughelli, our Crusade Guest Speaker, the Rt. Rev'd Dr. & Mrs. Stephen Fagbemi, Bishop of Owo who took the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Lecture, The Rt. Rev'd Tubokosemie Abere, Bishop of Okirika who preached at our 10<sup>th</sup> Consecration and Enthronement Anniversary Eucharistic Service, Prof. Jerry Gana who chaired the Anniversary Lecture and Mr. Julius Nglass who ministered in songs during the celebration.

Back home, we thank Sir the Hon. Justice Iche and Dame Ngozi Ndu who chaired the Anniversary Dinner, the Executive Chairman of Obio/Akpor Local Government Area, Hon. Prince Solomon Abel Eke, the Member representing Obio/Akpor State Constituency 1 in the Rivers State House of Assembly,

Hon. Martin Chike Amaewhule, Chief O.C.J. Okocha, SAN, Traditional rulers and Chiefs of Evo Kingdom; Dr. Max Ugwu, Chairman, Cathedral Building Committee; Sir Harold Okoye, Treasurer of the Cathedral, Sir Chijioke Tasie, Chairman, Cathedral Dedication Committee and all members of these two Committees as well as the Priests and wives serving in the Cathedral and all members, for the great work they did. May they live long to enjoy the manifold blessings of God for all their sacrifices.

## **LOOKING AHEAD TO THE NEXT TEN YEARS AS A DIOCESE**

We shall continue to be THANKFUL TO GOD for using the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) to give a great number of our Churches/Communities in Evo Kingdom the opportunity of existing together as an independent Diocese.

We are equally grateful to all who offered themselves for the struggle that led to the eventual creation and inauguration of the Diocese in 2009, and for the growth of the Diocese in different ways.

It has not been easy piloting the affairs of the young Diocese over this period. However, the faithfulness of God has seen us through the smooth and rough times of our existence. That explains the reason for our choice of the theme for the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations: "**The Lord: Our Helper and Strength**" (Isaiah 41:10).

As we wind up the activities marking our 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, we should begin equally to think about the next ten years and how God would want us to approach the tasks before us. We should not approach the next ten years with no specific vision or targets in mind. If we go about it aimlessly, we may end up achieving nothing new and even the little milestones of the past ten years, might be lost. And so, how do we go about our journey of the next decade?

*The following answers might just provide the guide we need:*

1. Let us seek to become and remain what we are called to be – the true Body (Church) of Christ, a people called out of the world and set apart to live the life that honours and glorifies God.

Let us seek deliberately to place God and the honour of His name above our personal pride, ego, greed and selfish interests. We must all desist from the inglorious culture of seeking praise and worship for the services we claim to be rendering to God or before we even render them. In the years

ahead, we should endeavour to exalt God over and above anything, and anyone else, including our individual selves.

2. So many persons in this Diocese have sadly been a part of the Church for many decades and had at different times risen to, occupied and served out their tenures in leadership offices without knowing or understanding the purpose of the Church. As we look ahead to the next ten years, let each member or leader in our Diocese commit him/herself to the original purpose for which the Church was birthed on the Day of Pentecost which includes the sincere Worship of God through our Lord Jesus Christ; instruction in righteousness through the Word of God; Fellowship and effective preaching of the gospel of our Lord with a view to drawing in many souls to His fold. We are talking about evangelism in the true sense of it.

An honest look and assessment of our churches will show that so many of them are stagnant, dry and fast becoming empty. We must all work hard at increasing the numerical strength of our congregations and most importantly, apply every biblically approved principle to retain and grow them in the faith of Christ.

3. To my brothers of the House of Clergy and their Wives to whom God has assigned the greater task among the other leaders, of building His Church, we charge them to approach their Pastoral Ministry in this Diocese in the coming years with extraordinary seriousness. They should draw inspiration from Paul's letter to Timothy, Chapter 4, verse 16 "*Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.*" Here, the Apostle Paul called Timothy to passion, perseverance and utter devotion in the fulfilment of his Ministry. Paul had commanded Timothy to take heed to himself and to his teaching, and never think that the days for personal vigilance were over or that the days for doctrinal growth were past.

The last ten years have exposed us so much to the unwarranted abuse, attack and malice of some Clergymen who would never be satisfied with their postings or any other step we try to take for the good of this Diocese. They have done everything in their power to discredit us and our episcopacy despite all we have done to possibly please them. We pray that they face the tasks of the next ten years with the spirit of true servants of God and of His Church.

4. To the rest of the Diocesan Community, we leave you with these words of the renowned Psychology Professor and Bestselling author, Viktor Frankl:

***“Everything can be taken from a man but one thing: To choose one’s attitude in any given set of circumstances is to choose one’s way.”***

The next ten years of this Diocese will certainly be more challenging for all of us than the period covered so far. Consequently, we shall be required to face our future with a right and more godly attitude if we hope to have a greater testimony. This right and godly attitude shall be our greatest asset. And so, we charge everyone to choose it. External forces or circumstances will attempt (as they have done in the past), to influence our attitude, but we must not allow them choose it for us. No matter how far up we think we have gone as individuals and as a Diocese, let us seek to go higher in the years ahead by keeping a good attitude in all circumstances.

Likewise, no matter how far beneath we have fallen (and truly many of us have fallen), we can rise to better heights with the right attitude. This was what William James understood when he said, ***“The greatest discovery of my generation is that human beings can alter their lives by altering their attitudes of mind.”*** Let our attitude from henceforth be so right and godly that they determine the cheerful and glorious results we hope to get in the years ahead of us.

When this is in place, we can then plant more Churches and grow them with existing ones, strengthen our existing educational institutions and establish at least one more, provide bigger and better facilities for our Diocesan hospital, reposition our Diocesan investment outfits for higher revenue yield and of course, delve into new areas, impact every sector of life in our communities with the gospel of Christ and the blessings of His Kingdom and lastly look beyond our shores to other areas where the door of Ministry might open unto us.

## **SUPPORT TO OTHER DIOCESES**

We assisted the Diocese of Uyo in their training of a Postulant at Trinity College, Umuahia and Diocese of Kebbi in their School building project for children of new converts to Christianity.

## **NIGER DELTA PROVINCIAL MATTERS**

**Send-forth in Honour of our Retired Archbishop, The Most Rev’d Ignatius C. O. Kattey**

1. The Provincial Send-forth in honour of our retired Archbishop and wife, The Most Rev. Ignatius Crosby Ogoro and Mrs. Beatrice Gonda Kattey, JP, was held on Saturday, 11<sup>th</sup> August, 2018 at St. Paul's Cathedral, Diobu, Port Harcourt. Members of our Diocese were well in attendance.
2. A similar event was organized by our Diocese in their honour on Wednesday, 15<sup>th</sup> August, 2019 at the Church Hall of the Cathedral. In attendance were the Diocesan officials/Board members, clergy/wives and representatives of all Admin Blocs and churches.
3. **Provincial Council Meeting**, the first under our new Archbishop, The Most Rev. Tunde Adeleye, was held at St. Peter's Cathedral, Isiokpo, Diocese of Ikwerre from Tuesday, 4<sup>th</sup> to Wednesday, 5<sup>th</sup> September, 2018. The theme was: "**What is in your hand?**" (Exod. 4:2). Prior to the meeting, the Archbishop undertook a courtesy visit on the Executive Governor of Rivers State, on Tuesday, 4<sup>th</sup> September, 2018.

### **Provincial Council Meeting**

This second Council meeting under our new Archbishop and first for the year 2019 was hosted by the Diocese of Northern Izon at St. Mark's Cathedral Church, Kiama from Tuesday, 22<sup>nd</sup> to Wednesday, 23<sup>rd</sup> January, 2019. The theme was "**Christ is our Peace**" (Eph. 2:14). It also featured the meeting of the Provincial Women Executive Council.

A major decision taken at this meeting was the downsizing of the Groups/Arms/Units existing at the Provincial level due to their financial demands and pressure on the Dioceses. The Council resolved that the women ministry programs should hold within a period of not more than two (2) days; Provincial Anglican Youth Fellowship, ACM and EFAC (applicable to Dioceses where it exists) be allowed to organize conferences annually at Provincial level.

Furthermore, the Council agreed that specialized group such as Provincial Bishops/wives, Clergy and wives, Prayer Squad and Choir Council could hold programs as the need arises with the approval of the Archbishop. Other Units/Arms not captured above are to henceforth exist and limit their activities only at the Diocesan levels. The decision took immediate effect from 23<sup>rd</sup> January, 2019.

### **Provincial Thanksgiving**

A Provincial Thanksgiving service to appreciate God for the election and presentation of our new Archbishop and wife, The Most Rev. Tunde Adeleye was held at the Holy Trinity Cathedral, Calabar on Sunday, 30<sup>th</sup> September, 2018. In attendance were Bishops, wives, clergy and lay delegates from all Dioceses within the Province and other guests. The Dean of the Church of Nigeria, The Most Rev. Dr. Buba Lamido preached the sermon.

### **Joint Provincial Council East of the Niger**

This Council which brings together the 55 Dioceses and Bishops of the former Province Two, met at Episcopal and General Council levels a number of times to discuss issues of common interest to member-Dioceses such as the Paul University, Awka, and its funding and NUC accreditation challenges, Institute of Theology, Awka, Trinity Theological College, Umuahia and the Superannuation Funds and its various investment Projects at Owerri, Port Harcourt and Onitsha.

The Meetings convened under the then Chairman, The Most Rev'd Emmanuel O. Chukwuma, OON, took place on Wednesday, 24<sup>th</sup> October, 2018 and Wednesday, 3<sup>rd</sup> April, 2019 at the Cathedral of the Good Shepherd, Enugu as well as on Tuesday, 7<sup>th</sup> to Wednesday, 8<sup>th</sup> May, 2019 at the Goshen Anglican Retreat Centre, New Owerri.

The Council also met at the Episcopal level on Thursday, 13<sup>th</sup> June, 2019 at the Goshen Anglican Retreat Centre, Owerri under the leadership of a new Chairman in the person of His Grace, The Most Rev'd Caleb A. Maduoma, Archbishop of Owerri and Bishop of Ideato. The Bishop paid a courtesy visit to the newly sworn-in Governor of Imo State, The Rt. Hon. Emeka Ihedioha to felicitate and pray with him on his new assignment.

The Council through the Superannuation Funds Scheme has completed a 100-room Hostel Project at Aluu in the Diocese of Ikwerre. This project was dedicated by the Primate of our Church on Monday, 15<sup>th</sup> July, 2019. A similar facility has equally been completed at the Goshen Anglican Retreat Centre at Owerri and is awaiting formal commissioning.

We commend the hard work of the Superannuation Fund Board headed by The Rt. Rev'd Chidi Oparaojiaku of Ohaji/Egbema Diocese.

### **Our Appointment as Chairman, Governing Council of Paul University, Awka Institute of Theology**

We have been appointed as Chairman of The Governing Council of Paul University Institute of Theology, Awka, Anambra State. The formal inauguration of the Council by the immediate past chairman of the Joint Council of the Provinces East of the Niger, The Most Rev. Emmanuel Chukwuma, took place at Awka on Tuesday, 19<sup>th</sup> February, 2019.

## CHURCH OF NIGERIA

- **September 2018 Standing Committee Meeting**

Standing Committee Meeting was hosted by the Province of Lokoja at St. Peter's Cathedral, Minna, Diocese of Minna from Monday, 17<sup>th</sup> to Friday, 21<sup>st</sup> September, 2018. The meeting was presided over by His Grace, The Most Rev. Nicholas D. Okoh, Primate of All Nigeria. It had as its theme: “**God is our refuge and strength**” (Psalm 46:1).

- At this meeting, the Committee declared a 3-day fasting and prayers by all Anglicans in Nigeria from the 1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> October, 2018 to address the various challenges facing the Church and Nation in prayer. These included the various flash points in the Church of Nigeria, the release of Leah Sharibu still being held by Boko Haram, and the 2019 general elections.
- Also Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> October set aside to be observed as day of raising special collection in all churches of the Anglican Communion in Nigeria for support to the victims of social unrest, insurgencies and displaced persons in the various IDP camps; as well as those affected by natural disasters.

- **Conditional participation in the 2020 Lambeth**

No participation of bishops from Nigeria until all vexing issues bothering on human sexuality are biblically addressed and resolved as well as invitation extended to ACNA, Brazil, etc.

- **Presentation of New Archbishops of Ondo and Niger Delta**

This special service took place on Tuesday, 18th September, 2018 during the opening Holy Communion service of the Standing Committee meeting held at St. Peter's Cathedral, Minna. Those presented were The Most Rev Gabriel kinbiyi of Ondo Province and The Most Reverend Tunde Adeleye of Niger Delta Province. We wish them well in their arch-episcopal ministry.

- **Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowther Memorial Project**

The Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) is to establish a Mission Centre within the Diocese of Ajayi Crowther, Oyo State to immortalize the late Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowther – the first black African Bishop of the Anglican Church. 100% offerings raised from the 2018 Advent Sunday Services across the country will be used to accomplish this project.

The entire offering raised in and remitted by all Anglican Churches across the CON on the Advent Sunday of 2018 are being used to accomplish this project.

- **New Bishops:** Elected on Tuesday, 18<sup>th</sup> September, 2018
  - i. Rt. Rev. Dr. Chukwuma Opara – Owerri Diocese
  - ii. Rt. Rev. Jezreel Vandeh – Zaki-Biam Diocese
  - iii. Rt. Rev. Godfrey Ekpenisi – Ika Diocese
  - iv. Rt. Rev. Sunday Adewole – Kwara by Translation from Jebba.

These new bishops were consecrated on Friday, 16<sup>th</sup> November, 2018 at St. Bartholomew's Cathedral, Kubwa Diocese.

### **Election of four Suffragan Bishops**

As part of efforts at achieving the speedy growth of our foreign mission fields especially in North America, the Episcopal Synod of the Church of Nigeria held during the January, 2019 Retreat at Ibru Centre, Agbarha-Otor appointed 4 new Suffragan Bishops for service in the Anglican Diocese of the Trinity (ADOTT) in North America and a sub jurisdiction of Anglicans in North America (CANA). They were consecrated at the Archbishop Vining Memorial Cathedral Church Ikeja, Lagos West Diocese on Wednesday, 3<sup>rd</sup> July (Feast of St. Thomas), 2019.

They are:

1. The Rt. Rev Olukayode Adebogun for CANA Region one
2. The Rt. Rev Dr. Martyn Anagbogu for CANA Region Two
3. The Rt. Rev Dr. Adedokun Adesoji Adewunmi for CANA Region Three
4. The Rt. Rev Dr. Augustin Unuigbe for CANA Region Four

Another set of new bishops was elected on Thursday, 7<sup>th</sup> February, 2019 at St. Andrew's Cathedral, Warri, Delta State and were consecrated on Friday, 29<sup>th</sup> March, 2019 at St. David's Cathedral, Ijomu, Akure, Ondo State. They are:

1. Ven. Joshua Sunday Onyinlola for the Diocese of Irele Ese-Odo to replace the late Bishop Felix Olamigoke
2. Ven. Adeyinka Adereoba for the Diocese of Jebba to replace Bishop Sunday Adewole who was translated to the Diocese of Kwara.
3. Ven. Ebenezer Akorede for Osun North East Diocese to replace Bishop Humphrey Olumakaiye who was translated to the Diocese of Lagos.

4. Ven. Festus O. Sabanke for the Diocese of Omu-Aran to replace the retired Bishop, Rt. Rev. Philip Adeyemo
5. Ven. Christian Onyia for the Diocese of Nike to replace the retired Rt. Rev. Prof. Evans Ibeagha

- **New Archbishops:**

1. **Kwara Province:** The Most Rev. Isarel Amao, the Bishop of New Bussa was elected the new Archbishop of Kwara Province also during the 18<sup>th</sup> September, 2018 Church of Nigeria Standing Committee meeting at Minna. He was formally presented to the Church on Tuesday, 5<sup>th</sup> February, 2019 at Warri.
2. **Enugu Province:** The Most Rev'd Dr. Emmanuel Chukwuma was re-elected for a second tenure of five years as the Archbishop of Enugu Province on Tuesday, 23<sup>rd</sup> April, 2019 at the Chapel of Resurrection, New Episcopal House, Wuye, Abuja. He was presented on Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> July, 2019 at the Archbishop Vinning Memorial Cathedral Church, Ikeja.
3. **Lokoja Province:** Similarly, the Bishop of Minna, The Rt. Rev. Daniel Abubakar Yisa was on Friday, 29<sup>th</sup> March, 2019 elected Archbishop of Lokoja Province and was presented on Wednesday, 3<sup>rd</sup> July, 2019 at the Archbishop Vinning Memorial Cathedral Church, Ikeja.

### **Divine Commonwealth Conference (DIVCCON) 2018**

The 2018 edition of the Conference held from Tuesday, 13<sup>th</sup> to Friday, 16<sup>th</sup> November, 2018 at the National Christian (Ecumenical) Centre, Abuja. The theme was "*I will restore*" (Joel 2:25).

In terms of attendance, our Diocese was ranked the fourth best participating Diocese nationally.

The 2019 edition of the Conference will hold from Monday, 11<sup>th</sup> – Friday, 15<sup>th</sup> November, 2019. Trophies will be awarded this year for highest-attending Dioceses and it is our desire to come home with this trophy. We therefore encourage everyone to plan to attend the conference. Registration is currently on-going and so we advise everyone to take advantage of it.

### **Annual Bishops Retreat, 2019**

The 2019 edition of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) annual Bishops' Retreat was held at the usual venue – Ibru International Ecumenical Centre, Agbaraha-Otor, Delta State, from Monday, 7<sup>th</sup> to Friday, 11<sup>th</sup> January, 2019.

The theme of this year's retreat is "**The Integrity of the Church Today and Tomorrow**". The Bishops devoted time to be alone with God for refreshment in His presence for renewed vision and direction for leading the Church of God in the New Year. The retreat among other things featured quality sermons delivered during the morning Holy Communion Services, Bible Studies and inspiring lectures delivered by some learned and experienced Bishops. Prayers were equally said for the nation, particularly for peace in troubled areas and for a peaceful 2019 electoral process.

### **Special offerings for the Church of Nigeria**

As directed by the office of the Primate, we in Edo joined other Dioceses of the Church of Nigeria to raise special offerings for the following:

1. **Relief Fund:** This was observed on Sunday, 28<sup>th</sup> October, 2018. Our Churches raised a total of ₦702, 685 and remitted to the national Church.
2. **Advent Sunday 100% remittance of all offerings:** This was observed on Sunday, 16<sup>th</sup> December in all our Churches. The total offerings raised on that day was ₦ 5, 752, 526.68 and this was remitted 100% to the Church of Nigeria.
3. **St. Matthias' Day Offering/100% Remittance 2019:** This was observed on Sunday, 24<sup>th</sup> February being the Feast of St. Mathias and the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the inauguration of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion). The total amount realized from all offerings/tithes taken in our Churches was ₦ 8, 794,569. This was also remitted 100% to the Church of Nigeria.
4. **GAFCON Support Offering:** On the occasion of the 11<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Global Anglican Future Conference (GAFCON) on Sunday, 30<sup>th</sup> June, 2019, some of our Churches responded to the Bishop's call through the office of our Primate for the taking of an offering to support its work. The total support from some of our Churches was ₦ 389, 395 only. There are Churches that have not complied with this directive. We are waiting for them to do so before we remit to the GAFCON office. Affected Churches are hereby charged to immediately do the needful without further delay.

### **Primate's Interactive Session with Eminent Anglicans**

The second in the series, this was held on Thursday, 13<sup>th</sup> December, 2018 at the new Episcopal House at Wuse. In attendance were notable Anglicans from all fields of life – politics, academia, industry, economy, traditional institutions and government. Our Diocese was represented by only 3 of our nominees – surveyor Gaius Assor, Sir Chief Mike Ejims-Enwukwe and HRH, Eze Sir S. C. Wokoma.

**Launch of Nicholas Okoh Foundation and the Book,  
*'Not By Might, Nor By Power: Selected Messages to the World'***

History was made on Thursday, 18<sup>th</sup> July, 2019 at the New National Secretariat of the Church of Nigeria at Abuja when the Nicholas Okoh Foundation, a multi-faceted Non-Governmental Organization committed to promoting a holistic development of the man was formally launched. The event which was chaired by a Senior Advocate of Nigeria, Chief Wole Olanipekun, OFR, also had in attendance the former Head of State, General Yakubu Gowon, GCFR, former President, Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, GCFR, the retired Primate, The Most Rev. Peter Jasper Akinola, several Bishops of the Church of Nigeria, representatives of State Governments amongst other dignitaries.

Also featured at the occasion was the public presentation of the book, '*NOT BY MIGHT, NOR BY POWER: Selected Messages to the World*', written by our Primate, The Most Rev'd Nicholas D. Okoh, MA, FSS, MSS, LLD, DD.

**2019 Conference of Chancellors, Registrars and Legal Officers**

This Annual Conference of the various categories of Law Officers of the Dioceses in the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) was held at the Basilica of Grace, Diocese of Abuja, from Monday, 29<sup>th</sup> July to Thursday, 1<sup>st</sup> August, 2019 under the theme: "***Contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the Saints***" (Jude 3). Our Diocese was represented by some members of our Legal party.

**New Church of Nigeria Hymnal**

A new Church of Nigeria Hymnal containing hymns, canticles and other spiritual songs has been unveiled and dedicated for use in our worship services by the Primate of our Church, The Most Rev. Nicholas D. Okoh.

This event took place at Abuja on Wednesday, 31<sup>st</sup> July, 2019 at the Conference of Chancellors, Registrars and Legal Officers of the Dioceses of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion).

We therefore commend it to all our churches and members in this Diocese for use. We shall make effort to place order for copies of this very rich hymnal for everyone to buy.

### **Coming Synod Venues and Diocesan Chief Launchers of Bishop's Address/Charge**

The table below shows our coming Diocesan Synod Hosts and the groups to stand as Chief Launchers for the next 4 years.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Host</b>	<b>Diocesan Chief Launcher Group</b>	<b>Host Chief Launcher</b>
2020	Trinity Missionary Archdeaconry	Diocesan CMF (All Men)	To be determined by the Host Bloc
2021	All Saints' Cathedral, Rumuokwurusi	Diocesan AYF (All Youths)	To be determined by the Host Bloc
2022	Rumuomasi Deanery	Lay Readers Association	To be determined by the Host Bloc
2023	Rumuobiokani Deanery	Prayer Groups of CMF & MU/WG	To be determined by the Host Bloc

## **FELICITATIONS**

### **For Electoral Victories**

We congratulate His Excellency, the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, General Muhammadu Buhari and his Vice, Prof. Yemi Osibanjo, SAN, on their victory at the presidential election held on Saturday, 23<sup>rd</sup> February, 2019 for a second term in office on the platform of the All Progressives Congress (APC). Similarly, we congratulate the Governor of Rivers State, His Excellency, Nyesom Ezenwo Wike and his Deputy, Dr. Mrs. Ipalibo Harry Banigo for their hard won victory at the State governorship election held on Saturday, 9<sup>th</sup> March, 2019 on the platform of the People's Democratic Party (PDP). Our felicitations also go to Hon. Okechukwu Kingsley Chinda, Member Representing Obio/Akpor Federal Constituency and Hon. Martin Chike Amaewhule, Member Representing Obio/Akpor State Constituency 1 in the Rivers State House of Assembly for their respective victories for another term at the Federal and State Legislatures.

We also congratulate our youth, Mr. Graham Elendu on his election as one of Nigeria's representatives into the Democracy Africa Youth Parliament based in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

### **For Political Appointments**

We rejoice with our parishioner, Hon. Isaac Kamalu for his recent appointment as Commissioner for Finance and Budget by the Governor of Rivers State.

### **For Career Advancement**

We congratulate The Hon. Justice (Mrs.) Augusta Uche Chukwu, wife of Chief Barr. Kingsley Chuku, the Chairman of the Local Organizing Committee for this Synod on her elevation last year to the position of a High Court Judge in the Rivers State judiciary.

### **For Academic Achievements**

We rejoice with the following on their recent academic achievements

1. Mrs. Amaka Emeka Awanye on her award of a Doctor of Philosophy, Ph.D, after successful completion of her studies in the University of Manchester, United Kingdom;
2. The Rev. Canon Cephas Okarefe on his award of a Doctor of Philosophy Degree, Ph.D, in New Testament from the Crowther Graduate Theological Seminary, Abeokuta, Ogun State (in affiliation with Ekiti State University).

### **For Professional Recognition**

We congratulate the Bishop's wife, Mrs. Chinyere U. Ordu, JP on her award of Fellow, Corporate Administration Institute, FCAI by the Corporate Institute of Administration of Nigeria and Mrs. Dora Iheanaetu for her investiture as a member of the Chartered Chemists of Nigeria.

### **For call to Community Leadership**

Sir Captain Clement Ejiofor, Adviser to the Bishop on Security Matters for the choice of him by his people of Ukala in Oshimili North Local Government Area as their Igwekani, Obi of Ukala Kingdom, a first class traditional stool in Delta State.

### **For Child Births**

We rejoice with the following families who were blessed with babies:

1. Rev. & Mrs. John Eze with twin boys
2. Rev. & Mrs. Moses Anyatonwu with a baby girl
3. Ordinand Amoson Ijah with a baby girl
4. Mr. & Mrs. Best Ekendia with a Baby girl.

### **For Marriages**

We rejoice with the following:

1. Sir Henry & Lady Ahunna Imoni on the weddings of their daughters, **Shantelle** on 24<sup>th</sup> November, 2018, **Stacy** on 27<sup>th</sup> April, 2019 and their son **Shawn Omonefe** on 29<sup>th</sup> June, 2019 to their spouses at St. Andrew's, Rumuobiokani Deanery;
2. Mr. Benjamin Eyiuche Peterson, the Bishop's Secretary and Adanne Joyce Orlu, former Secretary of the Diocesan AYF and currently a Diocesan Auditor, on their wedding on Christmas Eve, Monday, 24<sup>th</sup> December, 2018;
3. Mr. Ernest Amadi and former Miss Hope Wokoma, leader of the Diocesan Sisters Forum on their wedding on Friday, 22<sup>nd</sup> February, 2019 at Daystar Anglican Youth Church, Rumuokwurusi;
4. Former Barr. Miss Christiana Uche and Mr. Cliff Nwennah on their wedding on Saturday, 1<sup>st</sup> June, 2019 at Holy Trinity Church, Elimbu Parish;
5. Sir Chike and Lady Ifeoma Okechukwu on the wedding of their son, Engr. Chike Obinna Okechukwu with Pharm. Jennifer Chinyere on Saturday, 27th July, 2019 at St. Michael's, Rumuomasi Deanery;
6. Sir Adolphus & Lady Christy Opara on the r celebration of their 50<sup>th</sup> (Golden Jubilee) Marriage Anniversary/Thanksgiving on Sunday, 28<sup>th</sup> July, 2019 at the Church of The Holy Spirit, Elelenwo District.

### **Deaths and our Commiserations**

1. Mrs. Roseline Nneoma Orianwo of All Saints' Cathedral, Rumuokwurusi on Tuesday, 24<sup>th</sup> July, 2018 at the age of 71. She was buried Friday, 31<sup>st</sup> August, 2018.
2. Chief Bekwele Nyeyonum, Eze Oba 1 of Rumuoba, Rumuobiokani on Friday, 3<sup>rd</sup> August; he was buried on Friday, 31<sup>st</sup> August, 2018;
3. Miss Ugochi Nnoromele, sister to Mrs. Augusta Chukwumati who died and was buried on Friday, 31<sup>st</sup> August, 2018;

4. Mrs. Catherine Iheanaetu, Mother of the Rev. Canon Ozioma Iheanaetu, Vicar of New Wine Church, East/West Road, Okporo on Wednesday, 5<sup>th</sup> September, 2018. She was buried on Thursday, 8<sup>th</sup> November, 2018.
5. We commiserate with The Rev. & Mrs. John Nkuene who lost their son on Thursday, 20<sup>th</sup> September, 2018.
6. The Rt. Rev. Anga Fred Nyanabo, a former curate of St. Andrew's, Rumuobiokani, Vicar of St. Michael's, Rumuomasi and retired Bishop of the Diocese of Northern Izon on Saturday, 6<sup>th</sup> October, 2018 in an Abuja hospital. His remains was buried at St. Peter's Cathedral, Okrika on Thursday, 22<sup>nd</sup> November, 2018.
7. Sir Godwin Enwukwe Adiele of St. Michael's, Rumuomasi Deanery, who died on Saturday, 3<sup>rd</sup> November and was buried on Wednesday, 5<sup>th</sup> December, 2018.
8. Sir Chief Samuel Amaewhule Amadi of St. Jude's Church, Oginigba Deanery died on Monday, 5<sup>th</sup> November and buried on Tuesday, 4<sup>th</sup> December, 2018.
9. Sir B.O. Ejekwu of St. Mark's, Elelenwo Deanery on who died Tuesday, 27<sup>th</sup> November at the age of 72 years. He was buried on Tuesday, 18<sup>th</sup> December, 2018.
10. Chief Israel A. Assor (Eze Nyemehome II), father of our Diocesan surveyor, Gaius Assor, who died on Sunday, 16<sup>th</sup>, December, 2018 at the age of 97 years; and was buried on Saturday, 12<sup>th</sup> January, 2019.
11. Mrs. Catherine Chinyere Chuku, mother of Diocesan Architect Sir O.C. Chuku who died on Wednesday, 19<sup>th</sup> December, 2018 and was buried on Saturday, 19<sup>th</sup> January, 2019.
12. Mrs. Chika Elizabeth Frankincense Chukwuma (wife of The Rev. Frankincense Chukwuma) who died on Thursday, 24<sup>th</sup> January, 2019 at the age of 44 years and was buried on Thursday, 21<sup>st</sup> February, 2019.
13. Hon. Mrs. Faustina Wali of St. Simon's Church, Okporo Denary died on Thursday, 24<sup>th</sup> January, and was buried on Wednesday, 20<sup>th</sup> February, 2019
14. The Church Teacher of The Chapel of Restoration, Rumuogba, Mr. Godspower Ozomeyo. He died on Friday, 1<sup>st</sup> February and was buried on Monday, 25<sup>th</sup> February, 2019.
15. Mr. John Okoh, the younger brother of our Primate.
16. Sir Francis Mbeledogu of St. Andrew's, Rumuobiokani Deanery and a former Chairman of the Diocesan Investment Committee, Diocesan Board and Synod. He died on Thursday, 7<sup>th</sup> February and was buried on Friday, 12<sup>th</sup> April, 2019 at his hometown, Ogidi, Anambra State.

17. Mrs. Adanma Nwanyinnaya Violet Nwaoha, wife of the retired Rev. Canon Ben A. Nwaoha on Saturday, 16<sup>th</sup> February and was buried Tuesday, 19<sup>th</sup> March, 2019 at Ogwe, Diocese of Ukwa.
18. Sir Chief Samuel Anokwuru Wutche, Chairman of the Steering Committee for the creation of the Diocese of Evowho died on Saturday, 23<sup>rd</sup> February at the age of 84 years and was buried on Monday, 25<sup>th</sup> March, 2019.
19. Mrs. Sabina Okerenta (Nee Jombo), mother of Engr. Emenike Okerenta who died on Monday, 25<sup>th</sup> March and was buried on Friday, 3<sup>rd</sup> May, 2019 at Obohia-Ndoki, Diocese of Ukwa.
20. Chief Vincent Nnanta Obilor (Eze Ekeanyaolu 1 of Oropotoma) of St. Michael's, Rumuomasi Deanery on Friday 5<sup>th</sup> April and was buried on 3<sup>rd</sup> May Friday, 2019 .
21. Elder Sabastine Nnoromele, (Father-in-law and father of The Ven. Chris & Mrs. Augusta Chukwumati who died on Saturday, 20<sup>th</sup> April and buried on Wednesday, 29<sup>th</sup> May, 2019 at Orogwe, Imo State.
22. Ezinne Annah Nwenenda Amadi, JP of St. Jude's, Oginigba (Mother-in-law and mother of Sir Ray and Lady Ngozi Joy Ray Amadi) on Wednesday, 24<sup>th</sup> April, and buried on Tuesday, 21<sup>st</sup> May, 2019.
23. The Rt. Rev. Joshua Ebunoluwa Ogunele, Bishop of the Diocese On the Coast on Thursday, 2<sup>nd</sup> May, 2019. He was buried on Friday, 7<sup>th</sup> June, 2019.
24. Sir. Frank Sunday Ezeokoli, a Lay Reader and Knight of our Diocese who died on the 10<sup>th</sup> May, and was buried on 19<sup>th</sup> July, 2019.
25. The Retired Rev. Canon Wilfred Chika Worlu who died on Saturday, 29<sup>th</sup> June and was buried on Saturday, 27<sup>th</sup> July, 2019.
26. Miss Chinwendu Ejims, (daughter of HRH, Sir (Eze) & Lady Samuel Nyeche Ejims-Wopara, Paramount Ruler of Rumuobiokani) who died on Tuesday, 23<sup>rd</sup> July, 2019 at the age of 33years and is being buried today.

We commiserate with the families of all these persons whom we hope have joined the Church triumphant and pray that the Lord will grant them the consolation of His Holy Spirit.

## **STATE AND NATIONAL ISSUES**

### **RIVERS STATE**

#### ***2019 Rivers State Governorship Election***

The year 2019 will not be too easily forgotten by many when the history of elections in Nigeria and particularly in Rivers State is written.

The 9<sup>th</sup> of March Governorship election which many thought was going to be an easy ride back to the Government House for the incumbent Governor of Rivers State suddenly turned out to be an awful nightmare of a sort as the electoral process in the State suffered a serious widespread disruption as a result of violence, shootings, ballot box snatching, stabbing, killings, declaration of false results and protests, amidst heavy military and police presence across the various local government areas of the State.

The situation was so bad that the electoral umpire, the Independent Electoral Commission, INEC, had to suspend the release of the results for close to a month.

Our dear Rivers State came under the close watch of the nation and the international community at large. The tension, fear, insecurity, general atmosphere of uncertainty that prevailed in the land and the heavy military presence in a manner that reminded us of the era of military coups, were not such that we would still raise our heads in pride as Rivers people.

We thank God for listening to the cries of many within and outside the State as through His intervention, the entire State and by extension our country, were saved from anarchy and more bloodshed.

We do not wish/pray for a repeat of what happened in the years to come. Politicians should desist from seeing politics as a do or die affair. Just as in sports, not everyone who contests for a political office will emerge victorious. Some will win and others will lose. Winners are to be magnanimous in victory and losers gallant in defeat while they prepare for next time.

The lives, properties and peace of the people and that of the State should not be threatened, destroyed and disrupted because of the ambition of a few persons.

Once again, we congratulate the Governor of the State, His Excellency Nyesom Ezenwo Wike, CON, GSSRS, POS (Africa), and his Deputy, Dame (Dr.) Ipalibo Harry-Banigo and all who emerged victorious at the 2019 polls at all levels and wish them success and God's grace in their service to the State and nation.

We commend the governor for extending the olive branch to all his political opponents and we charge all concerned to accept same for the greater peace and development of our dear State.

We also commend the governor for remaining focused despite all odds in the last four years and delivering on a number of his campaign promises. We charge him to approach these last four years with greater zeal and commitment with a view to leaving Rivers State far better than he met it in 2015.

There are many areas of concern to us, particularly, sanitation and agriculture, which we plead with His Excellency to give urgent attention to, for the greater development and glory of our State.

## **Environmental Sanitation**

Over the years and through to the present, we have watched helplessly as the state of our environment in Rivers State, particularly, Port Harcourt, has deteriorated to the point of being an eyesore today. In our various addresses in the last nine years, we have consistently drawn the attention of all and sundry, especially, authorities saddled with the task of keeping our environment clean, to the apocalyptic state of our environment which we long envisaged and which sadly, is now upon us. On a daily basis, our immediate environment continues to suffer a barrage of assaults: From artisanal refining (*kpo fire*) from the creeks, to overzealous security men destroying illegal refineries, black soot (with its attendant respiratory dangers), consistent roasting of animal skin with condemned motor tyres (with its significant health risks for consumers) by very callous butchers, supposedly educated motorists throwing wastes from their vehicles on the streets, residents dumping non-biodegradable waste like plastics into gutters and canals, incessant and unbridled dumping of refuse on the streets – in fact, everywhere now is a refuse dump on Port Harcourt streets! The city has become a terrible eyesore right from every point of entrance and we can't afford to continue this way.

For the umpteenth time, we call on all Rivers residents, especially, those within the Port Harcourt Metropolis, to urgently revisit their attitudes towards waste disposal and sanitation. The consequences of poor attitude to keeping our environment clean are all too clear for all to see. Let us look at just one example: Floods have consistently sacked residents from their homes in the state. It has become an annual ritual. We must have a change of mind and attitude before it is too late. No resident, motorist, trader, company or institution should wait for government's push to keep our environment clean.

On the side of the government in Rivers State, we also find a loophole. There seems to be a *laissez faire* attitude from environmental policy implementers in the state. For instance, every other month in the state, one would expect a notorious cancellation of the monthly environmental sanitation exercise for one reason or the other. This is not right. In fact, this has built into the psyche of residents, an expectation each month that the exercise would be cancelled as usual. The consequence of this is that the seeming lackadaisical attitude of government to the exercise is transmitted to residents who show palpable apathy to keeping the city of Port Harcourt clean. We urge the government in the state to be firm and consistent in enforcing the monthly sanitation exercise in the state. We call on the executive governor of the state to rise up to the occasion and revoke the contracts of any company found to have collected tax

payers' money to clean the environment but which fails to do so. In fact, individuals found to own such companies should be made to cough out such monies and then prosecuted, no matter who they are. Our environment should be greater than anyone.

## Agriculture

Permit us to quote the following excerpt from our 2016 Address:

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

The call above was made exactly three years ago but we strongly believe that it is still imperative even today and two reasons make it so. First, we have continued to witness a spike in cult-related activities among Rivers youths. This is in addition to cases of kidnapping, armed robbery and blood-chilling killings in our communities. All these have taken a worrying turn since after the last elections in the state. We believe that the recent launching of the *Operation Sting* security architecture by the governor of the state will definitely arrest this ugly trend. However, we also believe that one of the ways to address this mayhem in our society is to engage the youths maximally. Since the economic realities have made it such that employment openings are greatly limited, we believe that investment in agriculture will offer a significant avenue to engage Rivers youths meaningfully. Agriculture surely offers a wide range of opportunities to engage a host of youths, no matter their fields of academic specialization, and even if they are not educated.

Secondly, the issue of the botched Federal Government Ruga policy is still with us, despite the seeming withdrawal by the proponents. We are in a country where things that we shut the front door against eventually come into the house through the backdoor. His Excellency, Governor Nyesom Wike had declared in the heat of the public outcry against the Ruga policy that Rivers State has no land to donate for Ruga. He also maintained that the land in

Rivers State is solely dedicated to agriculture. We completely align with the position of the governor. However, going forward, we call on the governor to quickly make his assertion practical by setting up large-scale farms on whatever available land there is. This is in addition to revamping the current farms lying comatose across the State. We firmly believe that doing this will discourage the Federal government from harbouring any ideas to forcefully grab our ancestral lands to pacify those who think they own our country. We also believe that such farms, if well-invested in and managed, can adequately take care of our meat and dairy needs, thereby saving us from opening up ourselves to those whose stock in trade is to sack host communities and take over their lands in the name of cattle-rearing.

### **Election Victory Thanksgiving Service in Honour of The Rivers State Governor and His Deputy.**

The eight Anglican Dioceses in Rivers State led by their Bishops, rolled out the drums in thanksgiving to God for the victory of their Excellencies, the Governor of Rivers State, Nyesom Ezenwo Wike, CON, GSSRS, POS (Africa), and his Deputy, Dame (Dr.) Ipalibo Harry-Banigo at the March 9, 2019 Governorship election in the State.

The service which took place on Sunday, 7<sup>th</sup> July, 2019 at St. Paul's Cathedral, Diobu, Port Harcourt attracted Bishops wives, Clergy and wives, Legal Officers, Knights and Ladies, Lay Readers, members of the Christian Men's Fellowship, Mothers' Union/Women's Guild, Anglican Youth Fellowship, Boys Brigade and Girls' Guild from the eight Dioceses, Traditional rulers, Politicians, Judicial Officers and past and present Government officials including two former Governors, Peter Odili and Celestine Omehia.

Our Diocese was very well represented at the Service. We, The Rt. Rev. Innocent U. Ordu, Bishop of Evo, were appointed by the Rivers Anglican Bishops to serve as Chairman of the Thanksgiving Service Planning Committee. Lady Josephine Enwukwe was chosen by members of the Committee to serve as their Secretary. She did an excellent work.

We thank the Bishops and the Committee for the opportunity given to us to serve the Church and State.

## **OUR NATION NIGERIA**

The poetic narration below by Dr. Chris Kwakpovwe, publisher of Our Daily Manna Devotional in the May 25, 2019 meditation summarises the unfortunate present state of affairs in our country Nigeria

*“Nigeria: The land of Generals without war, professors without discovery, politicians without ideology, wealth without prosperity, religion without piety, leaders without vision, the oppressed without worries, courts without justice, criminals without fears, history without glory, heroes without honour, schools without learning, artists without taste, intellectuals without thought, terrorists without identity, appointees without life, hunger without famine, change without progress, next level without foundation, democracy without citizens, unity without love, heroes without sacrifice, policies without plans, crime without culprits, saints without humility, integrity without performance, wars without enemies, billionaires without businesses, youths without dreams, elders without wisdom, electricity bills without power”.*

And I would add hospitals without health, rivers without aquatic life (resulting from oil spillages), music without inspiration. And you can add your own.

Any emerging responsible government in the country is expected to devote its energy in addressing some of the issues/challenges enumerated above, rather than engage in policies that will distract the people and further divide them along ethnic or religious lines. In our opinion, the present Federal Government under the leadership of President Muhammadu Buhari is leaving undone quite a number of things or issues that should impact positively on the lives of the citizenry and is busy engaging in policies that tend to destroy our corporate existence as people of one nation. One of such vexing actions of the present government is its temporarily suspended Ruga policy.

## **Federal Government’s Ruga Policy**

On June 25, the Federal Government, again, said that it would create what it described as Ruga settlements across the country for herdsmen in the next five years in order to end open grazing, adding that 12 states had already keyed into the programme which received the endorsements of pro-northern groups, including the Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria. However on July 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2019, the policy was suspended by the Federal Government. The suspension came on a day Arewa youths, under the aegis of Coalition of Northern Groups, CNG, gave southern leaders 30 days to accept the Ruga Project in peace, and a 30-day ultimatum to President Buhari to implement the programme. According to a report in *The Vanguard* on July 4<sup>th</sup>, 2019,

they also chastised some northern leaders for fraudulently promoting agitations for power shift to the South in 2023. It said unless the Fulani were allowed to rear their cattle in peace in the South, they will not allow southerners to enjoy peace in the North.

Before we proceed, permit me to quote a columnist with Punch (July 19, 2019), thus:

*Let me state without equivocation state that the controversy and debate, which the Federal Government-proposed Ruga policy has generated will not abate so soon. ... President Muhammadu Buhari is from the Fulani ethnic group, which the Ruga agenda is designed to benefit. You may argue that there is nothing wrong with an ethnic group being favoured for a governmental programme; yes, but not when such a programme is laden with very scary implications for the rest of the country. As a result, everyone, including those folks from the South who are usually given to political correctness, is kicking against Ruga; except of course the government and the North, where the Fulani hold sway as determiners of political direction.*

The picture above becomes clearer when we recall that Nigeria currently ranks 148 out of 163 countries, according to the 2019 Global Peace Index, a report by the Institute for Economics and Peace and is said to have a ‘very low’ level of peacefulness.

Unlike the usual predictable divisive behaviours of Nigerians over policies, it’s significant that for once, all the federating states in the southern part of the country and their indigenes have risen in unison against a government policy, shunning hypocrisy. Benue State has even aligned with these southern counterparts, notwithstanding that the state itself is situated along the Middle Belt axis, where its sister states have joined the North to literally beckon to Ruga.

We have read in online platforms that Ruga (or Rugga) is a Fulani word for (human) settlement, yet the same word is being bandied about as an acronym for Rural Grazing Area. However, whatever it means is immaterial; what really matters are the realities the policy is packed with, which can upset both the cultural and demographic make-up of any community where it is allowed. The Federal Government has

continued to downplay this reality. In fact, it has only just stopped short of guaranteeing that the policy will permanently put an end to incessant killings of indigenes of local communities, where Fulani herdsmen take their cattle for grazing. The Senior Special Assistant to Buhari on Media, Shehu Garba, explained: “‘Ruga Settlement’ that seeks to settle migrant pastoral families simply means rural settlement in which animal farmers, not just cattle herders, will be settled in an organised place with provision of necessary and adequate basic amenities such as schools, hospitals, road networks, vet clinics, markets and manufacturing entities that will process and add value to meats and animal products. Beneficiaries will include all persons in animal husbandry, not only Fulani herders.” But for whatever it is, we align with Prof. Wole Soyinka, that Ruga would be “an explosion” if not carefully handled.

In his words,

*People have been killed in hundreds just because of the failure of leadership at a critical time. And the cattle herders have been given a sense of impunity. “They kill without any compunction, they drive away the farmers who have been contributing to the food solutions in the country, the cattle eat their crops and then you come up with Ruga. I think that there is going to be trouble in this country if this Ruga thing is not handled imaginatively and with humanity as priority. Any country where cattle take priority over human life is definitely at an elementary stage.*

Note that incessant killings of indigenous people on their farmlands by Fulani herdsmen is being referenced here as “security threats”, a rather misleading view on the killings. To insist that they occur on both sides during clashes between farmers and pastoralists, in spite of the victims’ gory tales, which normally attract even international media coverage, shows the Federal Government’s unmasked bias in favour of the Fulani and cruel insensitivity towards the plight of the indigenous people.

The terrible truth is that herdsmen would literally invade farming communities with their cattle. Any attempt by the farmers to safeguard their farmlands is usually visited with overwhelming terror. Entire communities are known to have been razed by Fulani herdsmen, with

hundreds of inhabitants killed in a manner that evokes imagery of a slaughterhouse.

If atrocities of the magnitude executed by itinerant Fulani herdsman can go on under the watch of government and its security agencies, the imagination is justifiable that host communities to the proposed Ruga would be at their killers' mercy, should the programme come to be.

Ordinarily, every Nigerian should have the freedom to migrate to any part of the country they wish to and set up a home, without arousing the least suspicion of domination in the indigenous inhabitants or of deprivation of their ancestral lands. Certainly, that would be the case if the Federal Government had not by its very acts or omissions portrayed the people of a particular ethnic group as a premium class.

We urge all Southern state governments (South-South, South-West and South-East) in addition to Benue State and other Middle Belt States to stick to their earlier decision to reject the scheme. They must be wary of lures, overtures and mouth-watering offers intended to induce them to part with their land ostensibly for industrial ventures but disguised approaches to obtain land for Ruga settlements. I'm certain that posterity will not forgive any government, community or individual that falls into this trap.

For the Federal Government, we say that there is still hope for the unity and progress of this country. We can harness our diversity and ensure a country that is fair to all." We urge to know that the rejection of the Ruga settlement model by majority of Nigerians was not personal but rather a struggle by the people of the country against impunity and injustice. We commend President Buhari for heeding the call of the people for the suspension of the plan. The decision to suspend the Ruga programme shows that President Buhari has heard the voices of majority of Nigerians on the matter. The truth has prevailed on the Ruga issue. However, we warn that the model should not be foisted on Nigerians dressed in another policy apparel to deceive Nigerians. We call on the President to take a step further to kill the policy permanently and encourage pastoralists and other livestock owners to embrace ranching as the best model of animal husbandry.

## **CONCLUSION**

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Presidential Address/Bishop's Charge, 2019

We shall conclude this address by thanking each and everyone of you once again for honouring our invitation and for your patience in listening to us. We specially thank ALL Diocesan officials, especially the Legal Officers led by the Registrar, Sir Barr. Nlerum Amadi, my wife, Mrs. Chinyere U. Ordu, JP, FCAI, the Synod Secretariat led by The Rev. Canon Gospel Onuchukwu, all Archdeacons and others in the house of Clergy, our office workers and assistants particularly all who stood by and assisted us as we prepared this address and members of the Diocesan Synod Planning Committee. We appreciate you all and pray God to most graciously reward you in Jesus name, Amen.

We thank the Woji Archdeaconry Board, the Archdeacon of Woji, The Ven. Chris & Mrs. Augusta Chukwumati, the Vicar of St. Nicholas, Woji District, The Rev. Canon & Mrs. Kingsley Ohajianya, the various Church Councils/Committees (PCCs & SCs) in Woji Archdeaconry, their Clergy, Church Teachers and wives for their immense contributions and sacrifices towards the hosting of this Synod.

We thank the entire parishioners of the Archdeaconry from Woji, Rumuolu and Rumuibekwe and others with their traditional rulers – HRH, Eze Sir (Amb.) Dr. & Lady Emeka G. Ihunwo, HRH, Eze (Amb.) Dr. & Mrs. G.N. Chukwumgbia, JP, HRH, Eze Sir & Lady Ray Chijioke Elewa, chiefs, elders, men, women and youths of these communities; Sir & Lady Christopher Dike of Christ Church, Federal Housing Estate Parish, Woji; the Chairman of Obio/Akpor Local Government Area, Hon. Prince & Mrs. Solomon Abel Eke; Chief Barr. Kingsley Chuku - Chairman Archdeaconry Local Organizing Committee and his wife, Hon. Justice Augusta Uche Chuku and Apple Solicitors (Legal Practitioners); members of the Archdeaconry and District Church Local Organizing Committees for your moral, spiritual and huge financial sacrifices made for this Synod and the hospitalities extended to all of us at your palaces and homes and here at the Synod venue.

Finally, we are most grateful to His Majesty, King Amb. Sir, Dr. Leslie N. Eke, JP, DCF, Eze Ohna Evo III, Eze Gbakagbaka, his Queen, the chiefs and elders from some communities in Evo and his friends from across the country who joined him to heartily welcome and receive us at his Ancient Palace in Woji when we visited him on Monday, 12<sup>th</sup> August, 2019 on a courtesy call. We appreciate his gifts and pray the Lord to bless him, the family and prosper his reign as King of Evo in Jesus name, Amen.

***“Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen. (Eph. 3: 20-21)***

Thank you for listening and may God bless you!

Rt. Rev. Innocent Uchechukwu Ordu,  
(Justice of the Peace)  
Bishop, Diocese of Evo

## **APPENDIX**

### **1**

COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AT THE END OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE  
MEETING OF THE CHURCH OF NIGERIA (ANGLICAN COMMUNION)  
HELD AT ST PETER'S ANGLICAN CATHEDRAL CHURCH, MINNA FROM  
MONDAY, 17TH TO FRIDAY, 21ST SEPTEMBER, 2018

### **PREAMBLE**

The Standing Committee of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) held at St Peter's Cathedral Church, Minna, Niger State, in the Diocese of Minna, Province of Lokoja, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and presided over by The Most Revd Dr. Nicholas D. Okoh, Archbishop, Metropolitan and Primate of the Church of Nigeria. In attendance were his wife, Mrs. Nkasiobi Okoh, the President of the Mothers' Union; the Dean of the Church of Nigeria. The Most Revd Dr Ali Buba Lamido, 163 Bishops, 122 clergymen, 79 members of the House of Laity and delegates of the Mothers' Union. It received many guests who attended the opening ceremony, including an erstwhile Minister of the Federal Republic, Professor Jerry Cana, and the President of the Nigeria Bar Association represented by the Secretary General of the Association. The Standing Committee acknowledges with immense gratitude the assistance of the Government of Niger State in ensuring the success of the meeting.

### **THEME**

The theme of the meeting is God, our Refuge and Strength, taken from Psalm 46:1: God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. The Bible assures us that God is our strength and shield. He has done that for us before and will do it again, therefore, we can be certain. Thus the Standing Committee calls on all Christians and the entire populace not to fear in the midst of the present challenges

and uncertainties of life, but to put their trust and confidence in the living, unchanging and all-powerful God, who is the shield and defender of His people.

## **NATURAL DISASTER**

The Church sympathises with families and communities that suffered from the damage caused by Hooding in various parts of our country, resulting in loss of lives, property and displacement of human beings and communities. It passionately calls on government to be proactive in providing relevant machineries that can control natural disasters in the future. It urges the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) and other related bodies in the private sector, including church organisations, to treat the issues of climate change with utmost seriousness, undertake more public enlightenment in this regard, especially that citizens should avoid building along water courses, and make adequate provision to assuage and alleviate such occurrences in the future.

## **EDUCATION/UNEMPLOYMENT**

The Church reviews the state of education in Nigeria and notes with regrets the fall in standards, and the lack of employment for graduates from our tertiary institutions. It calls on government to review curriculum to include vocational training and skills acquisition that will guarantee self-employment on graduation.

## **HEALTH SECTOR**

The Standing Committee notes with concerns the continued deteriorating state of our health facilities, and decries government's failure to give adequate attention to the health of the citizenry. A situation whereby Government Hospitals, including the National Hospital, have no adequate facilities is not only disappointing but also unacceptable. Nigerians demand proper medical care at home instead of travelling abroad which only a handful of the populace can afford. It calls for proper monitoring of budget of the hospitals and to ensure that allocated funds are

channelled towards improving the state of the hospitals, thus enhancing affordable Medicare for the masses.

## **SECURITY**

The insecurity and escalation of violence in different parts of the country continue to be a source of worry to all. The Church laments the death of the health worker in the captivity of the Boko Haram terrorists and strongly appeals to the Federal Government to ensure that Leah Sharibu, the other Chibok girls and the other abductees of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) are not killed but released unharmed.

## **2019 GENERAL ELECTIONS**

The Standing Committee calls on Nigerians to exercise hope and confidence in God as they prepare for the forthcoming General Elections. It commends the Not too Young to Run bill that was passed by the National Assembly. But it views with grave concern the prohibitive cost of obtaining nomination forms for elective offices, which has an undermining effect on the bill, as this makes it further difficult for the youths to secure nomination to run for key offices. It condemns the exorbitant cost of nomination forms. This is only a contradiction of the ideals for which the Not Too Young to Run Act stands.

It calls on the political parties to present well-qualified and sound-minded candidates to run for political offices, as the country needs people who can appreciate its problems, proffer solutions and successfully pursue to logical conclusion any proposals towards alleviating the challenges of the country.

It therefore calls on INEC and security agents not to compromise their constitutional roles, and to give equal opportunities to political parties and contestants; to maintain the position of an unbiased umpire so that the outcome of the election can reflect the true wishes of the electorate. It calls for a peaceful electioneering devoid of violence

where campaigns are issue-based reflecting genuine aspirations of the people within the context of their particular campaign issues.

## **STATE OF THE ROADS**

The Church laments that the deplorable state of Nigerian roads have persisted both at the State and Federal levels. It calls on government at all levels to address them as a matter of urgency to avoid continuous loss of lives and ensure comfort and peaceful travel for all road users.

## **WELFARE OF NIGERIAN WORKERS**

The Church calls on government to resolve without delay issues surrounding the agitation of the Nigerian workers for a new minimum wage, noting that the level of poverty amongst Nigerian workers has reached unacceptable level. The suffering of the masses and the near-absence of morality in the distribution of wealth in the country is indicative that the government may be out of touch with its people.

It calls on the Government to give priority' to the welfare of pensioners who have served the country faithfully. Neglecting them will discourage the workers now in active service from serving faithfully. Many pensioners have no other means of survival without the payment of their monthly entitlement. It is important, therefore, that they are properly and timely supported.

## **EXTERNAL BORROWING AND THE FUTURE OF NIGERIA**

The external borrowing of the country' has become a matter of grave concern to all. It calls for the government to consider the future of the yet unborn Nigerians by limiting its borrowings and use money already retrieved through its anti-corruption drive for the benefit of the masses.

# **GLOBAL ANGLICAN FUTURE CONFERENCE (GAFCON)**

The Standing Committee rejoices in the success of Gafcon3 which held in June 2018 in Jerusalem. It supports the House of Bishops of the Church of Nigeria in reaffirming the Statement of GAFCON 2018 that the Archbishop of Canterbury should invite as full members to Lambeth 2020 the Bishops of the Province of the Anglican Church in North America and the Province of the Anglican Church in Brazil, and that he should not invite those Provinces that have endorsed by word or deed sexual practices that are in contradiction to the teaching of Scripture and Resolution 1.10 of the 1998 Lambeth Conference, unless they have repented of their actions and reversed their decisions. In the event that this does not occur the Bishops of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) unanimously resolved that they will decline any invitation to attend Lambeth 2020 and all other meetings of the Instruments of the Communion.

And now, Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth! The LORD of hosts is with us; The God of Jacob is our refuge (Ps. 46:10-11).



Venerable Dr. Gershinen Paul Dajur,  
General Secretary, Church of Nigeria



The Most Rev'd Dr. Ali Buba Lamido  
Dean, Church of Nigeria



The Most Rev'd Dr. Nicholas D. Okoh,  
Archbishop, Metropolitan and Primate of All Nigeria &  
Chairman, GAFCON Primates' Council



## CHURCH OF NIGERIA (Anglican Communion)

THE MOST REV'D NICHOLAS D. OKOHO, MA, FSS, MSS, LLD, DD  
Archbishop, Metropolitan and Primate of All Nigeria

### PASTORAL LETTER FROM THE STANDING COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE CHURCH OF NIGERIA (ANGLICAN COMMUNION) HELD FROM MONDAY, 17<sup>TH</sup> TO FRIDAY, 21<sup>ST</sup> SEPTEMBER, 2018, AT THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF ST. PETER, MINNA, NIGER STATE

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Greetings to you in the matchless name of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

The Standing Committee meeting of the Church of Nigeria, Anglican Communion, was held from Monday 17<sup>th</sup> to Friday 21<sup>st</sup> September, 2018, at the Cathedral Church of St. Peter, Minna, Niger State, on the theme, "God, our Refuge and Strength." (Ps 46:1).

We are not unaware of the present sufferings of our people with many losing their faith; we are, however, reassured by the Psalmist that in the midst of fears and uncertainties, God is our refuge and strength. While some place their trust in 'chariots and horses', the infallible word of God continually guarantees us that those who put their trust in the Lord, will never be put to shame (Ps 20:7; 1 Pet 2:6). We are perfectly secured in Him, here on earth and in eternity where we shall enjoy uninhibited security and peace forever. In our battles against the enemies of the Church, may we be reminded of the words of our Lord Jesus; "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

We must endeavour to do all we can to avoid the distracting forces against the mission of the Church; holding firm to the Great Commission, which is preaching and teaching the word of God and making disciples of Jesus Christ. God is our refuge and strength!

We identify with our brothers and sisters who are affected by the negative impacts of climate changes around the world, especially in some parts of our country. While we continue to pray for protection of lives and property, we are advised to employ proactive measures that will minimize the level of sufferings we go through, especially during flood disaster. We call on the good people of our Church not to forget our tradition of relief contributions meant to cushion the effects of certain unforeseen circumstances that confront our people. Moreover, the Church should be involved in promoting

environmental hygiene, especially maintenance of sewage ways. Meanwhile Sunday, 28<sup>th</sup> October 2018 has been chosen for special relief offering in the Church of Nigeria, Anglican Communion. Please give generously.

As part of our commitment to the unity of the body of Christ, we implore you to continue to pray for Miss. Leah Sharibu, the other Chibok girls, and the remaining abductees of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) who are still in Boko Haram captivity. The God of Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego is alive!

The Global Anglican Future Conference (GAFCON) held in Jerusalem from 17<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2018, was a huge success. A total of 1,950 delegates comprising Bishops, Clergy and Laity from 50 countries, were in attendance. The theme was, "**Proclaiming Christ faithfully to the Nations**". It was a great time of word proclamation, fellowship and prayers. We give glory to God that all our delegates from Nigeria returned safely. We express our appreciation for your prayers and logistics supports for GAFCON 2018. We call for your prayers for the new leadership of this global movement, particularly, the new General Secretary, Most Rev. Benjamin Kwashi, and the deputy General Secretary for West Africa, the Rt. Rev. Henry Okeke.

Brethren, the Church of Nigeria is all the more committed to the only life-transforming gospel of Salvation, with Jesus Christ as the central message. We reiterate our resolve to Biblical orthodoxy, the uniqueness of Christ and His salvific work on the cross. We are delighted that the Standing Committee adopted the resolution of GAFCON 2018, not to attend the Lambeth Conference of 2020, and any other meeting involving the revisionists group until the disuniting issues are resolved. This church shall uncompromisingly proclaim Christ faithfully to the nations, and make committed disciples of Jesus Christ.

As the 2019 elections draw near, we urge you all to participate in this important civic exercise; wisely get involved in political activities, and ensure possession of Permanent Voter Card (PVC). As responsible citizens, we must resist every temptation to sell our votes, so as not to make mockery of our conscience and our democracy. Above all, we must pray fervently for the elections, before, during and after the exercise. In view of this, Monday 1<sup>st</sup> to Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> October, 2018 have been declared by Church of Nigeria, fasting and prayer days for Nigeria. We urged all Anglican faithful to participate in this clarion call.

The Church of Nigeria Secretariat which foundation was laid on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2015, is nearing completion. We are hoping that it will be dedicated before the end of year 2018. We thank all the Bishops, Clergy and Laity of our Church for our commitment to this three-year project, using the Advent collections, and pray for God's blessings upon you all. The Advent collection of 2018 will be used to immortalize Bishop Ajayi Crowther through the development of a mission center in Ajayi Crowther Diocese, Oyo State.

The mission of the Convocation of Anglicans in North America (CANA) is encouraging, as the congregations keep growing in faith and in membership. We call for more prayers for CANA Bishops and Clergy that God's work in their hands will never suffer any setback for lack of finances and dedicated human resources.

The 2018 Divine Common Wealth Conference (DIVCCON) which holds from Monday, 12<sup>th</sup> to Friday, 16<sup>th</sup> November 2018, at the National Christian Centre, Abuja, promises to be impactful. The theme is, 'I will Restore' (Joel 2:25). Again, we shall expect our spiritual fathers and our members in unlimited numbers.

We congratulate all our members who received the favour of God in various ways. We rejoice with them and their families, as we condole with those who were bereaved within the year. May the God of all comfort, abide with them in the hope of resurrection in Christ Jesus.

It is with a grateful heart that we thank the Archbishop of Lokoja province, the Most Rev. Emmanuel Egbutu and his dear wife, Abiodun, the Bishop of Minna Diocese, the Rt. Rev. Daniel Yisa and his beloved wife, Alice, other Bishops of the province of Lokoja and their wives, the clergy and their wives, the hard working Local Organizing Committee (LOC) under the able Chairmanship of Barr. Dr. Abraham Yisa, MON, and the entire laity of the Province, for their selfless services in the hosting of the Standing Committee. May the Almighty God bless and reward them all.

In conclusion, be reminded that God is the only source of help and refuge in times of trouble. As we look unto Him for various interventions in our situations, we should remain faithful in our mission as a Church, even as we wait for the glorious coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

May the peace of God which passes all understanding keep you all now and always.  
Amen.

Yours always in Jesus Christ,



**The Most Rev'd Dr. Nicholas D. Okoh,  
Archbishop, Metropolitan and Primate of All Nigeria &  
Chairman, GAFCON Primates' Council**



## Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion)

# **COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AT THE END OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE CHURCH OF NIGERIA(ANGLICAN CHURCH) HELD AT ST ANDREW'S CATHEDRAL CHURCH, WARRI, DELTA STATE, FROM MONDAY 4TH - 8TH FEBRUARY, 2019.**

**COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AT THE END OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE  
MEETING OF THE CHURCH OF NIGERIA(ANGLICAN CHURCH) HELD AT  
ST ANDREW'S CATHEDRAL CHURCH, WARRI, DELTA STATE, FROM  
MONDAY 4TH - 8TH FEBRUARY, 2019.**

### **PREAMBLE**

The Standing Committee of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) held at St Andrew's Cathedral Church, Warri, Delta State, in the Diocese of Warri, Province of Bendel, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and presided over by the Most Revd Dr Nicholas D. Okoh, Archbishop, Metropolitan and Primate of the Church of Nigeria. In attendance were his wife, Mrs Nkasiobi Okoh, the President of the Women's Organisations; the Dean of the Church of Nigeria, The Most Revd Dr Ali Buba Lamido, 135 Bishops, 120 Clergymen, 89 members of the House of Laity and delegates of the Mothers' Union. It welcomed many guests including the Executive Governor of Delta State and his wife, His Excellency, Senator Dr Ifeanyi Okowa and Dame Edith Okowa, His Excellency, Mr Peter Obi, former Governor of Anambra State, Chief Great Ogoro, Senator Ovie Omoagege, the representative of the Chairman, Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), Dr Muhammed Lecky, and traditional rulers from the region.

### **THEME**

The theme of the meeting was *The Lord is My Shepherd*, taken from Psalm 23, a popular psalm that is well known to Christians all over the world, and which many Christians learn to recite from childhood. The Psalmist encourages all to see the Lord God as the faithful shepherd who provides, protects and delivers his flock even from the valley of

the shadow of death. Mindful of God's unfailing loving kindness demonstrated in Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd, who does not slumber or sleep, but rather cares for his own to the point of giving his life for all; the Standing Committee therefore calls on all to trust God in spite of the tension and palpable fear that have permeated the whole land. The Standing Committee calls on political and secular shepherds to be faithful in their respective callings to protect and care for those over whom they are placed as shepherds.

## **INSECURITY**

The Standing Committee notes with utmost concern the lingering state of insecurity in our country characterized by unprovoked attacks, kidnappings by armed bandits who exploit the ordinary citizens for their clandestine and illicit acts. It notes with curious relief the present state of near-absence of the herdsmen menace, praying that this will be a permanent and genuine closure to such troubles, even after the elections.

It further reminds the Federal Government of the agony that the continued captivity of Leah Sharibu has inflicted on her immediate family and the wider society, and urges it not to relent in its efforts to rescue her, the remaining Chibok girls and others in similar captivity of the Boko Haram Islamic sect unhurt. It calls on the Federal and State Governments to, as a matter of urgency, increase their efforts in restoring permanent peace in any troubled areas of the country. Security is a primary task of government that it must not fail in.

## **MINIMUM WAGE**

The Standing Committee commends the Federal Government for the increment in Workers' Minimum Wage, particularly for the House of Representatives' passage of the N30,000 minimum wage Bill. It calls on the concerned parties to settle issues relating to this in due course. Above all, it calls on the Federal Government to deal with matters that will lead to the revival of the economy, to increase stability and fund generation, as a permanent and more realistic solution to the agitation for wage increase. This will make for the eventual payment of reasonable living wage to Nigerian workers, which is the desire of all.

## **ASUU STRIKE**

The Standing Committee notes with dismay the lingering crisis in our tertiary education sector that results in incessant industrial actions by the members of the Academic Staff Union of Universities with its attendant negative implications on our teeming-youth. There is an

urgent need for all concerned, especially the Federal Government to find a lasting solution to this menace, so that our already struggling education system will not crumble. It appeals to the Government to deal with this issue, especially by making appropriate provision in the budget in line with international convention.

## **RELIGIOUS FREEDOM**

The Church appreciates the constitutional provision for freedom of religion and association. It strongly appeals that the multi-religious nature of the country be preserved, and that no subtle attempt or effort is allowed to circumvent it. Rather, religious freedom should be guaranteed at all levels. It further urges politicians to make a commitment to this in their campaigns.

## **2019 GENERAL ELECTIONS**

As the General Elections draw near, the Church commits itself to continued prayers for peaceful and violence-free elections at all levels. It strongly urges politicians not to compromise the integrity of the elections through hate speeches or acts, or by offering any form of inducement towards vote-buying. It calls on all eligible voters to be guided by clear and good conscience and not involve in vote-selling or any act of political thuggery that could spell doom for the country. While urging politicians to play by the rules, it calls on INEC to maintain the position of an unbiased umpire that it is expected to be. Security agents are also called upon to maintain neutrality in the discharge of their constitutional duties.

## **JUDICIARY**

The Church expresses great worry about the current situation that is confronting the Judiciary. While it frowns at any form of corruption at all levels, it calls on the Federal Government and all concerned to follow appropriately the rule of law in dealing with matters affecting the judiciary and any arm of Government. It further calls on the Federal Government not to be selective in obeying court orders so that the sanctity of our judiciary can be preserved

## **FELICITATION**

The Standing Committee gives thanks to God on behalf of the Vice President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Prof Yemi Osinbajo, for averting the disaster of a potentially fatal air crash, and pray for God to continue to protect all our leaders in their travels. It further calls on

the aviation industry to give utmost attention to prompt and regular maintenance of all air craft to ensure safety of all air passengers.

## **ACNA and CANA**

The Church of Nigeria remains committed to the Anglican Church in North America (ACNA) and its mission through the Convocation of Anglican Churches in North America (CANA). The role of the Church of Nigeria in advancing the ministry of the gospel and in upholding orthodoxy in both teaching and practice in the Anglican Communion remains a matter of utmost importance. It pledges therefore its continued prayers and support to CANA and ACNA for this joint mission.

## **CONCLUSION**

Finally, the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) expresses its confidence in the Lord God Almighty as the Shepherd who will provide, protect and deliver Nigeria from every form of evil, and therefore calls on all not to fear. *The Lord is my Shepherd I shall not want...Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I shall fear no evil because you are with me; your rod and your staff they comfort me (Ps.23:1, 4).*

Venerable Dr. Gershinen Paul Dajur,  
General Secretary, Church of Nigeria

The Most Rev'd Dr. Ali Buba Idris  
Dean, Church of Nigeria

The Most Rev'd Dr. Nicholas D. Okoh,  
Archbishop, Metropolitan and Primate of All Nigeria &  
Chairman, GAFCON Primates' Council