

**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, 15TH AUGUST, 2020

AT THE

SECOND SESSION OF THE FOURTH SYNOD

HOLDING AT

**ST. MATTHIAS' ANGLICAN CHURCH,
ATALI DISTRICT
(Trinity Archdeaconry)**

Synod Theme

“Stronger and Better Together”

(Ps. 133; 1Cor. 12:14; Eccls. 4:9-12)

BISHOP'S PICTURE

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 intended and shaped all redeemed mankind to be united in one Body, of which Your Son, Jesus Christ is head; we thank You for bringing us together in this Synod amidst the challenges arising from the menace of the global coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. We thank You for preserving our lives with several others across the world. We share in the pains and griefs of families who must have lost their loved ones to this crisis. We pray that you console and grant them the comfort of Your Holy Spirit in this time of distress.

As we assemble as a Diocesan Community in this Synod, grant that we and the rest of Your Church on earth might be truly one family, united in loyalty to You and service to all mankind, just as You are united with Your Son and the Holy Spirit in Your mission of redemption of the whole world.

Inspire, we pray you, our fellowship in this Diocese of Evo, with the Spirit of love and sacrifice, that we may be true to You and to one another, that at the end of this synod we shall return to our various ministry posts stronger and better in our service together. This we pray in the mighty name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

All: Amen.

GREETINGS AND PROTOCOLS

“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ” (Eph. 1:3).

Your Excellency, The Executive Governor of Rivers State, Chief Barr. Ezebunwo Nyesom Wike, CON, GSSRS;

Your Graces, the Archbishops and my Lord Bishops here present or represented;

My Lord, The Bishop of the Diocese of Ijebu South-West, The Rt. Rev. Dr. Babatunde F. R. Ogunbanwo, FICT, FALI, JP, our Bible Study leader.

Our visiting Archdeacon and speaker, The Ven. Dr. Christian Iwuagu-Amatu. Vicar, St. Mary’s Church, Hamotsworth, London, and other resource persons.

The Executive Chairman of Obio/Akpor Local Government Area, Hon. Solomon Abel Eke and members of your Executive Council,

Other Government functionaries and Guests of Honour,

The Diocesan Registrar, Sir Barr. Nlerum S. Amadi & all other Legal Officers of the Diocese,

The President of the Diocesan Mothers’ Union & Women’s Guild, Mrs. Chinyere U. Ordu, JP (Mama Evo),

Venerable Archdeacons and their wives,

Invited heads of churches in Rivers State here present or represented,

Our brethren of the House of Clergy, Church Teachers with your wives,

Our highly revered Royal Fathers, Community Chiefs and Elders here present, especially HRH, Eze Sir T. O. A. Ejekwu, JP and members of your Council of Chiefs,

The President, Sir Engr. Sunny Worlu, the Executive Committee and members of the Diocesan Christian Men’s Fellowship (DCMF) – the 2020 Diocesan Synod Chief Launcher,

The President and members of the Diocesan Council of Knights and their Ladies,

The President and members of the Diocesan Lay Readers Association,

Our special Nominees and other distinguished delegates to the Synod,

Members of the Diocesan and Local Synod Planning Committees;

The President, executive and members of the Diocesan Anglican Youth Fellowship (AYF),

Members of the Fourth Estate of the Realm;

Our dear ladies and gentlemen;

With a heart full of gratitude to God, we welcome every one of you to this **Second Session of The Fourth Synod** of our Diocese of Evo holding here in

St. Matthias' Anglican Church, Atali District, Headquarters of Trinity Archdeaconry, hosts of this year's synod.

We are grateful to you for finding time out of your very crowded schedules to attend this year's Synod either as delegates, observers, invited guests or friends of the Diocese and more especially for your highly esteemed presence at this presentation of our Synod Address/Charge. Your coming here despite the challenges posed by the global pandemic of COVID-19 is of great encouragement to us and we wish to thank you very, very sincerely.

OUR SYNOD HOST

Trinity Archdeaconry

As part of our plans towards the rapid evangelization of every part of the Diocese, We, on Thursday, 20th September, 2012 at Church of The Holy Spirit, Elelenwo District now Paraclete Deanery, and on Friday, 28th December, 2012 at St. Philip's Church, Oro-igwe District proposed to the Diocesan Board the creation of the **Trinity Missionary Archdeaconry** to be made up of churches in Atali (St. Matthias' and Great Physician); Pipeline Community in Rumuokwurusi (Church of The Epiphany, Holy City Anglican Church and Bethany Anglican Church), New Covenant Church, Eliminigwe – Elelenwo and the Anglican Church of the Pentecost, Rumuogba. Furthermore, we announced to the Board that these churches would be expected to work hard to become a full-fledged Archdeaconry within 5 years and that thereafter, New Covenant Church, Eliminigwe and Anglican Church of Pentecost, Rumuogba Parishes would be pulled out to join

the Archdeaonries closest to their locations. It seven years now, and by virtue of our recent creation of new Administrative Blocs, New Covenant, Eliminigwe Parish will join the new Elelenwo Archdeaconry soon to take-off, while Anglican Church of the Pentecost, Rumuogba Parish will as from 1st September, join the Okporo/Rumuogba Archdeaconry which has already taken-off since 1st March this year.

On Monday, 18th February, 2013 at its emergency Meeting held at the All Saints' Cathedral, Rumuokwurusi, the Diocesan Board formally ratified our proposal and consequently created the Trinity Missionary Archdeaconry with St. Matthias' Church, Atali Parish as the Headquarters of the new Archdeaconry.

The new Archdeaconry was inaugurated on St. Matthias' Day, Sunday, 24th February, 2013 with The Rev. Canon Chimaobi Nwachukwu as the Supervisor. On that occasion we charged the clergy and laity of the new Archdeaconry to work in partnership with the Diocesan Missions, Evangelism and Church Planting Board to plant more churches within the vast Atali and Pipeline areas covered by the new Archdeaconry. Sadly, this charge is far from being kept as only two new congregations – the Anglican Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary and Christus Victor have been planted within the Archdeaconry since then. This would simply mean that successive sets of clergymen posted to this Archdeaconry with the Archdeaconry Board did not buy into our vision. This Archdeaconry covers vast areas already developed and still developing without the Anglican Church presence. There is urgent need for the Trinity Archdeaconry Board, Church Councils, Mission and Evangelism Committees within the Archdeaconry in partnership with their serving priests to prioritize this matter, take advantage of the opportunities that abound within the area, and raise congregations NOW before it becomes too late.

Being a relatively young Archdeaconry, only three priests including the present Archdeacon, The Ven. Charles Mordi have so far served here as administrators. The first was The Rev. Canon (now Venerable) Chimaobi Nwachukwu who pioneered the Archdeaconry as Supervisor from 2013 to 2014, followed by The Ven. Alex Usifoh as Archdeacon from 2014 to 2018.

SYNOD VENUE

ST. MATTHIAS' ANGLICAN CHURCH, ATALI DISTRICT

The Anglican Church in Atali started in 1920 by the efforts and inspiration of **Abraham Tasie, Jacob Tasie, Owhonda Wokiriki** and **Sampson Ejekwu**, all of the blessed memory. **Owhonda Wokiriki** donated his hut (*obiri*) which became the Worship Centre. The *obiri* was commissioned a worship centre and christened **Saint Matthias' Church, Atali** by the **Late Garic, the Agent at that time**. The pioneer worshippers were baptized in the same takeoff year.

When the hut (*obiri*) donated by **Owhonda Wokiriki** could no longer accommodate the growing number of worshippers, the need for a more spacious accommodation arose; hence the Rumukamalu family of Atali donated the present permanent site of the church upon which a mud church building was erected. Shortly after this, the brethren of Elingbu community who were worshipping at the All Saints' Church, Rumuokwurusi withdrew from there and joined **St. Matthias' Church, Atali**.

In the year 1924, worshippers from both communities (Atali and Elingbu) agreed that the church now under the spiritual oversight of **Church Agent Omordu**, be renamed **St. Matthias' Anglican Church, Atalimbu**, thus incorporating their both names in its location.

In November 1965, the construction of a concrete church building was started. It was completed in May 1967 and dedicated on Saturday, 1st July, 1967 by the then Bishop of the Niger Delta Diocese, **The Rt. Reverend R.N. Bara-Hart** of blessed memory.

However, in their quest for autonomy, the Elingbu brethren, on 24th January, 1988 withdrew their membership of **Matthias' Church, Atalimbu**. This abrupt pullout was not opposed by Atali Community as it was considered favourable to the growth of the Anglican Communion and also as it would encourage evangelism at Elingbu community. Following this breakaway, the church reverted to its original name of **Saint Matthias' Church, Atali**.

Parish Status

On 24th January, 1994 and under the leadership of Reverend **M. O. Ejiowhor**, the church requested for a Parish Status. This request was graciously approved by the **Niger Delta Diocesan Board**. The Parish status took effect on 1st January 1995, but formal inauguration took place on Saturday, November 8, 1997 with the then Bishop, The Rt. Rev. Samuel O. Elenwo, JP presiding. On that same occasion, the children's chapel which was built by Eze T. O. A. Ejekwu, KSC was dedicated by His Lordship with The Rev. E. C. Mgbeahuruike as Vicar.

The Present Church Auditorium

Under the leadership and guidance of The **Venerable Gershon Wonodi** the foundation of the present church building was laid by **The Rt. Rev. Ignatius C.O. Kattey, JP, Bishop of The Diocese of Niger Delta North**, on Saturday, 1st March, 2003. On completion of construction of the church auditorium, We, **The Rt. Rev Innocent Uchechukwu Ordu, Bishop of the Diocese of Edo** dedicated the building to God on Sunday, 12th February, 2012.

**Ministers Who Have Served in St. Matthias' Church,
Atali from Inception to Date**

1. Mr. Garic	(now late)	Agent
2. Mr. Kamalu	(now late)	Agent
3. Mr. Wilfred	(now late)	Agent
4. Mr. Rufus Ogudire	(now late)	Agent
5. Mr. Wonucha Okene	(now late)	Agent
6. Mr. Omordu	(now late)	Agent
7. Mr. Y. A. Fubara	(now late)	He rose to become the Bishop of Niger Delta Diocese
8. Mr. Nwankwo	(now late)	Agent
9. Mr. Kanwi	(now late)	Agent
10. Mr. I.A Chezu	(now late)	Agent
11. Mr. J.C. Azubuike	(now late)	Catechist
12. Mr. Woko	(now late)	Catechist
13. Mr. J.W. Epele	(now late)	Catechist
14. Mr. G.O Nwachukwu	(now late)	Catechist
15. Mr. W.I Olaka	(now late)	Catechist
16. Mr. J.I Ogbu	(now late)	Catechist
17. Mr. D.E Onunka	(now late)	Catechist
18. Rev. M.O Ejiowhor	(now late)	(First Priest) 1993-1997
19. Rev. E.C Mgbeahuriuke	(now Ven)	Vicar, 1997-2001
20. Rev. Gershon Wonodi	(now Rtd. Ven)	Vicar, 2001-2007

Ord. Festus Osarojiji and Ord, John Nkuene. (Both later became
training and Deacons after
ordination)

21. Rev. Chris Iwuji	(now Ven)	Vicar, 2007-April 2007.
22. Rev. Canon Leonard Nwachukwu	(now late).	Vicar, 2007- 2010 he later became a Canon

23. Rev Samuel Obialor	(now Canon)	Curate, 2007-2010
24. Rev. John Chinda		Vicar, 2010- 2011
25. Ven. Azubuike Ugoha		Vicar, 2011-2012
26. Mr. Ezeigbo Maduakolam,		Church Teacher
27. Rev. Ahamefule Olluor	(Now Canon)	Vicar, 2013-2014
28. Ven. Alex Usifoh		2015-2018
29. Rev. Favour Iroegbulem		Curate, 2014-2016
30. Rev. Charles Ibeh		Curate 2016-2020
31. Ven. Charles Obi Mordi		April 2018 to date
32. Rev. Uchechukwu Chinda		Priest, February, 2019-February, 2020
33. Rev. Moses Anyaefena		Curate, February, 2020
		to date

CHURCH OF THE EPIPHANY, AZUMINI, RUMUOKWURUSI PARISH

- The Anglican Church of The Epiphany, Azumini, Rumuokwurusi was planted at the Azumini market square on Sunday, 26th October, 2003 by The All Saints' (Ang.) Church, Rumuokwurusi (now All Saints' Cathedral) during the tenure of The Ven. F.N. Akah, JP as Vicar. Services continued at the market square for a while until Mr. Odinigwe Mokelu (now late), a member of the mother Church (All Saints') offered his plots of land as a temporary place of worship before the acquisition of the present and permanent site.
- The Church was managed by Lay-readers and Clergy from All Saints' Church in turns until 1st January, 2004 when two missionaries, Messrs.' Gospel Onuchukwu (now Rev. Canon) and Solomon Amadi were engaged to offer spiritual leadership and administrative assistance to the church, on behalf of the Vicar.
- On Sunday, 6th June, 2004, the Church moved to her permanent site of worship.
- The Church, formerly known as *House of Faith* was later christened ***Church of the Epiphany, Azumini, Rumuokwurusi***, on 24th December, 2004 during the foundation stone laying service by The Rt. Rev.

I. C. O. Kattey (JP), Bishop of our residual Diocese of Niger Delta North (now Retired Archbishop of the Niger Delta Province).

- We, The Rt. Rev. Innocent U. Ordu, JP, Bishop of the Diocese of Edo inaugurated it a Parish on Sunday, 23rd January, 2011.

NEW COVENANT ANGLICAN CHURCH, ELIMINIGWE ESTATE PARISH, ELELENWO

- In the 2004 Synod of the Niger Delta North Diocese, the Bishop, The Rt. Rev (now retired Most Rev.) I. C. O. Kattey, charged the Churches in the Diocese to plant new ones. This led to the resolution of St. Mark's Anglican Church Elelenwo Deanery led by the then Rector, Ven. Innocent U. Ordu (now Bishop, Diocese of Edo) to inaugurate a 5-man Committee on the 14th of June 2005 to secure a site for the proposed Church. When securing a site became difficult the Mission/Outreach Committee of the Deanery approached the Great Anglican Revival Team (GART) for the use of their land at Eliminigwe Estate, Elelenwo as a temporary site for the new Church. GART's approval was secured in May 2006.
- Under our leadership as the Rector of St. Mark's Church, Elelenwo Deanery, a four-day Church Planting Crusade was held from Thursday, 20th to Sunday, 23rd July, 2006 with Evang. (now Rev.) Romanus Onyegbula and myself ministering alongside other speakers. Thus, Sunday, 23rd July, 2006 marked the formal take off of the new church.
- The Rev. Samson Abada (now Canon) was the Supervising Priest at its inception.
- The church was christened "New Covenant Anglican Church, Eliminigwe" on 14th September, 2008 by the Bishop of Niger Delta North Diocese, The Rt. Rev. I. C. O. Kattey, JP. The Rev. Ugochukwu Nwahaghi was the Supervising Priest then.
- We, The Rt. Rev. Innocent U. Ordu (Justice of The Peace), Bishop of Edo, laid the foundation stone of the present/new church building on Sunday, 31st October, 2010 with The Ven. F.N. Akah as the Rector of Elelenwo Deanery and The Rev. Benjamin Roland (now Canon) as the Supervising Priest.
- This new church building was dedicated on Saturday, 28th July, 2012 and the station inaugurated a Parish church the following day, Sunday, 29th. The Rev. Chukwuma Anukem was the Vicar.

- We, The Rt. Rev. Innocent U. Ordu (Justice of The Peace), Bishop of Edo also laid the foundation stone of the present/new vicarage building on Sunday, 14th April, 2013 and dedicated it with the security post and church fence/gate on Saturday, 31st October, 2015. The Rev. Chukwuma Anukem was also the Vicar then.

ANGLICAN CHURCH OF PENTECOST, RUMUOGBA PARISH

The Anglican Church of Pentecost, Rumuogba Parish started as a Home Fellowship established by St. Andrew's Church, Rumuobiokani, in the house of Mr. & Mrs. Ike Egbunu at No. 102 Old Aba Road, Rumugoba, (the building adjacent Obio Customary Court) with Bro. Alozie Iheanacho as teacher and assisted by Sir Godfrey Nnamdi Ohuabunwa.

With increase in membership, the then Vicar of St. Andrew's, Rumuobiokani, The Rev. Canon Innocent U. Ordu (now Rt. Rev.) established a new Centre in the house of **Hon. & Mrs. George Nnah** with Mrs. Tina Ohuabunwa (now Lady) as the centre teacher.

The above two House Fellowship Centres later evolved into the Anglican Worship Centre, Rumuogba during the tenure of The Rev. Ebenezer Eleazu (now Venerable) as Vicar. A 3-day crusade organized by the missions department of St. Andrew's, Rumuobiokani led by Sir Godfrey Nnamdi Ohuabunwa which held from 3rd to 5th February, 2002 preceded the takeoff of the new worship centre on Sunday, 6th February, 2002 at the residence of Hon. & Mrs. George Nnah.

Purchase of the Church Land

With the membership of the church rising from about 33 persons at takeoff to approximately 120 persons the need for a more permanent place of worship became exigent. The initial effort made by St. Andrew's church to secure a land at a borrow pit behind First Bank, along Port Harcourt Aba Express-way proved abortive.

The Church under Evang. Chukwuemeka Chiana as Church Teacher was to later with the assistance of St. Andrew's Church, Rumuobiokani purchase an existing structure (a Church building) located on a 467.55 SQ. M piece of land at **No 5 Gotheg Avenue, Rumougba** from one **Rev. Steve Ifeanyi Nwanwa** whose landlord was **Late Mr Christopher Nna**.

In order to create more space for expansion and give the church a befitting Anglican outlook, **Engr. & Mrs Enwuzurike Nna** adjusted their fence wall (freely giving up a portion of their land to accommodate the present church building).

The foundation stone was laid and the church christened on the **26th April, 2008** by The Rt. Rev. Ignatius C.O. Kattey JP (now The Most Rev. Ignatius C.O. Kattey JP, Retired).

Dedication of Church Building and Parish Inauguration

The present new church building was completed and We, The Rt. Rev. Innocent U. Ordu, JP, dedicated it on Sunday, 25th August, 2013 and also inaugurated the station as a Parish church the same day. The Rev. Canon Gospel Onuchuku was the Vicar at the time.

Purchase of Land/ Building and Dedication of Parsonage

The present location where the parsonage is built was bought at the cost of Three million naira (#3,000,000) during the Vicarship of The Rev. Gospel Onuchuku (now Canon). We laid the foundation stone on Friday, 15th May, 2015 during the tenure of The Rev. Raymond Osakwe, and dedicated the project on Sunday, 27th August, 2017 during the time of The Rev. Canon Godfrey Onyemelukwe.

Past Missioners and Pastors

A good number of Clergy and lay ministers have so far pastured this congregation from its inception to date.

They include:

1. Ord. Michael Mba (now late Rev. Michael Mba); April May 2002
2. Evang. Chukwudi Evans Theophilus (now Rev. Chukwudi Evans Theophilus); June 2002 - February 2003.
3. Evang. Odinaka Okereke (now Rev. Odinaka Okereke); 2002 – February 2003.
4. Evang. Ngofa H.B MacPepple (now Rev. Ngofa H.B MacPepple); February 2003 - January 2005.
5. Evang. Collins Daniel (now Rev.), part time Missionary Assistant; 2004.
6. Evang. Isaiah Orji; January 2007.
7. Evang. Chukwuemeka Chiana; January 2007 – 2009.
8. Rev. Favour Iroegbulam; January 2009 - January 2010.
9. Rev. Can. Olufemi Igbamerun; January 2010 - January 2011.
10. Rev. Gospel Onuchuku; January 2011 - January 2015
11. Rev Raymond Osakwe; January 2015 – 5th February, 2016.
12. Rev Canon Godfrey Onyemelukwe; February 2016 – April 2018.
13. Rev. Canon Chimaobi Chieme; April 2018 -Date.

14. Ord. Dandison S.F. OKuru (Church Teacher now Rev.); April 2018 – February 2019.
15. Evang. Festus Uchechukwu O. Amamba (Church Teacher); 22nd February 2019 – date.

It is worthy to note that the ministry of each of these missionaries/Pastors impacted positively on the church in one way or the other and we pray that the good Lord will continue to prosper their ministries in Jesus name.

THE GREAT PHYSICIAN ANGLICAN CHURCH, VALLEY VIEW ESTATE, ATALI

In response to our charge made in 2010 to various churches across the Diocese to plant new ones for the speedy growth of the young Diocese, St. Matthias' Church, Atali under the leadership of The Reverend John Chinda took the challenge and planted a new church station. The first worship was in a rented temporary hall, on Sunday, 7th February, 2010. On Sunday, 19th December of that same year we christened it *The Great Physician Anglican Church, Atali*.

After the period of three months and two weeks the church moved to its present location at Valley View Estate, Atali on the 15th of March, 2015.

So far, the following ministers have served there from inception to date: Mr. Christian Taise (now Reverend), Evang. Moses Anyatonwu (now Reverend), Rev. Favour Iroegbulam, Evang. Chukwuemeka Obani, and presently – Rev. Anointed Onyeme.

HOLY CITY ANGLICAN CHURCH, PIPELINE, RUMUOKWURUSI

The Diocesan Lay Readers Association, under the leadership of the then Chairman, Elder (now Sir) Christian C. Obidi organized a three days crusade from Friday, 30th April to Sunday, 2nd of May, 2010 leading to the establishment of the Anglican Worship Centre, Pipeline, Rumuokwurusi. This was in response to our charge to the Diocesan Readers to plant a church.

The young church began worship in the facility of the Burden Bearers Ministry, off Igbo-Etche Road, Rumuokwurusi. The Lay readers were quite determined and committed to its growth.

The first church worker to be posted to this station was Brother Collins Daniel (now Rev.).

As the church gradually grew the need to relocate to a new place arose and the congregation moved temporarily to a rented space at Road 4, New Jerusalem, Pipeline, Rumuokwurusi.

On Sunday, 15th May, 2011 we christened the worship centre “**Holy City Anglican Church**”.

On Sunday, 10th February, 2013 the second church worker in the person Brother Uchechukwu Chinda (now Rev.) assumed charge of the station, taking over from Collins Daniel.

The church was to later move to its present and permanent site at No. 26/28 Chief Nwosu Street, Pipeline, Rumuokwursi on a two plots of land jointly purchased and paid for by members of the young congregation, the Lay Readers Association and the office of the Bishop.

In 2013 we directed The Chapel of Grace and Knowledge, ACMGS, Elelenwo to adopt the Holy City Anglican Church as her mission field in conjunction with the Diocesan Lay Readers Association.

Other ministers who have served the church are Rev. John Eze and currently, Rev. Frankincense Chukwuma.

The new parsonage building project started by the Diocesan Lay Readers Association is nearing completion. We commend the Lay Readers Association and urge them to hasten their efforts towards the finishing and dedication of the project.

On her part, the station has been able to put up two modest worship auditoria over these years for the adult and children congregations both of which were dedicated by us.

BETHANY ANGLICAN CHURCH, RUMUWORGUZOR, PIPELINE, RUMUOKWURUSI

Bethany Anglican Church, Rumuworguzor, Pipeline, Rumuokwursi was planted by the Missions Board of St. Andrew’s Church, Rumuobiokani Deanery with then Rev. Canon Charles Mordi as Deanery Supervisor and Sir Ama Hart as Chairman of the Mission Board in collaboration with the Women’s Ministry of the Deanery.

This was in keeping with our directive to bigger churches to plant new congregations in areas where the Anglican presence was lacking within the geographical boundaries of the Diocese. The then supervisor of St. Andrew’s Rev. Canon Charles O. Mordi Mobilized the Mission board led by Sir Ama Heart in collaboration with the women ministry of the Church to plant a church within Rumuworzor Community.

The planting of the Church was preceded with a - Day crusade held on Friday, 15th and Saturday, 16th April, 2010. The first Sunday service for the formal take off of the new church took place on Sunday, 17th April in a temporary structure vacated by one Christ Living Church. The said structure was eventually acquired by St. Andrew's and was rebuilt by Sir Ama Hart and family for the newly planted church. The New church made rapid progress considering the Level of support received from the mother church then.

On Sunday, 15th May, 2011 we Christened the station **Bethany Anglican Church Rumuworguzor, Pipeline, Rumuokwurusi.**

Evangelist Stella Ogbonna and Mr. Legbosi Emmanuel were the first set of church workers, followed by Rev. Raymond Osakwe, Rev. Reginald Chinweze, Mr. Chukwudi Edem and the current priest, Rev Uchechukwu Chinda.

ANGLICAN CHURCH OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY, ODANI GREEN CITY NEW LAYOUT, ELELENWO

The Anglican Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary was planted by The New Covenant Anglican Church, Eliminigwe Parish, Elelenwo with The Rev. Chukwuma Anukem as Vicar. Again, this was in response to our charge to churches to reproduce themselves.

The church began its official Sunday Service on Sunday 17th November, 2013 at the residence of Mr. and Mrs Peter Okegbe and afterward moved to a temporary rented site at No. 7 Owzor Close, Eliminigwe Housing Estate, Phase 4 on Sunday 27th April, 2014.

On Mothering Sunday, 26th March, 2017 we formally christened the station **Anglican Church of The Blessed Virgin Mary.**

On Sunday, 7th January, 2018 the Church moved again to its now permanent site at Odani Green City New Layout, off the Elelenwo/Elemo axis of the East-West Road.

Church Teacher Chinedu Opara was the first minister to serve in this station. He was succeeded by the current Supervising Priest, The Rev. Christian Tasie.

CHRISTUS VICTOR ANGLICAN CHURCH, OFF IGBO-ETCHE ROAD, RUMUOKWURUSI

The Christus Victor Anglican Church started as a Worship Centre at Ohiaowuru-Elili, off Igbo Etche Road, Rumuokwurusi on Sunday, 19th July, 2015 after a weekend crusade. It was the result of the then church planting endeavor of the Trinity Missionary Archdeaconry with The Ven. Alex Usifoh as Archdeacon.

On Easter Day, 1st April, 2018 we formally christened the Worship Centre as **Christus Victor Anglican Church.**

Mr. Success Bari who was sent to Trinity Missionary Archdeaconry by St. Andrew's Anglican Church, Rumuobiokani Deanery was posted to this station by the Archdeacon as the first Missionary. The Rev. Isaac Ezekpo, then Supervising Priest of Rose of Sharon, Atali also monitored the station as Archdeaconry Chaplain.

However, the missionary service of Mr. Success Bari at the station has since ended. In his place, the then Archdeacon, The Ven. Alex Usifoh assigned Evang. ThankGod Oluo to the station as Local Helper. Mr. Nnamdi Nwakekpe has also been serving there as a missionary assistant.

ROSE OF SHARON ANGLICAN CHURCH ENEKA/IGBO-ETCHE ROAD, ATALI

The Rose of Sharon Anglican Church, Atali was planted by the Diocesan Women's Ministries on a piece of land acquired by them in 2013 along Eneka/Igbo-Etche Road at the outskirts of Atali community.

On Monday, 28th July, 2014 we laid the foundation stone of the church and christened it "Rose of Sharon Anglican Church, Atali".

By the second quarter of 2016 work on the new church building by the women of the Diocese had reached finishing stages. Consequently formal Sunday services commenced at the church on Sunday, 1st May, 2016.

On Sunday, 17th July, 2016 the church building exclusively constructed by the women of the Diocese under the leadership of the Bishop's wife, Mrs. Chinyere U. Ordu, JP was formally dedicated by us.

At the synod of that year (2016) we formally ceded the station which had been under the Bishop's office to the Trinity Missionary Archdeaconry as one of her stations as well as the mission field of the Diocesan Women's Ministries. However, our office has since the church's inception been working out a monthly arrangement by which parishioners from the various administrative blocs and activity groups of the Diocese go there to worship in support of the young and growing congregation at the station.

We commend our Archdeacons, Rectors, other priests, and leaders of the various churches and groups for their sustained support in ensuring that worship services are regularly observed in that “wilderness” (yet to be fully developed) area.

The following ministers have served at various times in the church:

Rev. Uzoma Ezeokpo served as the pioneer Supervising Priest of the church from July 2016 to 1st April, 2018.

Ord. Henry Odu (now Reverend) served from August 2016 to 25th September, 2016 as an Ordinand.

3. Rev. Timothy Ahamefula S. Otuka is currently (since 8th April, 2018) serving as the Supervising Priest.

OUR SYNOD SPEAKERS

The Rt. Rev. Dr. Babatunde Ogunbanwo.

Bishop, Diocese of Ijebu South-West

Rt. Revd. Dr Babatunde Ogunbanwo is the Bishop of Ijebu South West. He was born in the Vicarage Fifty three years ago by Ven. and Mrs. Joseph Ogunbanwo at Odogbolu- Ijebu in Ogun State. He studied Agriculture at the then Oyo State college of Education, Ilesa before proceeding in 1988 to Immanuel College of Theology, Ibadan for the Ordination course. He was made Deacon in June 1993 and ordained Priest in June, 1994 by the first Bishop of Remo Diocese, Rt. Rev'd E.O.I Ogundana. He served in Remo Diocese from 1991 to 2009 rising through the ranks: Canon in 1999, Archdeacon in 2000, Provost in 2003. He was elected Bishop of Ijebu South West in October 2009, consecrated on January 10, 2010 and enthroned on 13th January, 2010. Bishop Ogunbanwo is a graduate of the University of Ibadan, Ibadan where he bagged both the Bachelors (B.A Hons) and Masters (M. A. Ethics) He recently bagged the Doctor of Ministry (DMin) degree from the Asbury Theological Seminary, Wilmore, Kentucky, USA specializing in Preaching and Leadership. Degrees. He bagged the Master of Philosophy (M. phil) from the Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago- Iwoye and the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D) from the University of KwaZulu -Natal, Pieter Marisburg, South Africa specializing in New Testament Ethics. He is widely travelled and involved in many international research initiatives on Contextual Bible Studies and Leadership. He is the co-ordinator and founder of the Emerging Leaders Programme. He is married to 'Olatundun' and they are blessed with wonderful children.

The Rt. Rev. Babatunde Ogunbanwo has been our Guest Bible study teacher/leader since Thursday. He will be taking the concluding part of the Bible study tomorrow morning as well as the sermon during the thanksgiving service.

We are immensely grateful to Bishop Ogunbanwo for accepting to come and minister to us at this Synod. We know it is a huge sacrifice on his part, and we greatly appreciate his coming. We pray that the good Lord will abundantly bless his ministry, family and the Diocese of Ijebu South-West under his episcopacy, in Jesus name-amen.

The Ven. Dr. Christian Iwuagu-Amatu
Vicar, St. Mary's Harmodsworth, London, UK

The Venerable Dr. Onundu Amatu Iheanyichukwu CHRISTIAN-IWUAGWU was born in Umuahia, Abia State at the Queen Elizabeth hospital (now FMC), and is the 3rd child and first son, of Mr. Christian Chukwunonyerem Iwuagwu (late), a lay Reader and former Director General in the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and Dame Letitia Chinenyenwa Iwuagwu, a retired Headmistress, both of the Holy Trinity Church, Obazu Ezi-Mbieri autonomous community in Mbaitoli LGA, Imo State. He obtained his First School Leaving Certificate with a Distinction from Mbieri Primary School, Obazu, and subsequently enrolled as one of the fourth set of students, at the Archdeacon Denis Junior Seminary (ADJS) in 1982. In his second year at the ADJS, he was appointed Staff Room Prefect by the then Principal of the Seminary, the Late Very Rev. Augustine Uchehara.

In 1986, the Ven. Onundu, having passed his WASC, as well as JAMB and College of Technology, (now Nekede Polytechnic) entrance examinations, in one sitting, proceeded for higher studies at COLTEC for three months (Mechanical Engineering), and then to the University of Port Harcourt to study Electrical/Electronics Engineering.

At the University of Port Harcourt, he was a pioneer member of the Anglican Chapel Choir as well as a hostel leader of the Students Christian Movement (SCM).

After his National Youth Service Corps at Wilbros Oil Servicing company, Port Harcourt, he was retained as Field Electrical Engineer, and later sent out of the Country by Wilbros for further education in Engineering. In 1996, he completed his Master of Science (M.SC) degree in Telematics from Middlesex University, London.

On the creation of the Diocese of Ideato in 1998, The Ven. Onundu was invited by the Pioneer Bishop, The Rt. Rev. Godson Chinyere Echefu to return for ordination. The Bishop also recommended him for ordination training at Trinity Theological College – Canterbury Christ Church University College (CCCU), now University, in Kent, United Kingdom. In the year 2000, he was among the pioneer deacons ordained in Diocese of Ideato; he was priested the following year. The Ven. Onundu was posted to St. Peter's Cathedral, Arondizogu to serve as Curate and subsequently seconded to the Parish church of St. Michael and All Angels, Stonebridge, in the Diocese of London for three years.

In 2003 and 2009, he was preferred a Canon and Archdeacon respectively by The Most Rev. Dr. C. A. Maduoma, incumbent Bishop, Diocese of Ideato (and now outgoing) Archbishop of the Ecclesiastical Province of Owerri who also appointed him Commissary of Ideato Diocese in the UK.

In 2004, he was appointed Associate Vicar of St. Mary's Welwyn, in the Diocese of St. Alban's before returning to Stonebridge as Vicar of St. Michael and All Angels in the Diocese of London. In 2007, he was installed Vicar of St. Mary's Church, Harmondsworth, in the Diocese of London, a position he holds until date. In 2010, he was appointed Archdeacon of the diaspora congregations in London, and Vicar of Anglican Igbo Church of the Holy Trinity, London.

He has been a resource person and preacher to several dioceses and provinces such as Diocese of Okigwe South, Ohaji/Egbema and Province of Owerri, etc. in 2011, The Ven. Onundu was invited by the former Primate, The Most Rev. Nicholas Okoh to source, prepare and present a business case upon which the now ACNN was born. He was thereafter appointed to serve on the ACNN management Board by the Primate, and directed to attend the Church of Nigeria Standing Committee Meetings from that year.

He is a pioneer and founding member of GAFCON, UK and was appointed in 2016 to serve as a member of GAFCON UK Panel of Reference. A member of Nigeria Chaplaincy UK Management Board, he also planted the first Anglican Igbo church of the Holy Trinity, London.

In the field of Engineering and Management, he was awarded of Chartered Engineer (CEng.) status by the UK Engineering Council (EU) and Chartered Manager (CMgr) status by the UK Chartered Management Institute (CMI). Over the years, he has also worked as Project Engineer, Project Manager, Management Consultant, Lead Technical Safety Engineer, Business Development Manager for several companies, including Shell, Aberdeen, ConocoPhillips Oil Company, British Telecoms, etc.

An author of several books and publications, The Ven. Onundu is married to Mrs. Princess Chinyere Christian Iwuagwu, a licensed Lay Reader, School Governor, Chartered Accountant, currently working as Chief Accountant at a Local Authority Council and the marriage is blessed with 5 children, (3 boys and 2 girls).

The Ven. Dr. Christian Iwuagwu – Amatu has been our guest preacher for the daily morning meditations on the theme of our Synod. He also delivered a Talk yesterday on “**Post Covid-19: Repositioning the Church for Optimal Performance and Growth**”. We are grateful to The Venerable for honouring our invitation, despite the challenges of this period. We pray that the Lord will continually bless his ministry, family and work, in Jesus name. Amen.

SYNOD THEME
“Stronger and Better Together”
(Ps. 133; 1 Cor. 12: 14; Eccls. 4: 9-12)

Introduction:

The unity of all Christians in the One Body of Christ is not an abstract ideal, remote from the unusual levels of ordinary life, but an essential and basic feature of practical (biblical) doctrine, postulating a basic understanding of human life and human purpose that directly affects our behavior and our attitudes to our fellow men.

From the Bible, we understand that redeemed mankind is united in one Body, of which Jesus Christ is its Redeemer and Head. By this, we imply therefore that God, the creator intended and shaped all men with the potential for that unity. He did not create men to be solitary creatures, living their lives in individualistic isolation of soul, destined to the despair of ultimate loneliness; rather, they have been created for God and for each other.

Notwithstanding this divine purpose and design, the Christian church throughout the centuries since the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the church has often had a difficult time in agreeing with each other. There are obviously numerous denominations and even many differences within the denominations. In the Anglican Communion for instance, we exist along National/Regional/Provincial Churches which are further subdivided into Dioceses and every Diocese strongly asserting its autonomy and independence even from the mother Provincial or regional church that gave it the right of existence in the first place. As if that is not enough, each Diocese is further

subdivided into Archdeaonries, Deaneries, Districts, Parishes and Church Stations.

These administrative structures were with good intent created for ease of governance and for more rapid growth of the bigger administrative units. In as much as we concede that this has to a very large extent been achieved, we are however to note here, that it has not been without so much undercurrent of resentment and negative parochial actions or policies towards the higher level of administration in the same National Church, Ecclesiastical Province, Diocese and so on. And so, in many places, you observe that a lower strata of a church denomination decides to move or swim below the surface current and in a different direction to it. Wherever/Whenever this happens, the strength of the larger body is diminished, tensions and weaknesses creep in to the overall detriment or disadvantage of everyone.

This brings us to a very important question. What could be the reason(s) for this dynamic in the Christian Church, whether amongst the various denominations or within a given denomination?

Sometimes things like church traditions, differing biblical interpretations, parochial concerns, sentiments and interests of a local congregation seem to stand in the way of unity. But what does the Bible say about unity? We shall discuss some of these causes later in this address!

Unity and Individuality

The Bible agrees with the fact that each man is a unique individual both by experience, biology and theology. But the assumption concerning man's nature that underlies the doctrine of the unity of the redeemed implies that man is much more than an individual. It insists that men, all men, are creatures intended and shaped for a unity that transcends their individuality. If this is true and if men do not attain the true unity for which they were made, then we may expect that they will seek and find a unity of sorts in substitute ways, and such, experience proves...

Having the local congregation in view, Paul carefully guards this dual aspect of man's being. In his separate epistles to the church in Rome and at Corinth, he declares: "So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members of one another" – Romans 12:5; "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular" – 1 Cor. 12:27.

Commenting on the first of these two passages, Karl Barth opined that Paul does not set forth individual human personalities as "partial" things comprehended in a larger whole, as so many cells, are united into one living organism, but rather

that the believers –men in relation to God –are therefore, in their full grown and in no way attenuated individuality, ONE BODY, ONE INDIVIDUAL in Christ.

They are not a mass of individuals, not even a corporation, a personified society, or a ‘totality’, but The Individual, The One, The New Man (1Cor. 12:12-13).

These two concepts, of unviolated individuality and of unfragmented unity, give us an important clue to the mode in which Christian unity is likely to express itself. What is true of the individual man and the One Body, is also true (if in a modified sense) of the individual congregation and of the One Body. As Alford comments on 1Cor. 12:27, ‘Each Church is said to be the body of Christ, as each is said to be the temple of God..., not that there are many bodies or many temples; but that each church is an image of the whole aggregate, a microcosm, having the same characteristics.

This dual insight into man’s individuality and designed unity is vital to Christianity, as it is vital to the health of the society in which we live. It denies to the extremes both of a totalitarianism which would submerge and suppress the individual, and of an individualism that might adopt the cry of Cain – ‘Am I my brother’s keeper?’...

From the wide horizons of Ephesians 4:4ff, Paul declares; “There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all...”.

Here Paul contemplates only one church, and it is scarcely too much to say that the Biblical doctrine of the church collapses without this truth. ‘Is Christ divided?’ Paul asked of the quarreling Corinthians (1 Cor. 1:13), and the question permits only one answer.

To state these facts in the face of the apparently divided state of Christianity today is to raise a question which must be the burden of any contemporary study of Christian unity. The visible church of Christ seems hopelessly divided: presenting different faces to the world in forms of worship, in doctrine, in church organization and government, and in testimony to the world.

In the language of our Synod theme, we can proffer answers to the question earlier asked: ‘what does the Bible say or teach about unity?’

Simply put, the Bible affirms that unity is good for all people and particularly, for the people of God. It posits further that as people of God, we are ‘stronger and better together’.

This is the inspiration we draw from the various texts chosen to back up our theme for this synod: “Stronger and Better Together”.

The first and main scripture is Psalm 133 which looks at unity as evidence of brotherly love. This Psalm was known in Latin as “Ecce quam banum”. Authored by David it focuses on the blessed unity of the people of God generally.

God's blessing involves unity among members of His family. In this poem, the Psalmist illustrated the sweet spirit of unity with the fragrant oil used to anoint the Priests and the life-giving dew of Mount Hermon. Such harmony within the family of God, particularly within the leadership of the church renews our energies as we share life with Him and with one another.

Our second text is found in the fourteenth verse of the twelfth chapter of Paul's first letter to the Corinthians: "For the body is not one member, but many". In this text, Paul likens the church-the collective name for all believers everywhere to a human body. Like a body, the church is one organism. Like a body, the church has many, diverse members who serve a variety of functions. A body is not made of up identical copies of just one part; a healthy body requires a diversity of forms and functions.

Paul began this discussion with an explanation of the supernatural gifts God's Holy Spirit distributes to every believer as He sees fit. Soon, Paul will identify each believer's part in the body of Christ by the gifts we have been given to use to serve the rest of the Church. Our gifts determine our function, and our function determines our part in the body of Christ. Every Christian has the Spirit and as a member of Christ's body has received a gift to use in service.

As each Christian cooperates with others in the exercise of their spiritual gifts the church is empowered.

Our third back up scriptural text is Ecclesiastes chapter 4 verses 9 to 12.

Two are better than one,
Because they have a good reward for their labor.
For if they fall, one will lift up his companion.
But woe to him who is alone when he falls,
For he has no one to help him up.
Again, if two lie down together, they will keep
warm;
But how can one be warm alone?
Though one may be overpowered by another, two
can withstand him.
And a threefold cord is not quickly broken.

The three 'if' clauses of this text show that Solomon is not simply stating that having two of something is better than having one. We all know this. Two hundred naira is better than one hundred. Two houses or cars are better than one. Solomon had hundreds of wives and concubines, lots of gold and several other possessions. In this passage, he is not speaking of the number of possessions or even number of people he had around him. He had these. However, in the midst of his pursuits, he found that he did not have quality

relationship with the few around him. This is what he missed despite the many projects he completed.

The 'two' speaks not just of a couple such as a married couple but of a relationship between individuals. Two is the minimum number needed for this relationship and it is used to describe what Solomon is speaking of. Solomon, essentially, was denouncing the value of getting what he wanted in life, with disregard of those around him. He, like many of us today, pursued his life rather than God's will.

In saying that "Two are better than one", Solomon is emphasizing the concept of team work. He is speaking of that synergy of spirit that happens when people are living with the same common purpose. The word 'synergy' is made up of two Greek words meaning 'work together, they are not living in that context for themselves but for the good of the whole.

Each individual needs not only to be committed to the joint task but to that of working with and valuing the contribution of others. Sometimes the pull of success helps people overcome their selfish goals, but the real attitudes needed to fuel a team is Christ's Spirit. The divine Godhead is the greatest team. God has brought this team concept, the synergy of spirit into two particular institutions that stand foundational for human civilization: marriage and the church.

What is the basis of our unity as Christians, members of the Body of Christ (The Church)?

Aristides, a second-century apologist for the Christian faith, wrote this to the Roman emperor Hadrian about believers in his day;

"They love one another. They never fail to help widows; they save orphans from those who would hurt them. If they have something, they give freely to the man who has nothing; if they see a stranger, they take him home, and are happy, as though he were a real brother. They don't consider themselves brothers in our usual sense, but brothers instead through the Spirit, in God".

As human beings, we all belong to the same family. Even though we are divided by all sorts of barriers and differences, "under the skin" we're the same. In his evangelistic address to a wholly pagan audience in Athens, Apostle Paul starts with this same fundamental conception of a wider human unity: 'And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed and the bounds of their habitation' – (Acts 17:26).

As believers in Jesus Christ, whatever our differences-denominations, preferences, worship styles, we are one spiritual Body that acknowledges the same heavenly Father:

‘There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, One faith, One baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all’ – Eph. 4:4-6.

The example of our spiritual forebears can be an instructive challenge to us as disciples of Jesus in the 21st century.

And so, unity among Christians comes from their union/identification with Christ. Unity in our diversity is the most effective witness to this sin-fractured world.

The next basis of our unity as Christians is the symbol of baptism (which in Romans 8, Paul explains as the enacted figure of identification with the crucifixion, death, burial and resurrection of Christ)! He writes ‘As many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ’. Here again, it is a vivid identification, a ‘clothing oneself’ with Christ. But, because this identification with Christ is shared by every believer, it becomes the making-one-in-Christ of every believer, ‘There is neither Jew or Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus – Gal. 3:27,28.

The third basis or expression of the same Christian unity, is the symbol of ‘One Loaf, One Body.’

“The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread” (1Cor. 10:16,17).

Baptism, as an act, was individual, this is communal, a sharing in the one loaf, and so the Eucharistic loaf, which is the body of Christ becomes the community of believers.

Lastly, in 1 Corinthians chapter 12, Paul identifies the Holy Spirit as the uniting power of the body, indeed, as the author of that unity and perhaps even as the very element in which our baptism takes place.

“By one Spirit we were all baptized into one body- Jews or Greeks, slaves or free-and all were made to drink of one Spirit” (1 Cor. 12:13).

According to Paul, we became members of the Body of Christ when we were born-again. The moment we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ we were baptized into the Body of Christ. At salvation we were placed into the Body of Christ by

ONE Spirit-we were removed from our position in Adam and positioned in the Body of Christ for by ONE Spirit we were all baptized into ONE body whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink from ONE Spirit.

It was on the day of Pentecost that the church was born. It was on that unique day that by ONE Spirit, all believers in the Upper Room were baptized into the Body of Christ. All were placed into Christ's Body by ONE Spirit-and throughout the Church dispensation the moment a sinner is saved by grace through faith he is removed from his position in Adam and baptized into the Body of Christ – by ONE Spirit.

Although we all have different gifts, graces, ministries and functions, there is no hierarchy of believers. God is no respecter of persons and in His eyes we all are equally important to the smooth functioning of the Body and we are all to work in obedience to Christ-the Head. There is no difference in status between believers. God does not differentiate between race or colour, gender or age, nationality or education, Jews or Greeks, slave or free for by ONE Spirit we were all baptized into ONE body, and we were all made to drink of ONE Spirit.

What a privilege it is to be a member of Christ's Body for we all equally partake of the same Spirit of God. We all have the same indwelling Holy Spirit, we all partake of the same spiritual benefits, we all have the same heavenly inheritance and we are all equally loved by the same Lord Jesus Christ.

Therefore, Be of The Same Mind: No Tug-of-War.

Given the above-listed basis for our unity as Christians, we cannot afford to convert the Church to the place for a tug-of-war. Tug-of-war is an intense but fun-filled competition involving two teams which train and prepare to pull together on their end of the rope to win the competition.

As believers in Jesus, we often face the challenge of learning how to pull together Self-interest, personal agendas, and power struggles as bishops, clergy, lay leaders and members of the Church often get in the way of genuine ministry and hinder the work of Christ. Such was the case in Paul's letter to the Philippians, where he had to plead with Euodia and Syntyche to "be of the same mind" (4:2).

The personal friction – a common experience with some key leaders of today's church-created a roadblock to their spiritual service, and their "tug-of-war" was harming the life of the church.

Paul's appeal was for them to pull together and work for the honour of the Master. It is an appeal that serves us as well today. When we feel distanced from our fellow believers, we must look for the common ground we have in our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

The Church is not a place for a tug-of-war. It is very important that we remind ourselves in this Synod that the Diocese of Evo is a part of that Church we are referring to, and that this Diocese was not created to provide anyone with the platform to promote any form of tug-of-war. Each member of this Diocese is called to share in the One body, One Spirit, One hope, One Lord, One faith, One baptism, and One God and Father (Ephesians 4:4-6) of us all with Christians from other denominations, Dioceses, Archdeaconries, Deaneries, Parishes, Stations, Activity groups, ethnic nationalities, etc. It is imperative that we work together in humility, gentleness, longsuffering, and loving forbearance (v.2) with as many as the Lord brings our individual and collective ways for the advancement of His Kingdom. God can use us in wonderful ways when we lay aside our personal differences and parochial attitudes and pull together on the rope.

The Evil One has used some persons in this Diocese within the last 10 years to cause disunity in a number of ways. This has greatly set us back. As a member of this Diocese and of the Body of Christ pray the Lord to reveal to you the way(s) you have caused disunity within the fold.

A believer, minister, church leader/worker at war with another Christian cannot be at peace with the Father.

We are a Band of Brothers and Sisters

- (1) "Be devoted to one another in brotherly love, give preference to one another in love" – Romans 12:10
- (2) "1 Thess.4:9-10."
- (3) "Psalm 133:1".

Of all Shakespeare's great plays, Henry V may rank as the most heroic. In one stirring scene, the English army stands fearfully before superior French troops. King Henry challenges his men to take heart. Because the battle will be fought on "the feast of Crispian", their victory will be remembered in its yearly celebration. The King tells his men "This day is called the feast of Crispian... We in it shall be remembered, we few, we happy few, we band of brothers."

Today, the US Marine Corps refers to itself as a "band of brothers". There is something about interdependence and personal sacrifice while under fire that binds people together in life.

Christians facing opposition or difficult times can also have such a bond. Paul wrote, "I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the affliction of Christ (Col. 1:24). As we complete Christ's work on earth and in diverse painful adversities, we share in His sufferings. Jesus suffered

for obeying the will of God, and so must we. But like Paul, we can find joy as we draw closer to our Lord and our band of brothers and sisters.

D. De Haan had this to say on this matter:

“Oh, how we need support in times of suffering and despair-upheld with love by saints of God who understand and care”.

Suffering can be a magnet that draws the Christian close to Christ and fellow Christians.

Built To Last

The church of God is made up of people with a variety of backgrounds, abilities, interests and needs and this makes uniting in a common purpose a not too easy process. The Bible pictures the Church as a building and each believer is a block in the building. Peter said that we, “as living stones, are being joined together” (Eph. 2:21) and “are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit (Eph. 2:22).

Christ is building His church, using our “different stones,” shaping us and assigning our places in the structure with a view to our becoming part of a strong, solid edifice. And so, we must let the Lord do His work among us. Every other ground or interest upon which we are standing to hinder genuine collaborative ministry will eventually crumble, but the church *which Christ has built and continues to build is sure to last*.

Principal Causes of Disunity in The Body of Christ

In discussing this, we remind ourselves of the point earlier made in this address that the visible church of Christ seems hopelessly divided today, presenting different faces to the world in forms of worship, doctrine, Church organization and government, even in testimony to the world. At this point we shall identify and discuss a few other causes of disunity in the Body of Christ:

1. Ethnic Prejudice

“For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition [*between us*]” (Eph. 2:14)

When Julius Caesar invaded the South East Coast of Britain in 55BC, he met resistance from warring Celtic tribes. But a century later, Roman control had extended all the way north into what is now Scotland.

The conquest took 30,000 Celtic lives, but the Roman victory was short-lived. Surviving clansmen soon began a fierce guerrilla campaign against

their occupiers. Soon in A.D. 122, Emperor Hadrian ordered a wall constructed to separate the romans from the barbarians to the north. Hadrian's Wall stands to this day.

In Jesus' day, a barrier stronger than Hadrian's wall stood between God's people and the Gentiles who were outside their spiritual community. It was the barrier of ethnic prejudice. God's design was to bless all the families of the earth through Abraham (Genesis 12:1-3; Isaiah 51:2). But instead of being a witness to the nations, Israel nurtured prejudice against the Gentiles.

Prejudice and racism remain with us today, even in the church. In this Diocese, some persons are quick to introduce or read ethnic interpretation into every action-whether it be on matters of administration, discipline, tithes/offering/donation/welfare, spirituality, policy decisions, physical development of the Diocese/church and the like.

Such attitudes do damage our witness of Christ's love for all people. Jesus laid down His life to redeem people from every tribe and nation. We must not only accept other people, we must love them as our brothers and sisters in Christ (Gal. 3:28-29; Rev. 5:9).

As believers, we share an enormous common ground with each other because we belong to an uncommon Christ. His love creates unity out of diversity. Every one of us should be willing to take the first step to understand fellow believers who are different from us or are from other cultures. No one should reject anyone whom God has accepted.

2. Unforgiveness

“For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you:” (Matthew 2:14).

Forgiveness is Christianity in action. The story is told of a small church which struggled over many things for a long period of time because of the conflict between two of its elderly members. Over time, the members divided their loyalties between the feuding elders, thus making any kind of progress impossible. They blatantly disregarded Jesus' instructions in Matthey 6:14 on forgiving others.

A new pastor came to the church and spent several weeks teaching about forgiveness and trust. For a while, the people stuck to their divided loyalties and continued to slog along in their stagnant pool of distrust. After much prayer, the pastor felt directed by the Lord to take action. So during a morning service, he called on the two men to stand and then asked them to forgive each other. He

knew that if the church were ever to have peace again, a strong confrontation had to occur.

The men faced off, paused, and then embraced. Tears ran down their faces as each begged the other for forgiveness. Forty-five minutes later, the crying and hugging and forgiving throughout the congregation finally stopped. The church was revitalized to serve together as a loving community for the glory of God.

Forgiveness is powerful! It brings a comforting calmness, with it, we can enjoy harmony with God's people; without it fellowship with God is broken; our hearts grow hard and cold and the mission of the church is weakened.

3. The Hunger For Power That Disrupts

“Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto,
but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many”
(Matthew 20:28).

What does it take to disrupt the good work of a church?

Just one power-hungry person. A Pastor wrote to his college friend about a disruption in his church. People had come to faith in Christ, and membership had quadrupled. The members were active in serving the church and community.

But then one man in a leadership position began to envy the pastor's influence. He felt he deserved more power, so he began to tear down the pastor-thinking that would increase his own stature. It didn't matter to him what he was doing to God's work; he wanted power and recognition. He caused such an uproar that the pastor finally had to resign.

When it comes to serving Christ, we have no right to seek power. We are not called for prestige. We have no reason to look for self-aggrandizement and recognition. How much better to serve quietly in the background, keeping in mind that Jesus, our example, “did not come to be served, but to serve” (Matt. 20:28).

Does this story of the prestige and glory-seeking leader and the disruption he caused in his local church bear some semblance to the activities of some persons in this Diocese? I leave you to reflect on the question.

Are you a clergyman? A Church teacher? A Knight? A Lay Reader? A Diocesan, Archdeaconry Board/Church Council member? A leader of any of the units of the Diocese/Church? A Church member? If you look for power, you may get it, but take heed that your thirst for power either now or in the years ahead do not disrupt the good work the church is called to do. We lose the approval of God when we seek the applause of men.

Towards the Conclusion

As we begin to draw this part of our address to a close the following legend, fable or story may serve us well as we try to understand what our theme, **“Stronger and Better Together”** means.

1. “Everybody is important and useful” (1 Cor. 12:14-26)

This legend is designed to help us know that nobody should be neglected whether in the family or in the church; for everybody is important.

A time came when the hands, feet, eyes, and teeth decided to go on strike. Their reason was that the bowel which they regarded as a lazy part of the body was doing nothing. They further said that his business was to enjoy the fruit of their labour from day to day.

All the above mentioned parts of the body decided to withdraw their services in order to see what the lazy bowel would eat. Because of their decision the eyes refused to show the way. The hand refused to prepare food. The feet also refused to move the body and finally the teeth decided not to grind anything again.

After three days, the eyes began to go inside, while the feet could no longer stand erect. The hand was so weak that it could hardly hold anything. As a result of weakness, the teeth could not smile again.

While this was going on, the bowel told them that he would continue to wait for them to bring food which he would digest and share among them. He further told them that if they failed to bring food, they would continue to starve since he would not see something to share.

The parts of the body mentioned above decided to call off the strike after three days when they finally discovered that the bowel, though hidden was doing an important work. As soon as they resumed work, and something went into the bowel, it was digested and shared among the whole parts of the body. As from that moment, all the parts of the body received strength and started to function again.

2. “United we Stand, but divided we fall”.

One day the fingers were arguing about which one among them was more important than the others. The first one claimed to be the most important because it was number one. The second finger claimed its own superiority over others just because it was the one that normally point at something. The third one claimed to be the most important hence it is at the centre having others as supporters. The fourth finger claimed to be the most important since all the wedding rings come to him. Finally, the fifth finger claimed to be the most important because the Bible says that the last will be the first.

While they were arguing, an angel came to them. Having learnt of the topic of their argument, he said to them, any of you who feels he is the most important, let him pick up this piece of paper on the ground without the help of another finger. They all tried, but it was in vain, for none of them could pick a piece of paper from the ground without the help of another. In this story, picking of the paper was possible the moment it was jointly done. Romans 12:5.

3. The Good sense of the grasshopper

One grasshopper seems insignificant as it leaps across the lawn. But when it joins forces with other grasshoppers, the resulting swarm can soon devour all the vegetation in its path.

Grasshoppers demonstrate the power of community. What they cannot do by themselves, they can accomplish together. In the Book of Proverbs, the Wise Man, Agur observed “The locusts have no king, yet they all advance in ranks” (30:27).

We can learn a lesson from these little creatures. Believers can make far greater advances for Christ’s cause when they act and pray together than they could ever make alone. When Christians are united in serving the Lord, they can become a mighty force for God.

Although the New Testament urges us to possess a personal faith in Jesus Christ, it says nothing at all about a private faith. We need other believers, and they too need us.

Let us enjoy the strength and fellowship available in the unified body of Christ. An effective church will reflect “the good sense of the grasshopper” by its love and unity in the Holy Spirit.

4. The Fable of the Porcupines:

The fable of the porcupines – large rodents with coats of sharp spines, or quills that protect them against predators, highlights the importance of staying together despite the hurts or pains we inflict on each other.

It was the coldest winter ever. Many animals died because of the cold.

The porcupines, realizing the situation, decided to group together to keep warm. This way they covered and protected themselves; but the quills of each one wounded their closest companions.

After a while, they decided to distance themselves one from the other and they began to die, alone and frozen. So they had to make a choice...either accept the quills of their companions or disappear from the earth. Wisely, they decided to go back to being together.

They learned to live with the little wounds and pains caused by the close relationship with their companions in order to receive the warmth and heat that came from the others. This way they were able to survive.

The moral here is that the best group is not the one that is made up of perfect friends, brothers, sisters and relatives, but by each individual member learning to live with the imperfections of others and yet admire the other person's good qualities.

Conclusion

“So built we the wall; and all the wall was joined together unto the half thereof: for the people had a mind to work” (Neh. 4:6).

Centuries ago, God told Nehemiah to rebuild the broken down wall around Jerusalem. The process of this reconstruction served to bring the remnant Jews from the Babylonian invasion together but the enemies of the Jews opposed the project and looked for ways to sabotage their efforts (Neh. 4:7-8).

In the same manner, the enemy of today's church and his agents are working exceptionally hard to disrupt the mission of the church. While half the men in Nehemiah's time worked, the others stood guard to protect. We should adopt the same approach today in our mission/good fight of faith as people of God.

In addition to providing protection, this wall was a demonstration of teamwork and unity (Neh. 3). All the team members brought their talents and skills, blending them together to accomplish far more than they could have achieved as individuals.

It should be that way in the church today. Our different talents, skills, attributes and vocations are complimentary callings and gifts from God to be used for building His Kingdom.

As the ancient African proverb says, ‘It takes a village to raise a child’. Let us therefore, determinedly shut out selfishness in all its forms in our stewardship of this Church of God. We must each put in our best energy, synergy and sincere commitment towards the ‘mission dei (Mission of God)’.

In the words of Cindy Hess Kasper, “we work better when we work together.” An Ethiopian Proverb says: “When spiders unite, they can tie down a lion”. “None of us is as smart as all of us” so says a Japanese proverb as well.

In 2009, the churches in this part of the bigger Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) came together to constitute the Diocese of Evo. That was our beginning. For these eleven years we have made appreciable progress by striving to keep together. And now, this synod charges us, priests, Deacons, lay leaders and parishioners – knights, men, women, youths of every church/group to strive for greater success in the work of God committed to our charge. The only way we can possibly achieve this success is by our choosing deliberately to work together.

This will make this structure called ‘The Diocese of Evo’ stronger and better, and our pride.

Doing/employing every conceivable scheme, trick or sentiment to stifle the Diocese only reveals who we truly are-ignorant and mischievous, insincere and lacking in love for the Diocese. These negative feelings and actions against the Diocese will only produce a very weak centre. In the time of challenges and critical needs at the local church levels there will be no strong or viable centre for us to run to.

This should apply to the wilder Body of Christ in Nigeria and across the globe irrespective of our different denominations. It should apply to us in the Anglican Communion notwithstanding the autonomy and interdependence of Dioceses. It should equally apply to us as Nigerians as we seek to build a nation that would be the pride of all of us-irrespective of our difference in tribe, tongue, political affiliation, creed, socio-economic status, etc.

“By yourself you’re unprotected. With a friend you can face the worst. Can you round up a third? A three-stranded rope isn’t easily snapped.” (Eccl. 4:12-The Message Bible).

When there is unity, God commands a blessing (Psalm 133:1).

DIOCESAN CONVOCATIONS

1. Nigeria At 59: Evo Prays

Members of our diocese responded to our call to prayers on Tuesday, 1st October, 2010 being the 59th anniversary of the Independence of our country from British Colonial rule. The Day of Prayer was observed at Bethel Church, Rumuibekwe Parish. We gave the Word on “Love for Nation”. (...) and with other ministers led the congregation in prayer for the nation amidst songs of Praise and worship.

At the occasion we inaugurated some reconstituted Diocesan Committees, Boards and Directorates.

2. Family Life Conference

This conference organized for the whole Diocese by the Family Life and Home Fellowship Ministry was held from Friday, 18th (St. Luke’s Day) to Saturday, 19th October, 2010 at New Wine Church, East/West Road Parish, Okporo. The theme was “Advancing the great commission through the family”.

Activities of the conference included a Holy Communion service and healing ministrations on the opening day, being St. Luke’s Day; talks on the

theme, bible study and group discussions on our beloved in-laws, Questions and Answers as well as prayer session.

We commend the Diocesan Coordinator of the Family Life/Home Fellowship Ministry for packaging such a rich conference for the Diocese.

We have since directed the Ministry to endeavor to take much of its activities such as the Family Conference to the local parish levels for greater participation and benefit to our members.

3. 2019 Diocesan Discipleship/Revival Conference

THE 2019 Diocesan Discipleship/Revival Conference was held at St. Philip's Anglican Church, Oroigwe District from Wednesday, 27th to Saturday, 30th November. The conference theme was "The Making of a Saint" (1Cor. 1:2; Romans 1:7).

The conference speakers were

- i. The Rt. Rev. Prof. Dapo Asaju, Bishop Theologian, Church of Nigerian (Anglican Communion) and Vice Chancellor of Adajai Crowther University, Oyo, Oyo State who was the main Expositor of the Conference theme.
- ii. Evangelist Nnamdi Ezech of the Diocese On The Niger who ministered at the 2-Day Crusade and Ministers Fire Conference which preceded the Discipleship Conference.
- iii. The Ven. Ifeanyi Aniagboso from the Diocese of Niger Delta North.
- iv. The Ven. Azubuike Ugoha (our own)
- v. The Rev. Canon Dr. Cephas Okarefe who handled the Bible Engagements
- vi. The Rev. Canon Samson Okechukwu Abada, Bible Studies.
- vii. Mama Diocese (Bishop's Wife), Mrs. Chinyere U. Ordu, JP; Dr. Innocent Kasarachi, Dr. Mrs. Rosemary Ekechukwu, Mr. Constance Echefu, Barr. Chinedu Ogbonna, The Rev. Canon Joseph Ofoegbu, Pastor Obarinemi Obele and a team from Lifeplus International Company Limited. These persons and entrepreneurial team addressed the conference on a variety of subject matters ranging from family life, sex, roles of youth, women and men in church growth, cybercrimes, New Online businesses etc. during the sessions of Panel Discussions, schools of Ministry and Business Seminar.
- viii. We the Bishop declared both crusade and conference opened on Monday and Wednesday respectively and also ministered on the Dangers of coming late to Church and the new prayer groups as vehicles of church growth.

Music was provided throughout the crusade and conference proper by the various teams of Music Ministers and gospel Bands from the various Administrative Blocs.

The conference came to a close on Saturday evening with the Evo Advent Praise anchored by the Rev. Canon Samuel Obialor and the various gospel Bands of our Diocese.

We thank the conference Planning Committee headed by The Ven. Azubuike Ugoha for their commitment, sacrifices and overall outstanding performance which gave us a great Diocesan spiritual convocation. The St. Philip's, Oroigwe D.C.C., Local Planning Committee led by Sir Emmanuel Ogele, the Eze of Rumunduru, Sir P. N. Okene and his lady, The Registrar of the Diocese, Sir Barr. Nlerum Amadi and his lady, Sir Ike Chinwo, Sir Paul Chukwumati, Prof. Amadi Echendu; the men, women of the church led by the Archdeacon's wife, Mrs. Precious Ugoha and the entire congregation for their notable contributions and sacrificial services throughout the days of the conference.

We thank all our churches and parishioners especially some members of St. Andrew's, Rumuobiokani for the enormous aid given for the hosting of the conference.

4. Diocesan Harvest Thanksgiving Service

This annual gathering of the whole diocese to conclude the various thanksgiving services at the Church levels took place on Advent Sunday, 1st December, 2019 at St. Philip's, Oroigwe District. It attracted quite a large number of worshippers from across the Diocese including some key community/traditional rulers and political office holders who generously supported the Diocese.

The theme of the Harvest was "The sacrificial and giving life of a true saint" (2Sam. 24:24). The First Lesson taken from 2Samuel 24:18-25 was read by Hon. Martin Chike Amaewhule, member representing Obio/Akpor Constituency 1 in the Rivers State House of Assembly. Lady Felicia Derek-Iyo read the Second Lesson from Luke 19:11-26. The service reader was The Rev. Canon Ozioma Iheanetu, Intercessor was The Rev. Chukwudi Theophilus and the sermon was delivered by The Rt. Rev. Prof. Dapo Asaju, Vice Chancellor, Ajayi Crowther University, Oyo.

Music was provided by the combined choir of the host church and the Diocese, the BCMSS students choir, the clergy wives choir and the Diocesan Band. These ministers in songs were all in their best. We thank them.

The Diocesan Harvest Thanksgiving Committee headed by Lady Felicia Derek-Iyo was quite thorough and detailed in their planning towards the service and eventually posted a first class performance on the day. Members of the Committee, out of their substance, sacrificially provided all that the Diocese needed to spend for that service. We thank them and pray for God's abundant blessings on every member of the committee. We are grateful to all our churches and parishioners for the commitment towards the service and its success.

Christmas: Service of Carol and Nine Lessons

5. Initially planned to hold within the Bishop's court premises, Hit festival of Advent/Christmas music and lessons was moved to the porch and frontage of the new Cathedral building. A sizeable number of the Cathedral faithful was in attendance. It held on Tuesday, 17th December, 2019 at 5pm. We commend the Diocesan Choir for a refreshing evening of glorious Christmas music.

The new retired Rev. Canon Chuka Opara delivered the night's homily.

6. Diocesan Advent Ordination Service

This took place at St. Andrew's Church, Rumuobiokani Deanery on Sunday, 22nd December, 2019. Three candidates – Amoson Ijah, Dandison Fiberesima and Nzubechukwu Esomonu were ordained Deacons and six others – Uchechukwu Chinda, Gift Chukwumati, Anointed Pythias Onyeme, Moses Anyatonwu, Christian Tasie and Donatus Ngah were made priests. We presided over the service, assisted by the clergy of our Diocese. The Rev. Gospel Onuchuku preached. The Ven. Chris Chukwumati handled the retreat.

We congratulate the newly ordained with their wives and wish them fruitfulness in their ministry. We also thank the retreat Coordinator, Preacher, St. Andrew's Church, Rumuobiokani Deanery and others who gave their services for the success of both the retreat and the ordinations service proper.

7. Diocesan Prayer Vigils

Diocesan (Night) Vigils for prayers to mark the end of the year 2019 were held in the various Administrative Blocs including the Chapel of Grace and Knowledge, ACMGS, Elelenwo and New Wine, East/West Road-both churches under the Bishop's office. This was on Friday, 20th December, 2019.

The first quarter 2020 Diocesan Night Vigil held on Friday, 28th February at St. Mark's, Elelenwo Deanery.

8. 2020 Diocesan Rededication Service

The 2020 annual edition of our Diocesan Rededication service took place on Sunday, 26th January at the All Saints' Cathedral, Rumuokwurusi. It was the highpoint of a weeklong crusades, revival meetings and prayer retreats held across the Diocese and by the Bishop, Clergy and their wives. Attendance to the service was massive and the worship quite uplifting and spiritually loaded. The Most Rev. Tunde Adeleye, Archbishop of our Province of the Niger Delta preached the sermon based on our Diocesan theme for the year: "Waxing Great, Moving Forward" (Genesis 26:13, 2 Samuel 5:10, Luke 2:40).

Prayers of rededication were offered to God by us, the Archbishop and the clergy for individuals and various groups of the Diocese and those representing the various sectors of the society.

The occasion was used by the Diocesan Council of Knights to present cheques to the recipients of their annual bursary awards.

HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT

1. John Maxwell Leadership Training

"Everything rises and falls on leadership" – John C. Maxwell.

A group of 20 clergymen with the Bishop successfully completed a 3-Day Workshop on the materials contained in one of John C. Maxwell's books: "The Leadership Handbook" from Monday, 7th to Wednesday, 9th October, 2019 at the All Saints' Cathedral, Rumuokwurusi. The workshop was anchored by a member of the John Maxwell's Team and certified Trainer, Engr. Sylvester Chiemeka. The cost of the training was totally borne by Barr. Othike Okpoghe, a knight of our church and member of St. Andrew's, Rumuobiokani Deanery. We are grateful to Sir Okpoghe for this kind gesture and we trust that beneficiaries rightly appropriate the lessons derived from the rich training.

A similar training was organized for 30 clergy wives of our Diocese on Thursday, 29th October, 2019 in the Bishop's Court Chapel of Refuge. The facilitator was also Engr. Sylvester Chiemeka. The participants were sponsored by their various churches and women ministries.

2. Beginning of the Year Retreat for Bishop, Clergy, Church Teachers and Wives

This retreat took place at Church of The Holy Spirit, Elelenwo (now Paraclete Deanery) from Wednesday 22nd – Saturday, 25th January, 2020. It was a time of separation for prayers, meditations on the Word and soul searching for the Bishop, the clergy, church teachers and their wives in preparation for the Diocesan Rededication Service and ministry through the year 2020. His Grace, the Archbishop of Niger Delta Province, The Most Rev. Tunde Adeleye ministered severally at the retreat on sundry matters of ministerial and ethical concerns.

3. Training by The Superannuation Fund Office

The Superannuation Fund office of the Join Provinces (East) of the Niger under the chairmanship of The Rt. Rev. Chidi Oparaojiaku hosted a special training in Abuja from Monday, 27th to Friday, 31st January, 2020. The theme of the training programme was “Repositioning The Church for Optimal Performance and Growth”.

Participants from our Diocese were Sir Gilbert E. Chuku who represented the Province of Niger Delta, Lady Felicia Derek-Iyo and Mr. Lawrence Chinda who represented our Diocese.

Topics addressed by the various resource persons at the training included Fund Management, Revenue Drive, accounting and accountability.

4. Church of Nigeria Senior Clergy Advanced Management Course

This year’s training took place between Monday, 13th, and Friday, 24th January at Ibru Centre, Agbarha-Otor, Delta State. We nominated the following clergymen for the training:

1. The Ven. Azubuike Ugoha(Team Leader)
2. The Ven. Thompson Onyewuotu
3. The Ven. Emmanuel Anyasodo
4. The Rev. Canon Kingsley Ohajianya
5. The Rev. Canon Hosanna Naenwi
6. The Rev. C. J. Kemakolam
7. The Rev. Dr. Ebenezer Owzor
8. The Rev. Anderson N.F. Owzor

They were exposed with vital lessons on administration and structure of the Anglican Church, goal and target setting, communication, time management, Constitutional matters, human relations, health, conflict management, etc. We hope that the beneficiaries of this high-level training from the National Church will deploy the knowledge acquired for the good of the church of God in our Diocese.

5. Cinematography Training

A One-Day cinematography training for members of the Media and Communication teams of all churches in the Diocese was organized by the Diocesan media & Communication Committee on Saturday, 8th February, 2020 in the ICT room of the Diocese. This important training was organized to expose participants to the art and science of videography, photography, live-streaming techniques and the role of the media and in the mission and evangelism work of the church.

We commend the chairman of the Diocesan Media and Communication Committee, Dr. Jossy Nkwocha for organizing the training which attracted over 60 participants.

Pre-Synod Training on New Media

The Diocesan Media and Communications Department in conjunction with the ICT unit facilitated a pre-synod training of the Clergy, Church Teachers, members of the Diocesan and church media teams and synod delegates on new media application particularly on the use of the Zoom Application preparatory to this synod.

Trainings by the Diocesan ICT Youth Development Centre

1. The Diocesan ICT Centre headed by The Rev. Canon Joseph Ofoegbu held a three-day Computer Training Awareness Program to enlighten the Diocesan Church Teachers on Modern Tools in Information Technology from Thursday 24th-Saturday 26th October, 2019 .
2. The ICT Centre in conjunction with the Diocesan Media and Communications department handled the live recording, editing and uploading of a Special 2020 Palm Sunday, 5th of April service which was hosted by our Diocese of Edo for the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) following the directive of our new Primate, The Most Rev. Henry Ndukuba. That service was transmitted globally by the Advent Cable News Network (ACNN). The service was held at St. Andrew's Anglican Church, Rumuobioakani Deanery.

3. With the onset of COVID-19 and subsequent partial/total lock-down in the State, and in a bid to reach our members and others within and outside the Diocese, we recorded two Diocesan services on Easter Day, 12th April and Sunday, 10th May, 2020 from St. Andrew's Church, Rumuobiokani Deanery and All Saints' Cathedral, Rumuokwurusi which were transmitted live through the various social media platforms of the Diocese with the assistance of the Diocesan ICT and Media/Communication units.

We have commenced a weekly broadcasts tagged "Hour of Refreshing" through the Diocesan social media platforms for the ministry of the Word and prayer. This comes every Wednesday at 12noon and Sundays at 4:00pm. We encourage members of our Diocese to follow us live on these days on the Diocese of Eyo Facebook page.

Bishop's Discipleship and Leadership Training Programme

We commenced a weekly Discipleship/Leadership development (Alpha Course) training programme on the 17th October last year in the Bishop's Court Chapel of Refuge for all newly licensed lay readers, those confirmed in recent times by us and others willing to attend. The training had progressed steadily until it was stopped following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and the lockdown imposed by the government the month of March this year.

We hope to resume the training sessions shortly after this synod. We hereby invite all participants and those wishing to join us to watch out for announcements from us regarding the reopening of the 'school'.

OUR EPISCOPAL SERVICES & ENGAGEMENTS IN CHURCHES AND SCHOOLS

1. Sunday, 8th September, 2019 – St. Philip's, Oroigwe District for Diocesan lay Readers Association conference thanksgiving and churaching of Mrs. Maria Mike Chukwumati after childbirth.
2. Sunday, 15th September, 2019 – St. Matthias', Atali, for the annual Diocesan conference/Harvest Thanksgiving service of the Christian Men's Fellowship.
3. Wednesday, 2nd October, 2019 – Morning Devotion with staff, students and pupils of ACMGS & ACMNPS, Elelenwo at the Chapel of Grace and Knowledge; and breakfast with some Excellent Girls and Management team of the school.
4. Thursday, 3rd October, 2019 (Samuel Ajayi Crowther Day) – Morning devotion with Staff, students and pupils of BCMSS, Rumuobiokani.

5. Saturday, 5th October, 2019 – at St. Mark's, Elelenwo Deanery for the Foundation Stone laying of a new 2- storey parsonage building project.
6. Sunday, 6th October – at BCMSS, Rumuobiokani for a Eucharistic Worship service with the staff and students of the school
7. Sunday, 13th October, 2019 – New Wine Anglican Church, East/West Road Parish, Okporo: Service of Confirmation of 23 candidates.
 - 4pm at Word of Faith Group of School, Woji for Eucharistic service and the Word and prayers with staff and students.
8. Sunday, 20th October, 2019 – St. James' Anglican Church, Iriebe Parish for confirmation of 14 baptized members.
9. 2-Day Episcopal Visit/confirmation of candidates at St. Simon's, Okporo Deanery. Visited the Eze Ohna Okpor, Okani Okwurusi, HRH Morgan Amadi, Eze John E. Amadi of Rumuodara, Eze Ken Iwezor of Mgbuesilaru, Pa Isaiah Amadi – the oldest man in St. Simon's and Mgbuesilaru and the families of late Hon. Mrs Forstina Wali as well as the wife and children of kidnaped Barr Iyke Emelogu of Faith Community, Eliowhani. All these were on Saturday, 26th October and on Sunday, 27th we confirmed 31 baptized members of the Deanery.
10. 3rd November, Sunday – at Anglican Church of Messiah, New Haven Parish, Iriebe for worship and Eucharist.
11. Sunday, 10th November – Mount Zion Church, Eliogbolo Parish for confirmation of 10 members of the church and Eucharist.
12. Saturday, 16th November – at Anglican Church of The Pentecost, Ahia, Woji for dedication of church building and laying of foundation stone for a new parsonage building project.
13. Sunday, 17th November – at Olive Plants Anglican Youth Church for Episcopal visit and Eucharistic service and Dedication of new parsonage building donated by the family of the late Sir Eze W. W. Onunwor.
14. Sunday, 24th November at St. Andrew's Rumuobiokani Deanery for the silver Jubilee anniversary thanksgiving service of the local CMF and reunion thanksgiving service of SMC class 80 Old Boys Association after 39 years.
15. Sunday, 1st December, at St. Philip's, Oroigwe for the Diocesan Thanksgiving (Harvest) and end of Discipleship conference.
16. Sunday, 8th December – at St. Jude's, Oginigba for Women's Conference Thanksgiving.
17. Sunday, 15th at Holy Trinity Church, Elingbu Parish, St. Nicholas' Anglican Church, Woji for different family thanksgivings.
18. Sunday, 22nd December, at St. Andrew's, Rumuobiokani Deanery for confirmations service of 53 candidates.
19. Christmas Day, 25th December, 2019 (Wednesday) – in the Cathedral for Holy Communion service.

20. Sunday, 29th December at Church of The Holy Spirit, Eliozu Parish for the thanksgiving after childbirth of Mrs. Joyce Ben-Peterson.
21. Tuesday, 31st December, 2019 at St. Michael's Rumuomasi Deanery for the New Year's Eve (Crossover) service tagged "Step up 2".
22. Wednesday, 1st January, 2020 and Sunday, 5th January, 2020 at the Cathedral for worship
23. Sunday, 12th January, 2020 at Church of the Epiphany for worship.
24. Sunday, 26th April, 2020 at St. Mark's, Elelenwo Deanery for their Patron Saint Day Holy Communion/Thanksgiving Service.
25. Sunday, 24th May, 2020 at Church of The Holy Spirit, Eliozu Parish for 20th Anniversary Service
26. Sunday, 12th July, 2020 at St. Philip's, Oroigwe District for the service of thanksgiving for the restoration of health by Mrs. Joy Okechukwu Ow'honda, wife of The Venerable Okechukwu Ow'honda.
27. Sunday, 2nd August, 2020 at All Saints' Cathedral for the memorial service thanksgiving of the late Canon Wilfred Chika Worlu and unveiling of his tombstone.
28. During the COVID-19 lockdown, We worshipped and monitored the Sunday services of the following churches: All Saints' Cathedral, Rumuokwurusi, St. Michael's, Rumuomasi Deanery, St. Nicholas', Woji District, Holy Trinity, Elimbu Parish, Upper Room Church, Eliozu and Great Physician, Atali and Chapel of Grace & Knowledge, ACMGS, Elelenwo.

Special Episcopal Services at St. Jude's Military (Protestant) Church, GRA, Port Harcourt.

Following the invitation of the Unit Church Council of the above-named church, we presided over four services of confirmation, enrolment/admission into the Women's Guild/Mothers Union as well as licensing of Lay Readers on Friday, 3rd and Saturday, 4th July, 2020.

In all, 61 candidates were confirmed, 24 women enrolled into the Women's Guild, 33 women admitted into the Mothers Union, and 14 candidates licensed as Lay Readers. We consider it a great privilege and honour to have been invited by the Lt. (Rev. Canon) & Mrs. M. O. Lucky, Vicar and wife respectively of the Church to preside over these special Episcopal services. We thank them for the honour.

BAPTISMS

1. Destiny Chikega Asonye, child of Postulant and Mrs. Joseph Asonye on Saturday, 26th October, 2019.
2. David Nwachigoziri Best, child of Postulant and Mrs. Best Ekendia on Saturday, 26th October, 2019.
3. Nmachi Jaydiel, child of Mr. Ben and Mrs. Joyce Ben-Peterson on Friday, 27th December, 2019.
4. Triumph Chioma Chukwuemeka, child of Postulant and Mrs. Chukwuemeka Obani on Saturday, 1st February, 2020.
5. Emmanuella Chimenem Theophilus, child of The Rev. Chukwudi and and Mrs. Juliet Theophilus on Sunday, 7th June, 2020 At Anglican Church of the Pentecost, Ahia-Woji
6. Wealth Chisorum Orlu, child of Postulant Chika and Mrs. Blessing Orlu on Saturday 25th July, 2020 at the Bishop's Court Chapel of Refuge.
7. Brain Ogenekobiruo, child of Mr. James and Mrs. Darling Ebebeinwe on Saturday 25th July, 2020 at the Bishop's Court Chapel of Refuge.
8. Daniel Awaji-Igbanam, child of Postulant Herbert and Mrs. Joy Anson on Saturday, 8th August, 2020 at the Bishop's Court Chapel of Refuge.

FOUNDATION STONE LAYING OF NEW PROJECTS

1. Saturday, 5th October, 2019 – Foundation Stone laying of a new 2-storey parsonage building at St. Mark's, Elelenwo Deanery.
2. Saturday, 16th November, 2019 – Foundation Stone laying of a new parsonage and church workers complex at Anglican Church of the Pentecost, Ahia-Woji.
3. Saturday, 18th April, 2020 – Foundation Stone laying of new Church building and parsonage at Maranatha Anglican Church, Victory Estate, Elelenwo.
4. Sunday, 19th July, 2020 – Foundation Stone laying of a new parsonage and church office block at the Anglican Church of the Passion, Rumuodani, Elelenwo.

PROJECTS DEDICATION

1. The new house of Hon. Prince and Mrs. Solomon Abel Eke, Obalga Chairman on Wednesday, 14th August, 2019 at Woji.

2. **Monday, 30th September, 2019** – Dedication of a new standard women’s kitchen with a store at St. Michael’s, Rumuomasi Deanery. This project was single-handedly put up by the women of the Deanery.
 - A two section toilets of 4 rooms each built by the Christian Men’s Fellowship of the church.
 - A lodge of 2 self-contained apartments for members of the NYSC serving at the community Secondary School, Rumuomasi and donated in perpetuity by St. Michael’s, Rumuomasi Deanery.
 - Dedication of Lectern, Pulpit, Bishop’s Seat, Pews and a Holy Table (Sacrarium) at Church of the Resurrection, Stadium Road, Rumuomasi
3. Saturday, 26th October, 2019- Dedication of the new Palace and throne of the Paramount Ruler of Okporo Community, HRH Sir Morgan Amadi.
4. Saturday, 16th November, 2019 – Dedication of The Anglican Church of the Pentecost, Ahia-Woji new church building.
5. Sunday, 17th November, 2019 – Olive Plants Anglican Youth Church, Rumuolukwu, Rumuomasi: Dedication of Bishop’s And Archdeacon’s Altar seats and also the new parsonage building built and donated by the family of the late HRH Eze Sir W. W. Onunwor, JP.
6. Saturday, 18th April, 2020 – Dedication of a temporary new church building of Maranatha Anglican Church, Victory Estate, Elelenwo single-handedly built and donated to the church by Sir Chief Mike and Lady Josephine Ejims-Enwukwe.

7. **Special Capital Project**

On Saturday, 18th April, 2020 We dedicated a 3-Bedroom bungalow built by the Diocese at Honorable Estate, Boskel, Elelenwo, and donated in perpetuity to Mrs. Blessing Ogu, widow of the late Rev. Canon Chukwuemeka Ogu and her children. This latest facility was put up by the Diocese through the generous assistance of the Rivers State Governor as a replacement for the earlier one also built by the Diocese

at Eneka which was regrettably demolished by the State Ministry of Lands and Urban Development.

We thank His Excellency, Chief Barr. Nyesom Ezenwo Wike for his kind gesture and assistance towards this project.

8. Sunday, 19th April, 2020 – Dedication of a Bus purchased by the women (MU/WG) of Maranatha Anglican Church, Victory Estate, Elelenwo.
9. Sunday, 7th June (Trinity Sunday), 2020 – Dedication of six altar chairs/desks, wall/ceiling fans, two sets of choir robes, etc. at Anglican Church of The Pentecost, Ahia-Woji.
10. Saturday, 13th June, 2020 – Dedication of a 20KVA Electricity Generating Set at Christ Anglican Church, Federal Housing Estate Parish, Woji.
11. Saturday, 18th July, 2020 – Dedication of a new Toyota Sienna car donated to Anglican Church of the Resurrection, Rumuomasi by HRH, Eze Sir Raymond Chinda, JP, Nyenwe-eli Rumuezeolu, Rumuomasi.
12. Saturday, 18th July, 2020 – Dedication of a new Parsonage complex comprising of a 3-bedroom, a 2-bedroom and two 1-bedroom flats at New Wine Anglican Church, East West Road Parish, Okporo.
13. Wednesday, 5th August, 2020 – Dedication of Renovated Twin-Dormitory Block; donated classroom desks and office furniture by the Rivers State Universal Basic Education Board (RSUBEB).

THE CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) PANDEMIC

The coronavirus also known as COVID-19 pandemic is a respiratory disease currently ravaging the world. The outbreak was first identified in Wuhan, China, in December 2019, hence the name COVID-19.

In Nigeria, the first confirmed case was announced on 27th February 2020, when an Italian citizen who works in Nigeria had returned on 25th February from Milan, Italy through the Murtala Muhammed International Airport, Lagos tested positive for the virus. He fell ill on 26 February and was transferred to Lagos State biosecurity facilities for isolation and testing.

On 9 March 2020, a second case of the virus was reported in Ewekoro, Ogun State. The victim was a Nigerian citizen who had contact with the Italian. The first case in Rivers State was officially announced on 25th March, 2020 The

outbreak of this disease which according experts is caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS CoV 2) was declared a Public Health Emergency of International Concern by The World Health Organization on 30th January, 2020, and a pandemic on 11th March.

As at Friday, 7th August, 2020, more than 19.1 million confirmed cases have been reported in 216 countries, areas or territories, resulting in more than 715, 000 deaths; and over 11.4 million people having recovered according Google update on coronavirus.

The statistics in Nigeria as at the same date shows that the number of confirmed cases stood at over 45, 500, recovered cases at over 32, 400 and over 930 deaths.

In Rivers State, number of laboratory confirmed cases stood at 1,911 with 267 on admission, and 1,591 discharged cases. Number of deaths stood at 53.

Just like Ebola, coronavirus is also highly contagious and is primarily spread between people during close contact, most often via small droplets produced by coughing, sneezing, and talking hence the need to keep good hygiene. We're told that a recent research conducted in June, 2020 has identified that speech-generated droplets may remain airborne for tens of minutes. The common mode of infection is said to be by touching a contaminated surface and then touching your face.

Common symptoms include fever, cough, fatigue, shortness of breath, loss of sense of smell and general body pains. Of recent, runny nose and diarrhea have been added to the list of symptoms. The time from exposure to onset of symptoms is typically around five days but may range from two to fourteen days. There is no known vaccine or specific antiviral treatment. Primary treatment is symptomatic and supportive therapy.

Recommended **preventive measures** by the World Health Organization (WHO) and Federal Ministry of Health include regular and thorough washing of hands with soap and water, maintenance of good respiratory hygiene by the covering of one's mouth and nose when coughing and sneezing; maintaining distance from other people, wearing a face mask in public settings, monitoring and self-isolation for people who suspect they are infected. The use of alcohol based hand sanitizers is also advised. One is also advised to keep a safe distance from people when they cough and sneeze.

Keep yourself informed

Everyone is encouraged to get updates/information about the virus as it progresses, from credible sources which include the Federal and States Ministries

of Health, National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) at the federal and state levels, radio and television stations and verified online platforms.

Do not panic

We are all advised not to panic should we begin to experience any of the above-listed symptoms. Health emergencies are known to get worse when panic sets in. You can also call NCDC toll-free numbers for Rivers State – 08056109538, 08031888093 and 08033124314.

Resultant Challenges

The pandemic has caused global social and economic disruption, including the largest global recession since the Great Depression. It has led to the postponement or outright cancellation of sporting, religious, political, and cultural events, widespread supply shortages exacerbated by panic buying, and decreased emissions of pollutants and greenhouse gases. Schools, universities, and colleges have been closed either on a nationwide or local basis in 172 countries, affecting approximately 98.5 percent of the world's student population.

Responding to the pandemic, authorities worldwide have imposed travel restrictions, lockdowns, workplace hazard controls, and facility closures.

Misinformation circulated through the social media particularly at the initial stage of the pandemic led to incidences of discrimination against Chinese people and those perceived as being Chinese. The Chinese themselves rose against foreigners in some parts of their country particularly Africans in what was clearly a xenophobic attack.

Another major challenge arising from the pandemic is the stigmatization of persons who test positive or are perceived to exhibit symptoms of the virus by the general public and even medical personnel including those from the Nigeria National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC). Persons who have gone through treatment and have even recovered and discharged have not equally been spared of the stigma with other members of their families.

The undignified burial usually given to victims who before their deaths had been separated from their families is another major challenge and trauma that both the virus and consequent government policy on its containment has posed on the society.

The pandemic and its consequent lockdown witnessed an upsurge in criminal activities and family squabbles, especially between now confined husbands and their wives, due to feelings of frustration especially on the part of the men. A clearly visible area of crime upsurge is the rise in incidences of rape and sexual

assaults both at the domestic and community levels. Apart from the spiritual undertone of this crime, we believe that the prolonged period of confinement at home may have triggered or exacerbated this development. We shall address this later as we go on.

Lessons from COVID-19

As a global health crisis, COVID-19 has shown no respect for national boundaries, nations, culture, race, religion, political and other public office holders, social status, etc. Its victims so far whether those still in critical condition, recovered/discharged or dead have included persons from all sectors of society-government, religious, traditional, military, sports/entertainment industry and even medical workers. Consequently, we all have to be very careful and watch our lifestyles and health habits particularly as government and health officials warn of a possible second wave of spread or transmission following the relaxation of the lockdowns.

The outbreak of COVID-19 has taught the world to take more seriously those simple but critical health/personal hygiene protocols that we had long abandoned.

It has taught the world to learn to slow down. Suddenly, the mad rush to do many things came to an abrupt halt and we are all still alive despite all that has not been covered or attended to within this period.

For us in Nigeria, we have learned that the citizens' long-standing cry/call to governments at all levels to fix our health institutions and facilities has become more imperative now than ever before. Following the restrictions on international travels it became obvious that our government officials who over the years depended on foreign health institutions for their treatments having failed to upgrade such institutions here at home, can actually be treated here like any other disadvantaged Nigerian when they get sick.

To a very large extent, COVID-19 appears to bring the best out of our leaders and citizens in the area of care giving and concern for the health and wellbeing of one another. We witnessed a high demonstration of kindness and benevolence from governments to the people in our churches, communities and other organizations, including spending over N600bn of taxpayers' money to "feed" unknown out-of-school children, and N1.32bn as in-house palliative for NDDC staff during the lockdown.

From COVID-19 and the many government guidelines regarding its containment we have seen that we in Nigeria can actually live sober, quiet and less-expensive

lifestyles. For example, quiet and less-expensive burials, weddings, and several other social ceremonies are now actually taking place without our engaging in the old culture of extravagance and immoderacy.

Following the lockdown, we now appreciate the value of freedom of movement in order to be with those we love; to live in dignity and security with everyone, from our loved ones to the refugees and the downtrodden.

It has forced us to appreciate the value of many people whose roles in the society tend to be undervalued: the medical Doctors, nurses, security agents, journalists, clergymen/intercessors and all whose services were classified as essential.

The global community, especially governments and international bodies like the World Health Organization (WHO) must have learnt the lessons of acting fast whenever any matter that may later assume or pose a major global challenge comes up.

After announcing the discovery of a “pneumonia of unknown origin” on the afternoon of 31st December, 2019; China resisted implementing a country-wide health screening or taking temperature readings in Hubei Province where Wuhan is located, even as Doctors in the city were reporting floods of patients struggling to breathe, as leaders in Beijing became aware they were confronting “the most severe challenge” since SARS. A study released in March underlined the importance of acting fast. Had China acted three weeks earlier by implementing wide-spread testing, a cordon sanitaire around Hubei, the cases would have been cut by 95%.

Spiritually speaking COVID-19 has equally exposed our hypocrisy and false faith even as Christians.

Many of us may now require the help of Google map to locate our church addresses, having stayed away for several months. The pandemic has exposed the true identity of many Christians. The very people who would go to any length to obey government’s policies on COVID-19 in order to escape imposed penalties are the ones who wouldn’t mind flouting the provisions of God’s Word and the directives of the churches where they worship.

Notwithstanding, we are however to note that quite a number of persons have been forced to develop deeper and closer relationship with God within this period. To God be the glory!

The consciousness of the imminent return of our Lord Christ and the warnings regarding it were also awakened in many.

The outbreak has taught us that we can do without much of our many physical gatherings and travels especially for meetings. Through the upsurge in divers technological and social media applications we have learnt to hold our meetings, conferences, church activities without having to embark on avoidable, expensive and risk-prone journeys. In this case, Hebrews 10:25:

*“not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as
is
the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so
much the more as you see the Day approaching”*

can still be fulfilled without our mass gatherings.

Many Christian churches and groups that hitherto exploited the media technologies we are referring to, did not quite suffer the adverse spiritual effects of not gathering in one place. We therefore challenge all our pastors and various leaders to see the need to get acquainted with current trends in information communication technologies that are beneficial for the enhancement of ministry. Improved knowledge of this would assist our clergy, home fellowship and prayer group leaders to maintain regular fellowship with their members should we find ourselves in this kind of situation again.

COVID-19 and the consequent lockdown also strengthened the longstanding call by many in the church including myself that we should return to the apostolic age when members gathered together in homes and, “continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers” (Acts 2:24), not in Cathedrals and other beautiful church buildings. A major lesson from the lockdown is that the church is not the building, but those who believe in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour, and are prepared to worship Him in spirit and in truth anywhere, anytime, and so God can actually do without our cathedrals, church buildings, but would still identify with us wherever else we choose or circumstances compel us to assemble in His name.

The Pandemic equally presented family heads with the golden opportunity to strengthen their family altars – where they could gather members of their households together for fellowship, singing, Bible reading, giving of words of exhortation and breaking bread (possibly consecrated by the priests).

We wonder how many family heads were able to gather those of their households for daily and Sunday fellowships.

We consider the experiences of COVID-19 as dress rehearsal of the rough times that lie ahead of the Church and the world in the coming years. God probably

allowed it to warn us of the danger ahead and for us to begin to fashion out ways of sustaining and building up our most holy faith.

COVID-19 and the fulfillment of scripture and Divine warnings

Though the global community (including the church) appeared not to have envisaged the present pandemic and its devastating effects on the economic, social, political and spiritual lives of nations and their peoples; God had much earlier however, spoken about it through the Bible prophecies and revelations given to some godly personalities.

In the wake of the pandemic, two words ‘quarantine’ and ‘lockdown’ became dominant.

Both words were later discovered to have a scriptural backing from Isaiah 26:20

*“Come, my people, enter your chambers, And shut your doors behind you;
Hide yourself, as it were, for a little moment, until the indignation
is past.”*

While indignation in the context of Isaiah 26 might mean the shameful exilic treatment in captivity, in the present circumstance, it is COVID-19 pandemic that has cut to size the pride and arrogance of the powerful, civilized and educated. The rich and the poor were both locked down. The powerful and vulnerable when tested and found positive were both quarantined. Coronavirus has become a leveler.

Dean Koontz in his 1981 book, *The Eye of Darkness*, talked about a lethal man virus in Wuhan, the same Chinese City, where Coronavirus broke out in 2019. That was a prediction that came to pass with precision and accuracy 38 years after.

In 1986, David Wilkerson, an American Christian evangelist, who was the founder of the addiction recovery programme Teen Challenge, and founding pastor of the non-denominational Times Square Church in New York City, gave a prophecy, “I see a plague coming on the world, and the bars, churches and government will shut down. The plague will hit New York City and shake it like it has never been shaken. The plague is going to force prayerless believers into radical prayer and into their Bibles, and repentance will be the cry from the man of God in the pulpit. And out of it will come a third Great Awakening that will sweep America and the world.”

Also, Sylvia Browne in his book, *End of Days: Predictions and Prophecies about End of the World*, predicted in 2008 that there would be a pneumonia-like global pandemic in 2020. Indeed, 11 years after Browne’s prediction, COVID-19 with all its pneumonia related symptoms is here with us. But then, how do we respond to the challenges posed by this pandemic?

Finally, in 1942, C.S. Lewis wrote about an upcoming event in which he talked about the revelation he received regarding the activities both from Satan and Jesus Christ. About Satan, Lewis revealed what Satan says he would do, “I will cause anxiety, fear and panic. I will shut down businesses, schools, places of worship, and sports events. I will cause economic turmoil.” Of course, this has been our experience in the past few months.

Also, Lewis revealed what Jesus Christ says He would do when that event happened, “I will bring together neighbours, restore the family unit, I will bring dinner back to the kitchen table. I will help people slow down their lives and appreciate what really matters. I will teach my children to rely on me and not the world. I will teach my children to trust me and not their money and material resources”.

Of a truth, God’s Word in Isaiah 26: 20, His revelations through His servants quoted above, and also the words of Jesus Christ as quoted by Lewis have been the experience of the Church of God since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in the final hours of 2019. Thus God’s Word will always stand sure: *“Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away”* (Matthew 24:35).

MINISTRIES AND UNITS OF THE DIOCESE

Diocesan Christian Men’s Fellowship (DCMF)

1. Annual Diocesan Conference/Harvest Thanksgiving

The 2019 Diocesan Conference of the Christian Men’s Fellowship was hosted by the Trinity Missionary Archdeaconry at St. Matthias’s Anglican Church, Atali District from Friday, 13th – Sunday, 15th September. The Conference was presided over by the Diocesan President, Sir Engr. Sunny Worlu under the theme “A Faithful man, Who can find?” (Proverbs 20:6).

The Conference featured talks, Bible studies, meeting of the various Men’s Prayer groups with their leaders, the reading of the President-General’s address, fund raising for the Diocesan Men’s Agricultural Investment Project and the Harvest Thanksgiving service to mark the end of the conference.

2. On Sunday, 15th December, 2019, We inaugurated the Committee for Mobilization of funds for the 2020 Diocesan synod launch of the Bishop’s Charge/Presidential Address. The Committee was headed by Sir Ama Hart.

In further mobilization of the men of our Diocese towards their assigned role in this Synod as Chief launcher of this Address/Charge, we met the Presidents and secretaries of the CMF at all church levels with the Archdeacons and

Rectors of Administrative Blocs in attendance on Saturday, 16th May, 2020 in the Cathedral. In a short while, we shall know to what extent that sensitization meeting impacted on the preparation of our men towards today.

Women and Girls' Ministries

To the glory of God the women of this Diocese under the leadership of the Bishop's wife, Mrs. Chinyere U. Ordu, JP, FCAI have continued to be a great pillar of strength to the ministry of our Diocese. Right from our inception as a Diocese the various arms of the Women's Ministry have remained consistent in their commitment towards our growth. We commend the Bishop's wife who in partnership with the wives of the clergy and members of the Diocesan Women Executive Committee has remained passionate, decisive, clear and concise in all their endeavours in the Diocese. It has been a case of all hands being on deck.

At the synod of last year, the women of this Diocese joyfully launched the Bishop's address with over Ten Million Naira, a feat that was only possible because all the women set their hearts at achieving it. We shall not of course, forget to mention the fact that the women have since 2010 consistently posted the highest remittance of the 10% of their total annual income generated to the Diocese over and above all other activity groups.

On behalf of the Synod and Diocesan Board, we thank the women of our Diocese for their clarity of vision, enormous sacrifices and support. May the Lord greatly bless you all; remember all your offerings and grant you all your genuine heart's desires and expectations in Jesus name. Amen!

1. Girls Guild

The 2019 Diocesan Girls Guild Conference took place at the Church of The Holy Spirit, Eliozi Parish from Friday, 6th to Sunday, 8th September. The theme was "Arise and Shine" (Isaiah 60a:1). The Conference attracted a large turnout of our young girls from the various churches of the Diocese. It featured talks, practical sessions, teachings, March past and thanksgiving service.

2. Sisters Forum

The 2019 Diocesan Sisters' Forum Conference was held from Friday 27th to Sunday, 29th September at St. Andrew's Anglican Church, Rumuobiokani Deanery. The Conference theme was "The Pacesetters" (1Timothy 4:12-16; 2Cor. 3:2). The conference featured Holy Communion Service, prayer sessions, Bible study, talks on diverse issues, practical session and revival hour. Mrs. Hope Ernest-Amadi is the Diocesan Co-ordinator.

Within the period of COVID-19 Pandemic, the Forum members visited an Orphanage, the Rivers State University Teaching Hospital (Former BMSH), the University of Port Harcourt Teaching Hospital (UPTH) and our own Bishop Elenwo Memorial Hospital with varied gifts items for the inmates and patients. They also hosted an online discourse on the topic: “Waiting but not wasting” with the Bishop’s wife, Mrs. Chinyere U. Ordu on Sunday, 24th May.

3. Diocesan Women’s Conference, 2019

The 2019 Diocesan Women’s Conference was held at St. Jude’s Anglican Church, Oginigba Deanery from Thursday, 5th to Sunday, 8th December. The Conference theme was “Faithfulness is in the doing” (Isaiah 3:10-11; Gal. 6:9, 10).

The conference began earlier that week with courtesy calls by the women of the Diocese led by their President, the wife of the Bishop on some prominent members of the church and the community. The conference featured devotions, talks on the theme, session with the youth, Match Past by members of the various women prayer groups in the Diocese, unveiling and fund raising for the 2020 Diocesan Women’s Calendar. The readings of the conference address by the Bishop’s wife, Mrs. Chinyere U. Ordu, and fund raise in support of women’s work.

The conference came to a close on Sunday, 8th December with the Diocesan Women’s Harvest and conference Thanksgiving service.

4. Launch of “Spark The Light” – a Value Reorientation Campaign.

This programme hosted by the Bishop’s wife, Mrs. Chinyere Ordu with the Diocesan women in conjunction with the Mother of Good Counsel Initiative (MOGCI) was held at the Chapel of Grace and Knowledge, ACMGS, Elelenwo on Friday, 31st January, 2020.

In attendance were students representatives from our three Diocesan secondary schools, three other schools in the State as well as youth representatives from the three senatorial zones of our State.

Also in attendance were representatives of the International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA), Diocesan Education Board and Diocesan Women executive Committee.

We, the Bishop were on hand to flag off the campaign. We commend the Bishop’s wife (Mama Evo) and the leadership of MOGCI for that campaign aimed at bringing back lost moral values in the society particularly among our youth. We have since advised that the campaign be taken to all students of our schools and those being visited by our College Ministry – the Public and Private Secondary Schools Ministry (PPSSM).

5. The Diocesan Widows Fellowship

The widows of our Diocese have commenced commercial farming activities on a portion of the Diocesan land here in Atali community. This agricultural project is one of the ways the Fellowship hopes to profitably engage her members and also empower the needy in their midst especially in this time of economic hardship.

We are glad to inform the Synod that the widows have already started harvesting mature crops from the farms. We commend their commitment and zeal.

The widows of our Diocese were visited by the Association of Lady Pharmacists of Nigeria and given palliatives during the lockdown occasioned by the COVID-19 pandemic. They received seven bags of beans, eight bags of rice, three bags of salt, 10 cartons of groundnut oil, 11 cartons of tinned tomatoes, 1 carton of maggi seasoning, 10 packs of water, nine loafs of read and a good number of nose masks from the Association on Friday, 29th May, 2020. They also gave a brief talk on COVID-19 particularly on maintenance of hygiene culture. These times were distributed to 53 widows-in keeping with the instruction of the Lady Pharmacists. Many thanks to Dame Priscilla Nosiri who made the contact.

Diocesan Council of Knights

The Council held a One-Day Prayer Summit at the Chapel of Grace & Knowledge, ACMGS, Elelenwo on Friday, 20th September, 2019. It was a day dedicated to Prayers for the Council members, our Diocese, the State, Government and our Nation Nigeria.

Our Diocesan Council of Knights has a little above One Hundred and Fifty-five members with an almost equivalent number of Ladies. The Council has continued with their annual empowerment of selected students of our Diocese in higher institutions with the presentation of bursary cheques to 26 of them during the Diocesan Rededication Service of Sunday, 26th January, 2020 held at the All Saints' Cathedral, Rumuokwursi. Each student received the sum of N100,000.

The Council had carried out a similar empowerment outreach to eleven (11) widows of our Diocese during the closing service of last year's synod at St. Nicholas' Church, Woji District. Each of the widows received the sum of N50,000 to enable them improve their petty trades and other small scale businesses.

We commend the efforts of the knights and pray for God's greater blessings on every member of the Council.

Members of the Council began the year 2020 with a 2-Day retreat at St. Nicholas' Church, Woji District from Friday, 14th to Saturday, 16th February, 2020. Led by the Diocesan President, Sir Dr. Emenike W. Amobi, the members deliberated on the theme: "The Man Joshua: finishing strong."

Diocesan Lay Readers Association

1. 2019 Diocesan Conference

The 2019 Diocesan Conference of the Lay Readers Association was held at St. Philip's Church, Oroigwe District from Friday, 6th to Sunday, 8th September. Presided over by the Diocesan President, Dame Meg Orianwo, the conference featured talks, Bible studies, sermon and activities centred on the theme: "In times like these" (Luke 21:5-36; 2Tim. 3:1-9). It ended with a thanksgiving service on Sunday, 8th September.

2. Beginning of the Year Retreat/Service of Renewal of Vows of License

This annual solemn gathering of our lay readers to prepare themselves for ministry duties for the year, was held from Friday, 7th to Sunday, 9th February, 2020 at Holy City Anglican Church, New Jerusalem, Pipeline, Rumuokwursi. Under the leadership of the Diocesan President, Dame Meg Orianwo and the Chaplain, The Rev'd Canon Ahamefule Olluor. The retreat dwelt on the theme: "Waxing Great as a Lay Reader and Advancing the Gospel". Key speakers and preachers were The Ven. Azubioke Ugoha, Rev'd Nelson Okocha, Mrs. Chinyere Ordu (wife of the Bishop) and We, your Diocesan.

On Sunday, all lay readers in attendance appeared before the altar afresh, with us presiding, to renew their commitment to serve the Lord and His church as lay readers. They also raised some money to support the completion of work in the parsonage building of Holy City. We pledged to support them the Lay Readers Association once more and the church with the sum of **N1,000,000** only, to facilitate the finishing of the parsonage building.

YOUTH AND CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES

Anglican Youth Fellowship (AYF)

1. 2019 Bible Study Conference/Harvest

The 2019 Diocesan Bible Study Conference and Harvest Thanksgiving service of the Anglican Youth Fellowship took place at St. Simon's Anglican Church, Okporo Deanery (Now District/Archdeaconry Headquarters) from Thursday, 25th – Sunday, 28th June, 2019 under the theme "God of All Possibilities" (Luke 18:27). It featured Bible teachings, worship, prayer sessions, reading and launching of the President, Brother Chima Okekem's Address. The Conference came to a close with the annual harvest thanksgiving service of the Fellowship on Sunday, 28th June.

2. Change of Leadership

Due to internal problems within the Diocesan Youth Fellowship bothering on financial impropriety and non-accountability on the part of the President, Brother Chima Okekem, coupled with his attitude of disregard for the Bishop and the Diocesan Chaplain of the AYF; the Diocesan youths at their Emergency General Meeting held at the All Saints' Cathedral, Rumuokwurusi on Sunday, 12th July, 2020 formally resolved to and actually removed him from office as their President in line with their constitution.

In his place, Sister Elizabeth Chile Ariolu, the Vice President was unanimously voted in as the new Diocesan President of the Anglican Youth Fellowship. The Fellowship also resolved to fill the vacant position of the Vice President in their next general meeting scheduled for September this year.

We wish the new president, Sister Chile Ariolu the guidance of the Holy Spirit in her new position.

3. Diocesan Youth Summit (Destiny Summit)

This summit held from 13th -17th of August, 2019 at ACMGS, Elelenwo, was an initiative of Mazi Sam Azoka and Barr. Chinedu Ogbonna with the support of St. Andrew's, Rumuobiokani Deanery. It was targeted at reaching out to the youths generally and particularly to those of them in our Diocese.

The aim of the summit was to empower the youths to fight against prevalent vices such as cultism, kidnapping, prostitution, idleness, etc. as well as exposing them to trainings in some helpful areas such as animal farming, industrial welding and opportunities in the banking industries. Some of the sessions were handled by the Bishop of Nsukka Diocese, The Rt. Rev. Aloysius Eze Agbo, Mrs. Chinyere Ordu (Our Mama Evo), and other notable ministers of the gospel and resource persons.

We are very grateful to Mazi Sam Azoka and Barr. Chinedu Ogbonna (both parishioners of St. Andrew's, Rumuobiokani Deanery) for their initiative and huge financial commitment towards the staging of this summit.

4. Anglican Corpers' Fellowship

This Ministry was established with a vision to "raise Corps members for the work of evangelism and discipleship" with the aim of assisting those of the Anglican background to maintain their root faith and become committed to the service of God during their National Youth Service programme.

Within this synod year they held various spiritually enriching programmes such as prayer meetings, vigils, Bible Study Conferences, seminars, street evangelism, Church outreaches/workshops on skills acquisition and many more. We hosted them to a special session for the Word and prayers on Saturday 15th February, 2020 in the Bishop's Court Chapel of Refuge.

They also conducted send-forth and reception parties for the outgoing as well as new members.

We commend the efforts of the chaplain, Rev. Collins Daniel and his assistants, Church Teachers Daniel Nwabueze and David Wopara.

Anglican Communion (Boys) Brigades (ACB)

The Diocesan Brigades have continued to play their expected roles by participating in activities of the Diocese. They also held several in-house programmes such as prayer retreats, meetings, etc. within this synod year.

The Diocesan ACB now has a new set of office bearers (Executives). There were elected on Sunday, 6th October, 2019 in a general election held at the All Saints' Cathedral, Rumuokwurusi. Those elected were:

S/N	NAME	POSITION
1	Lt. Ucheagha Kingsley Chibueze	Diocesan Coordinator
2	Lt. Sunny Okoli	Deputy Diocesan Coordinator
3	Capt. Mrs. Harriet Ngozi Okolo	Secretary
4	Lt. Buasu Waazor Princess	Assistant Secretary
5	Lt. Ahumaraeze Reward	Public Relations Officer (PRO)
6	Lt. Orji Stanley	Financial Secretary
7	Mr. Eucharua Wali	Treasurer
8	Lt. Wuche Rose N.	Welfare 1
9	Thermar Bassey	Welfare 2
10	Michael Onyeocha (NTO)	Training Officer 1
11	Chineye Obidinma	Training Officer 2
12	Lt. Promise Ihetu	Project Officer 1
13	Covenant Chukwuma (W.O.)	Project Officer 2
14	Lt. Destiny Amadi	Prayer Secretary/Bible Study Coordinator 1
15	Faith Nna	Prayer Secretary/Bible Study Coordinator 2
16	Lt. David West	Provost/Protocol Officer 1
17	Capt. Ajoku Victor Chike	Provost/Protocol Officer 2
18	Lt. Divine Michael	Band Leader 1
19	Lt. Philip Wilson	Band Leader 2

20	Capt. Raymond Chinda	Captains Forum Chairman.
21	Capt. Nnodi Nyebuchi Bright	C.S.O 1
22	Lt. Ihunwo John Chisom	C.S.O. 2

They were dedicated formally by us on Sunday, 22nd December, 2019 at St. Andrew's Anglican Church, Rumuobiokani Deanery during the Advent Diaconate and Priestly Ordination service.

We have also appointed a new Diocesan Chaplain for the ACB. He is the Rev. Samuel John Ejekwu.

We hosted, and as State Grand Chaplain presided over the service of re-investiture of Professor Blessing Chimezie Didia as the President of the Rivers State Council of the Boys' Brigade, Nigeria and the inauguration of other State office bearers, on Sunday, 16th February, 2020 at the All Saints' Cathedral, Rumuokwurusi.

ANGLICAN CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

The Diocesan Children's Ministry hosted a number of internal activities since the third quarter of 2019.

1. 10th Diocesan Teachers' Conference

This was held at St. Jude's, Oginigba Deanery from Friday, 19th to Saturday, 20th July, 2019.

2. Evo Children Rejoice

This Programme was held on Saturday, 19th October, 2019 at St. Andrew's, Rumuobiokani Deanery. A total of 1,053 Children and 106 teachers were in attendance.

There were various activities to engage the children such as Sword Drill, Bible Challenge, and presentation of literatures to the teenagers in attendance by members of the Diocesan Hannah Women Prayer Group.

3. Participation in Provincial and National Programmes

Our Diocesan Anglican Children's Ministry took part in the Niger Delta Provincial Teachers Conference, Children's Bible Quiz and Singing Competition which held at St. Mark's Cathedral, Kaiama, Diocese of Northern Izon from Thursday, 15th to Sunday, 18th August, 2019 under the theme, "The Power of The Holy Spirit" (Acts 10:38).

Our Children took the first position at the Quiz Competition of the conference. We received, celebrated and prayed for this victorious team

during the thanksgiving service of last year's Synod at St. Nicholas', Woji on Sunday, 18th August.

In addition, the Diocesan ACM appreciated the three victorious children with a total sum of N110, 000 to support their parents in their schooling.

We commend the very hardworking Chaplain of the Diocesan Children's Ministry The Rev. Canon Olufemi Igbamerun and his team, with the teachers for the outstanding performance of our children and also for the cash gifts extended to them.

Some of the children proceeded to represent our Province with others at the National Quiz Competition held during the National Teachers Conference at Diocese of Gwagwalada from Thursday, 29th August to Sunday, 1st September, 2019. They took the fourth position!

4. Our Diocesan ACM response to the Challenge of COVID-19

In order to assist parents in providing spiritual nurture and care for our children and teenagers during the period of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Diocesan ACM Constituted a team called "Jesus-19 team" which prepared weekly Bible Studies and sent out to the children online through their parents and pastors. Some other Dioceses also patronized these studies through the National ACM platform.

A similar method of reaching the children was adopted by the ACM leadership during the National/Diocesan children's week celebration from Monday 25th to Sunday 31st May, 2020.

CLERGY & CHURCH WORKERS CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

Annual Christmas holidays retreat held from Sunday, 15th to Tuesday, 17th December, 2019 at the BCMSS, Rumuobiokani. The retreat coordinated by Mrs. Seun Ijaware and Chaplain, Rev. Samuel Fedigha had as theme: "Guard Your Heart" (Prov. 24:3).

ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL, DISCIPLESHIP, LITERATURE AND PUBLICATIONS MINISTRY (SSDLPM)

In keeping with their vision to '*excite genuine hunger and love for the undiluted Gospel among Diocesan faithful*' this ministry has continued to assist in strengthening the overall spiritual life of the Diocese through the various publications as well as holding retreats and workshops for Sunday School teachers across the churches of the Diocese.

Some of their activities within the synod year include:

1. **The Diocesan Bible Week** which presumably held in all the local churches from the 28th October to 3rd November 2019 on the theme: “AS IN THE DAYS OF NOAH” (Matthew 24:37-39, Genesis 6:2-14). The high point of the 2019 Bible Week was a Diocesan Bible quiz competition held at Bethel Church Rumuibekwe Parish on Saturday, 2nd November, 2019. Attendance and participation were very encouraging.

*The result of the quiz competition was as follows: *1st position, Woji Archdeaconry,

*2nd position, Evo South East Archdeaconry

*3rd position, Trinity Missionary Archdeaconry.

The Bible Week programme was capped by Corporate Sunday School on the theme in most of the Churches in our Diocese.

2. Diocesan Sunday School and Discipleship Ministry’s end of year Prayer Meeting held on 14th December, 2019 at Anglican Church of the Resurrection, Rumuomasi.
3. A One Day Mandatory Retreat/Training for all Adult Sunday School/Discipleship Teachers was held at the 8th February, 2020, at Church of the Holy Spirit, Eliozu Parish.
4. They participated in the 2020 C. O. N. Publications Writers' Workshop hosted by the Diocese of Owerri at St. James Church, Uzzi from Monday, 17th to Thursday, 21st February;

*Participated actively in the writing and editing processes of the CON Bible Study Outlines and the Daily Fountain.

We have noted that, year after year, our Sunday school manuals have been grossly underused, to the point that most of the topics covered were merely there occupying spaces and may not even have caught the attention of many who were not deliberately searching for them. We charge the clergy, church teachers and leaders of the Adult Sunday School Ministry in our churches to dust up all past manuals and fish out such study subjects which may meet their needs on different seasons and occasions of the church.

DIOCESAN PRAYER MINISTRY

Diocesan Prayer Chain against COVID-19

In responding spiritually to the coronavirus Pandemic, we mobilized the Diocese to the place of prayer for the plague to be stayed across the world and for the spiritual health of members of the Diocese during the lockdown.

Those who responded to our call were grouped into two Daily Prayer watches at 9am to 12 noon and 3pm-6pm. Coordinated by The Rev. Chukwuemeka Udeh and Church Teacher David Wopara – Diocesan Prayer Chaplains. The volunteers stood faithfully in the place of prayer every day and covered duty for everyone else.

We are eternally grateful to as many as heeded to the invitation and came out with others or on their own interceded during the period.

INDUSTRIAL, BUSINESS AND WORKPLACE CHAPLAINCY

We commend this Chaplaincy under the leadership of the Rev. Canon Ugochukwu Lawrence Nwahaghi for their continued spiritual oversight in the industrial communities within our Diocese.

They have continually maintained their weekly/monthly fellowships in the establishments as well as prayer/fasting programmes in some of their fellowship centres.

Within the synod year they have extended their ministerial influence to the following firms:

1. Benue Link (Transport Company) at Eleme Junction
2. Akwa Ibom Transport Company (AKTC), Aba Road by Oil Mill
3. Chinaka Integrated Farm limited, Iriebe
4. F. L. Nwamae Associate (A law Firm) at YKC Junction, Woji and
5. La Luz Global Resource LTD, Rumuobioakani

Business owners who are members of our Diocese that are yet to identify with the ministry should avail themselves of the grace of God through this Chaplaincy.

The Chaplaincy has a busy period ahead as the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic hopefully relaxes. Businesses are fast returning and new ones springing up. This will definitely mount pressure on the few members of the Chaplaincy. We therefore call on interested persons especially the youth to volunteer to serve God in this area and help cover more grounds as well as maintain the existing ones.

DIOCESAN LAY WORKERS CHAPLAINCY

This Chaplaincy is saddled with providing spiritual guidance, fellowship and the interpretation of acceptable standards of operation for lay workers in the Diocese.

The chaplaincy held several meetings and programmes during the synod-year such as

Combined fellowship/meetings, end of year (2019) love feast, beginning of the year (2020) fasting & prayer retreat, etc. to strengthen members for both their spiritual and administrative roles in the Diocese.

A major achievement of the chaplaincy for the period under review is the formulation of a policy guideline for all members.

We will like to state here once again that this chaplaincy was created by us to cater for and coordinate the spiritual activities/wellbeing of all non-clerical staff of the Diocese – account clerks, administrative officers, sextons, yardmen/gardeners, drivers, etc, etc.

Programmes and activities of this chaplaincy are mandatory for all those concerned. We have continued to receive reports of lack of interest and even non-participation by some of these workers who blame their attitude on their bosses, the priests. This is not acceptable to us. Consequently we charge the priests of our churches to endeavor to always release these workers under them for activities of the chaplaincy.

The gains of their participation in the chaplaincy's activities will ultimately be of all-round benefit to both the priests and the churches where they serve.

Henceforth, the chaplain is to submit to us reports of participation or otherwise by the workers concerned.

PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS MINISTRY (PPSSM)

The Ministry sent out a team of evangelists to preach in various schools and ministered to both students and teachers. They also conducted quiz for some selected schools. Questions were drawn from Mathematics, English, General Science and Bible Knowledge. 12 schools were present with Archdeacon Brown Education Centre emerging the overall best.

On Friday, 21st February, 2020 the ministry conducted a **Variety Day** at Bryno International School, Igbo-Etche Road. It had a talk on the theme “Society of Insanity,” which led to Altar call and prayers. Other features include debate and drama presentations on the theme by the various schools, spelling bee. A total of 190 staff and students represented the various participating schools. The host School, Bryno International School took the first position in the drama presentation while Rosaline Memorial School, Woji was the best in debate and spelling bee.

The Diocese procured and distributed through this chaplaincy 1,600 copies of the CON published “Daily Dynamites” (youth edition of the “Daily Fountain”) among the various schools under the Ministry’s coverage. Both staff and students of these schools were excited receiving the publications and promised to make good use of them.

The Ministry has also continued **Publication of the Yearly Magazine, “CHRISTO-INTELLECTUAL”**: The third edition was published in February 2020. 1,000 copies were distributed to the public free-of-charge. As the caption of the magazine goes, it featured articles that are targeted to building the life of the youths spiritually and intellectually. Also published were activities of the ministry within the period under review.

Archdeacon Brown Education Centre (ABEC), Woji

Our chaplaincy in that school continues in its efforts to provide spiritual guidance and other forms of pastoral care to students and teachers in this school. Highlights of their activities include

1. Sunday Services by 10am.
2. Catechism Class and Bible Studies every Saturday by 6.00pm.

They also organized the following:

- Christmas Carol of Nine Lessons held on Tuesday, 17th December, 2019.
- Founder’s Day Celebration with the Induction of the New Prefects on Saturday 25th January, 2020.
- A celebration of the institution’s 20th Anniversary with prayers of Thanksgiving and several outdoor activities on Saturday 15th February, 2020.
- Ash Wednesday Service observed on Wednesday, 26th February, 2020 with emphasis on humility.

Pamo University of Medical Sciences. Tap, Iriebe

We established a chaplaincy in this school to cater for the spiritual health of both Anglican and non-Anglican students there. The report of increase in attendance to the chapel’s activities occasioned by a slight adjustment of service time to 10am is a welcomed development. The chaplaincy provides the following services:

- Holy Communion once every month.
- Praise and thanksgiving service on the first and last Sundays every month.
- Counseling sessions every Sunday after service.

The chaplaincy also held other services according to the Anglican liturgical calendar such as the Ash Wednesday and Mothering Sunday. The Rev.

Nzubechukwu Esomonu, Supervising Deacon of the Redeemer's Cross is the Chaplain of this chapel.

DIOCESAN SPORTS MINISTRY

The Sports Ministry took part in the Inter-House Sports of our Diocesan Schools. They prominently officiated at the Archdeacon Crowther Memorial Girls School inter-house sports on February 14th 2020.

We commend them for keeping the Evo Clergy Football Club alive and well particularly with the weekly training and keeping fit activity that is well attended by a large number of our clergymen.

They organized series of friendly matches with Dioceses within and outside our Province as part of the 10th anniversary celebration of our Diocese last year and secured victories.

DIOCESAN PRAYER GROUPS

The reorganized Prayer groups of our churches have since taken off. We commend the Chaplains, Supervisors and coordinators of these groups at both the local church and Diocesan levels for the understanding some of them have so far demonstrated with regards to their carrying out the vision behind the restructuring exercise.

We note however that not every group is growing as we expect. Some chaplains, supervisors and coordinators have not shown much commitment; and we are quite unhappy about this. For every leadership office, the occupants require zeal, passion and commitment to make a positive impact. The groups were established to touch the lives of our members and those outside the church through effective preaching of the gospel, prayers and social actions.

Indifference and Lukewarmness on the part of any leader will definitely impede our vision and aspirations. We charge all prayer group leaders to immediately go about their assigned duties, mobilizing all their members as well to make full proof of the ministries committed to their charge. Those who are not prepared to run with the vision long shared with them and documented in a publication should no longer delay in returning the leadership mandate they received both from us and members of their groups.

BOARDS, DIRECTORATES, INSTITUTIONS AND COMMITTEES

DIOCESAN INVESTMENT BOARD

We established the Diocesan investment Board to anchor investment opportunities of the Diocese with a view to enhancing the revenue base of the Diocese.

The Board verses the operations of the Diocesan Printing Press, the Book/Stationery/Vestment shop and the Diocesan Farm at Atali.

The Board keeps an eye on all Diocesan lands purchased since our inception with a view to safeguarding them from encumbrances.

The Printing Press

The Investment Board has carried out a major reorganization exercise at the Printing Press targeted at improved performance and income generation. Following their recommendation the Diocesan Board has since September last year engaged the services of a consultant/Business Clinic firm – VITAL SOLUTIONS CONSULTANCY to assist the Investment Board in implementing the firm's recommended action plans towards revamping the Evo Press. The Board has equally engaged the services of a new very experienced Operations Supervisor in the person of Mr. Lanre Oyeboode. Between the close of the 2019 synod and now, the Investment Board has carried out a staff audit of the press through the Vital Solutions, installed the Direct Imaging (DI) machine acquired some years back which was left at the Press uninstalled; renovated the Press building and also furnished the offices for staff; engaged the services of MOZ machine maintenance engineers based here in Port Harcourt, thus reducing the cost incurred on those coming from Lagos over the years; the procurement and installation of a New Banner Making Machine at the cost of N3.9m.

It was severally reported to the Diocesan Board that some churches groups and individuals failed to pay for jobs faithfully executed for them by the Press. With our support the Investment Board embarked on a vigorous debt recovery drive and was able to recover much of the debts totaling **over Four Million Naira**. We are completely opposed to the ugly and fraudulent practice of people, churches and groups not paying for the services they have received at the Printing Press; what they will not do in other non-church owned business outfits. We see this as a calculated attempt at ruining the business of the Diocesan Press, only to turn round and accuse the firm of poor performance. The following churches/groups are reported by the Diocesan Investment Board to be owing for jobs executed for upwards of one year and above:

S/N	Names of Debtor Churches/Groups	Job done	Balance
1	St. Andrew's CMF	25th Anniversary Programme	N60,000

2	St. Matthias', Atali District	Report Programme, 2019	N1, 000
3	Woji Archdeaconry W.G. Conference	2018 Programme	N50, 000
4	St. Nicholas', Wojí District	Bulletin 17/2/2017	N10, 000
5	Woji Archdeaconry	2019 Synod Jotter	N160, 000
6	Evo Diocesan Anglican Youth Fellowship (AYF)	2018 & 2019 Bible Study Conference Programmes/Addresses	N284, 000
7	Diocesan Music Ministry	2019 Conference Programme	N35,000
8	Former Evo S/E Archdeaconry (Paraclete Deanery & Iriebe Archdeaconry)	Funeral Programme of late wife of Rev. Frankincense Chukwuma	N150, 000
9	Chapel of Grace & Knowledge, ACMGS, Elelenwo	2018 10x8 Banner	N16,000
10	BCMSS, Rumuobiokani	Exercise Books	N239, 000
11	Anglican Church of the Pentecost, Rumuogba	2018 Boys Brigade Programme	N5, 000

We hereby direct them to immediately offset their debts without further delay. We equally advise the staff of the Printing Press to NEVER AGAIN act irresponsibly by accepting and executing jobs that are not fully paid for.

Book/Stationery/Vestment Shop

This Diocesan Investment outfit is doing fairly well since its take off in March, 2019. Within a year of its operations the shop has procured goods worth close to three million Naira and sold items worth over N4.9m. it recorded a gross profit margin of N2, 085, 703.54 and a net profit of N1, 494, 703.54.

The shop was established to meet the needs of churches and members of the Diocesan community in the areas of Christian literatures, stationery materials and clergy vestments. We call on all to encourage the businesses of the shop by patronizing its goods and services. We hereby commend and thank all members of the Investment Board led by Sir Chief Gilbert Chuku for all their efforts at repositioning our Diocesan Investments for improved revenue yield.

Diocesan Farm

The Projects Committee of the Dioceses has successfully completed the fencing project at the Atali Diocesan Farm. We thank the Committee headed by Sir Promise Eze Wodi.

Notwithstanding, this move aimed at securing the plantain farm, we have continued to suffer serious setback at the farm following the continuing theft of the fruits by unknown persons before they get mature for harvest.

We trust the Lord to help us find an enduring solution to this sabotage.

PURCHASE OF ADDITIONAL PLOTS OF LAND

In readiness for the development of our proposed forth Diocesan secondary school, “SEED OF DAVID ACADEMY”, we have acquired another 50 plots of land in addition to the initial 30 earlier acquired beside the Shell Pipeline at Atali. The total cost of purchase is N174m. Payment for this purchase has been on instalmental basis. By the grace of God we hope to offset the outstanding balance of N54m within the first and second quarter of 2021.

SOCIAL WELFARE DIRECTORATE

Our Response to the Welfare Challenge of COVID-19

At our directive, the Diocesan Directorate of Social Welfare embarked upon a drive across the Diocese to raise relief with which we were to extend support and assistance to some needy members of the Diocese particularly in the area of food and beverages.

We deeply appreciate as many as made donations of cash and food items towards that outreach which we extended to well over 160 parishioners from all the churches of the Diocese. We thank the following (in no particular order) for their generous donations and assistance which amounted to over N1.5m:

- Madam Eunice Okenwa
- Sir Mayor & Lady Chijioke Tasie
- Mrs. Angelina Orianwo
- Sir & Lady Onweluzo
- Sir & Lady Victor Dania
- Lady Bibian Nnoli
- Amb. & Mrs. Bright Chukwu
- Sir & Lady Prof. Okeke Gibson
- Lady Ndidi Utchay
- Mrs. Ebele Okafor
- Mrs. Ichebadu D. Emma
- Sir & Dame Orakwue
- Chief & Mrs. O. C. Wali
- Barr. Chinyenye Agbo
- Mrs. Ibinabo Obuofoforibo
- L. A. Kings hotel
- Lady Wobia
- Engr. Chika T. Amadi

- Engr. Kingsley N. T. C. Amadi
- Evangelist & Mrs. Silas Ekezie
- Lady Chibuzor Ani
- Chief Mrs. Gloria Wali
- Lady Glory Nwachinyere
- Mrs. Patricia Ella
- Sir & Lady Ray Amadi
- Mr. & Mrs. Edeki
- Mr. & Mrs. Lawrence Chinda
- Sir & Lady Chinedu Amadi-Worlu
- Sir & Lady Mike Ejims-Enwukwe
- Mr. Emmanuel Chiejina
- Engr. & Mrs. Chinike Amadi
- Elder & Ezinne Babs Abinusawa
- Mrs. Nneka Ilogu
- Mrs. Kate Jaja
- Sir & Lady Enyinda Owabie
- Sir & Lady Chukwuma Onwuchekwa
- Engr. & Mrs. Uzoma Odumodu
- Sir & Lady Ike Chinwo
- Sir Archt. & Lady Charles O. Chuku
- Hon. Martin Chike Amaewhule
- Mrs. Ebi Nwibani
- Engr. & Mrs. Emeka Ajere
- Mrs. Stella Chimenem Amadi
- Mr. Tosin Ajayi
- Sir Chief & Lady Ernest Chinwo
- Sir & Lady P.W.O. Owhor
- Mrs. Ijeoma C. James
- Lady Christy Onukem
- Dame Priscilla Nosiri
- Mrs. Joy Madume
- Mr. Onyeogu Victor Chukwunonyerem
- Surveyor & Mrs. Gaius Asor
- Lolo Agnes Ezenta
- Sir & Lady Ike Mgbemena
- Engr. & Mrs. Charles Onyedinma
- Sir & Lady Adol Opara
- Mrs. Uloma Opike
- Evo Diocesan Council of Knights

- Diocesan Mothers Union/Women's Guild
- Archdeacon Crowther Memorial Girls' School, Elelenwo
- All Saints' Cathedral Women's Fellowship
- A number of anonymous donors

In the same vein the Diocese also made (through the Diocesan Women Garment Industry) and freely distributed close to 4000 pieces of facemasks to all the churches in the Diocese as part of efforts to encourage parishioners' adherence to health/safety measures against the COVID-19 pandemic.

Our gratitude also goes to Lady Bibian Nnoli and all members of the Diocesan Directorate of Social Welfare for their zeal in mobilizing the Diocese to raise the needed material support.

Intervention by the Various Administrative Blocs and their Churches

The various administrative blocs of our Diocese and churches under them raised relief materials to cater for some of their needy (indigent) members during the period of the lock-down.

Below is the summary of what was done which we equally forwarded to the offices of the Primate and the Archbishop of our Province as requested.

S/N	ADMINISTRATIVE BLOC	RELIEF ITEMS DISTRIBUTED	VALUE (₦)	PERSO NS REACH ED	REMARKS
1	All Saints' Cathedral, Rumuokwurusi	Rice, Beans, Chicken, Yam, Etc	N903, 300	102	
2	Rumuomasi Deanery	Garri, Beans, Rice, Yam, Etc	N828,200	213	
3	Rumuobiokani Deanery	Rice, Garri, Yams, Etc	N1,183,000	355	
4	Woji Archdeaconry	Bags of Rice, Beans, Garri, Indomie, Etc	N1,103,500	263	
5	Oginigba Deanery	Rice, Beans, Garri, Indomie, Yam, Oil, Etc	N724,000	175	
6	Okporo/Rumuogba Archdeaconry	Bags of Rice, Beans, Yams, Garri, And Medical Supplies, Etc	N730,000	180	
7	Paraclete Deanery	Yams, Beans, Onions, Etc	N410,000	32	
8	Trinity Archdeaconry	Rice, Indomie, Yams,	N724,500	188	

		Garri, Etc			
9	Iriebe Archdeaconry	Rice, Beans, Garri, Etc	N596,400	156	
10	Diocesan Churches	Rice, Garri & Cash	N100,000	25	
11	Diocesan Council Of Knights	Food Items & Cash	N800,000	210	
	*Rumuobiokani Deanery Chapter	Food & Cash to priests & needy church members	N400,000		
12	DIOCESAN Christian Men's Fellowship	Rice, Meat, Beans, Cash, Etc	N400,000	72	
		Grand Total of relief materials in cash=N8, 902,900.00			

We commend the Archdeacons/Rectors, priests, church teachers and leaders of the various activity groups for their thoughtfulness and kind gesture at a time of need.

Rivers Anglican Dioceses Support Government Fight against COVID-19

Our Diocese of Edo collaborated with seven other Anglican Dioceses in Rivers State to support the State Government in its fight against the Novel Coronavirus pandemic with a donation of 100 pieces of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) amounting to the sum of N3million.

We appreciate the churches and institution of our Diocese listed below for their generous cash donations which enabled us to partner with the other Dioceses. They are:

S/N	CHURCH/INSTITUTION	AMOUNT DONATED
1	All Saints' Cathedral, Rumuokwursi	N100,000
2	St. Michael's, Rumuomasi Deanery	N100,000
3	St. Andrew's, Rumuobiokani Deanery	N150,000
4	St. Mark's, Elelenwo Deanery	N100,000
5	St. Nicholas', Woji District	N100,000
6	Church of the Holy Spirit, Paraclete Denary	N100,000
7	Oroigwe/Eliogbolo Archdeaconry	N50,000
8	New Wine, East/West Road Parish, Okporo	N100,000
9	Okporo/Rumuogba Archdeaconry	N100,000
10	Chapel of Grace & Knowledge, ACMGS, Elelenwo	N80,000
11	Daystar Youth Church, Rumuokwursi	N40,000
12	BCMSS, Rumuobiokani	N120,000
	Total	N1,100,000

On her

part, the Rivers State Government through the Ministry of Health donated to the Diocese of Eyo 20 cans of four liters and 10 bottles of 500 milliliter of Hand Sanitizer for distribution to our churches and use in the Bishop's Court at the outbreak of the virus. Due to the limited number of these items only a few churches benefited from the distribution.

We thank the Rivers State Ministry of Health for the gesture.

Also, the COVID-19 Palliative Committee of the Rivers State Government through the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) and the Christian Council of Nigeria (CCN) donated 30 tubers of yam and some other food items to our Diocese. We distributed them to three retired clergymen and wives of three deceased clergymen. We thank the state government for the support.

BISHOP'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON EMPOWERMENT

Our office through the Advisory Committee on Economic Empowerment presented starter packs to 25 graduates from its skills acquisition programme during the 2020 Diocesan Rededication Service held at the All Saints' Cathedral, Rumuokwurusì.

Recipients of the business starter packs were trained in Catering, fashion designing, laundry and textile, hair dressing, decoration and bead-making. They were presented gas cookers and ovens, gas cylinders and regulators, electric sewing and weaving machines, washing machines, generator, electric steam-iron, hair dryers and other saloon accessories, chair-covers and fabrics.

We commend the efforts of Dame Priscilla Nnosiri and Sir Chidi Osuji, our advisers on economic empowerment for their commitment towards the economic development of our youths.

EYO DIOCESAN EDUCATION BOARD AND SCHOOLS

To the glory of God, the three existing Diocesan schools; Archdeacon Crowther Memorial Girls School (ACMGS), Elelenwo, Bishop Crowther Memorial Secondary School (BCMSS), Rumuobiokani and Woji Town Word of Faith Group of Schools (WOFGS), Woji have continued to make steady progress under the leadership of the Education Board headed by Sir Victor O. Dania and the Principals and staff of the Schools.

The Education Board continues to progress the following key objectives;

- To attain accreditation by the Association of Christian Schools International ((ACSI)
- Implementation of Personnel & Organizational Management Systems to improve governance
- Information and Computer Technology (ICT)-enhanced operations to make the Schools operations and management to be electronic and online,

Additionally, the Education Board is charged with supervising the Parish Schools to ensure that they meet the appropriate Diocesan and Government standards, and lately, the Board has initiated strategies and plans towards the establishment of a new model Diocesan Secondary School.

Following the pre-accreditation candidacy visit of Mr. Mike Epps, Global VP of ACSI, the Education Board has continued to drive implementation of the recommendations for accreditation, notably the infrastructural upgrades, and the curriculum-based initiatives, through the Board's Performance Improvement Coordinator, the Rev. Canon Olufemi Igbamerun.

Significant progress has also been made in formally issuing for use some key Policies and Procedures to improve governance, while e-filing and e-learning are ICT tools already deployed, the latter fortuitously during the COVID-19 shutdown of Schools.

Parish Nursery/Primary Schools

The Education Board has continued in the roles of supervising and regulating the Parish Schools in the Diocese. These are namely:

All Saints' Nursery/Primary School, Rumuokwurusu

St. Michael's School, Rumuomasi

St. Mark's School, Elelenwo

Limited progress has been made by these Parish schools over the last year, and much still needs to be done to bring them up to the quality standards of the Diocese, especially in the areas of administration, quality of teaching staff and environmental upkeep. They must brace up to compete with the best of private schools around them, and not hide under the spiritual umbrella of their mother Churches. So far, only the All Saints' Nursery/Primary School is known to have initiated the process leading to Government approval.

All three Parish Schools are hereby directed to ensure full approval by the State Ministry of Education before the end of this year. The Education Board will introduce an appraisal system to identify and reward performing and non-performing staff as appropriate.

The Leadership of the relevant Parishes are also hereby charged to exercise a greater degree of governance over their Nursery/Primary schools to ensure quality standards.

Rivers State Government Registration and Approval of Diocesan Schools

We are pleased to report that the Rivers State Government granted Full Approval to ACMGS and BCMSS to continue to operate both the Nursery, Primary and Secondary Schools, WOFGS was granted interim approval, pending provision of an appropriately-sized playground. Work is already at an advanced stage to enhance the existing facilities to meet the requirements.

New Diocesan School (Seed of David Academy)

Following discussion and agreement at the last Synod to initiate plans towards the establishment of a new Diocesan School, the Education Board has obtained Diocesan Board consensus on the specifications for the school. This includes being a mixed school that will from inception meet national and appropriate international standards and curricula, and to be located at a new site on the Diocesan land at Atali.

Financing options being considered include joint-venture partnership with interested and suitable individuals from within and outside the Diocese and organizations. We shall very shortly be inviting to a meeting those who will be willing to work with the Diocese in this joint-venture arrangement.

Students' Spiritual, Academic, and Extra-Curricular Activities

To the glory of God, the Diocesan schools continue to grow in numerical strength, with a combined population at the end of the 2nd Term of 1,880 students/pupils at all levels, compared to 1,710 last year, while staff population has increased from 290 to 301.

We, the Bishop, undertook episcopal visits to all the Schools in October, which included celebrating the Eucharist with students and staff.

The Schools have registered relevant students for the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) and Senior Secondary Certificate Examinations (WAEC/NECO) respectively which were however suspended due to the Covid-19 Pandemic. Meanwhile, with the resultant closure of schools, the Diocesan schools started online classes from the last week of April, first for exam classes, and subsequently for all classes including the Primary School.

The schools equally organized online classes to better prepare the students for the JAMB examinations. The closure of the schools in a way, has helped in fast-tracking the plans hitherto initiated by the Schools for e- teaching and learning, and we hereby direct that this development should henceforth be an integral part of our schools' teaching methods.

We believe God that academic performance of our students will continue its steady improvement and we enjoin the Education Board, Principals and Staff to continue striving towards making the Diocesan Schools to be the "Schools of first choice in all ramifications".

Our students continue to excel and make notable achievements in extra-curricula areas,

- ❖ ACMGS celebrated the International Day of the Girl Child on 11th October, 2019. The Rotary Club joined in the celebration with a lecture after which they donated items to the senior students. Miss Precious Eburuche, was overall winner at an Essay Competition organized by the University of Benin Alumni Association, Port Harcourt Branch involving 6 Participants each from thirty-six Schools.
- ❖ BCMSS Students are participating in the Science Project Exhibition of the Society of Petroleum Engineers by constructing a mini biogas plant, that will generate cooking gas from waste. Also BCMSS student, Master Nadum Nadum Zobari, is through to the last ten of the Rotary Club's Mathematics Competition, while 8 other students qualified for the final stages of the Einstein Challenge Season VIII. The School's Choristers came 3rd in a choir competition also organized by Rotary Club International,
- ❖ WOFGS marked the Founder's Day in memory of Late Dame Beatrice Eke at a religious Service in the palace of Eze Leslie Eke (Eze Gbakagbaka, Eze Oro Evo III, Evo Kingdom), and Master Don Ijaware emerged the overall best in Woji zone at the Mathematics competition organized by Royal Mathematics Challenge Academy Rivers State. The school awaits the result of the competition with other zones in the State.

Staff Development

We recognise that our staff constitutes some of the most valuable assets we have, and so their training and development continue to be of utmost priority. To this end, our staff participated in the following major training programs, among others:

- ❖ Regular pre-resumption retreat and training at the beginning of every term for all staff.
- ❖ The Schools ensured that all teachers registered with the Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN), in compliance with Government guidelines. Our teachers sat for the examinations and all released results were successful.
- ❖ We, the Bishop, with the Principal and one Vice Principal from each school attended the International Training and Exposure Conference For School Owners/Administrators in Africa (ITECSAA) held at the Dubai World Trade Centre from 23rd Feb, 2020, The programme organized by Global Education Supplies and Solution (GESS) aimed to expose African Schools Administrators and Teachers to modern techniques and technologies of the 21st Century Education like Robotics, Artificial Intelligence, Virtual Learning etc.
- ❖ The Principals also attended a school leadership conference organised by GESS at the Sheraton Hotel Lagos, from 29th October to 1st November, 2019
- ❖ Several of our staff participated in one or more of the following additional training programmes organised by the bodies indicated:
 - Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI) Path to School Improvement Training (PSI) designed for Schools in Africa, to specifically meet their needs in terms of continuous improvement and growth, in order to obtain an ACSI Professional development certificate that is internationally recognized, and that can facilitate accreditation. Staff also attended the PSI for Cohort Leaders and PSI for School Leaders programmes.
 - Education Initiatives Nigeria (EIN)/Global Education Solutions and Services (GESS):
Management Staff attended the GESS/EIN Conferences on 29th to 30th October, 2019 in Lagos. These Conferences presented latest and emerging trends and global best practices in education. Furthermore, all Management Staff participated in a free EIN online training discussing strategies for school to survive, wax great and move forward post COVID-19.
 - School Administrators Training Institute (SATI):
Management Staff participated in this online training in April/May, 2020 which considered digitization, globalization,, robotics, among several other matters of contemporary education.

- British Council: A 3-day Connecting Classrooms Programme for training on Core Skills in August, 2019 with. follow-up trainings in September, 2019 and February, 2020.

Infrastructural Developments

Following the major projects dedicated in the 3 schools last year, efforts to completely upgrade and modernize the infrastructure in all our schools continue with the following projects being undertaken this new year;

❖ ACMGS:

- Three hand-wash stations have been built, commissioned and are now in use to meet the hand washing requirements of Covid-19
- Renovation and expansion of the former Computer Laboratory into a Computer Based Test (CBT) Centre by the PTA is on-going.. Plans include to equip the Centre with up to one hundred and thirty five (135) networked stations.
- Work on the New Dormitory Complex was put on hold after the foundation laying ceremony due to scarcity of funds. Efforts are ongoing to source for funds externally.

❖ BCMSS:

- The school has embarked on the construction of a 170-metre long drainage from the back of the dormitory block to link the front of the dining hall and staff quarters in order to further address the flooding situation in the premises.
- New Wooden Bunks are being constructed to eventually phase out the fragile metal ones.

❖ WOFGS:

- The PTA of the school financed the concrete flooring of the frontage of the New Classrooms block and the laying of an underground drainage pipe while the school undertook flooring of the kitchen area, all to check the perennial flooding of the premises.
- The School is also purchasing additional 10 computers with UPS and 12 computer tables in addition to construction of Classrooms desks and some dormitory Bunks.

Special Donations and Support

We are grateful to the PTAs of our 3 Schools for undertaking the infrastructural projects mentioned above and others hereunder, We appreciate them for being true partners with the Diocese in the continuous upgrading and improvement of our schools.

Our gratitude also goes to all those others, 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;

❖ ACMGS

The ACMGS Old Girls Association of North America led by Mrs. Deborah Abbey gave bursaries of N50,000 to each of the 57 SS3 students at an impressive ceremony. We note that this is the third time this set of Old Girls Association made such notable donation to their alma mater, in addition to equipping the Mathematics Laboratory four years ago.

- RSUBEB renovated a twin Dormitory block and donated office and classroom furniture for the Nursery/Primary Section. We are very grateful to our Ven. (Dr.) Fyनेface N. Akah, JP who graciously facilitated these and pray for God to uplift him.
- Members of the Diocese donated the sum of N1,900,000.00 (one million, nine hundred thousand naira only) during the School's Inter house Sports Competition towards the construction of a Sports Complex:
- Mrs. Peniel Diennye-Waribo, a National Youth Service Corps teacher in the School donated Physics Textbooks for four best performing students in her class. We commend her.

❖ BCMSS

- The PTA in an effort to facilitate e-Learning donated 15 Computers Systems and 18 Projectors for the School Classrooms and Computer Laboratories. This has spurred the ICT drive in teachers and students and come in very useful during the Covid-19 shutdown..

❖ WOFGS

- The PTA donated the sum of N585,920.00 for the underground pipe laying and German flooring of the kitchen/Hostel area of the school as already mentioned above and work has commenced to extend the playground to meet Government specifications.
- Mrs. Ngozi Oyewole (nee Eke) gave 50 pieces of wrapper to the staff of the school as she does annually.
- The MU/WG of St Andrews (Ang.) Church, Rumuobiokani donated food items for the students.

On behalf of the Diocese, we wish to thank all those who have consistently supported the Schools over the years, notably RSUBEB, Rotary Club, Society of Petroleum Engineers, the ACMGS Old Girls, the PTAs of the 3 Schools and Mrs Ngozi Oyewole (nee Eke).

The Evo Diocesan 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 or partner with us in any of the following areas of need or as they are led;

- 1) Development of the New Diocesan School, The Seed of David School
- 2) New hostel building at ACMGS, for which the foundation laying ceremony has been done,
- 3) New staff quarters at both ACMGS and BCMSS

- 4) Construction of internal roads especially at BCMSS.
- 5) Irrigation and re-grassing of the Sports Fields at both ACMGS and BCMSS, being outstanding requirements to qualify for the ACSI accreditation;
- 6) Appropriately-sized diesel generators in the 3 schools for full lighting of entire compounds to avoid dark spots at night.
- 7) 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.

BISHOP ELENWO MEMORIAL HOSPITAL, RUMUOBIOKANI

The Diocesan Bishop Elenwo Memorial Hospital established in May, 2017 has continued to provide medical services in the areas of General Consultation and Drugs, Laboratory Investigation and Diagnostics tests, Hospitalization, Annual Physical Examination, Antenatal Care/Delivery, General Surgeries, Accident and Emergency Services, and Eye Clinic through the efforts of its 19 dedicated and hardworking staff.

The hospital enjoys has continued to witness an improvement/increase in patients' inflow. Between May, 2019 and May, 2020 it registered a total of 660 patients, performed 14 successful deliveries and 2 surgeries. In all, from its inception to date, the hospital has attended to a total of 1, 733 patients, carried out 49 successful deliveries and 5 surgeries.

We undertook through the Diocesan Projects Committee major renovation works at the facilities of the Bishop Elenwo Memorial Hospital, Rumuobiokani.

We are grateful to the Rivers State Ministry of Health for allocating a Youth Corps Doctor to serve in the hospital since May this year and also the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) for inviting four of our hospital staff to take part in a One-Day Training workshop for healthcare workers on the containment and management of COVID-19 pandemic in the Niger Delta region.

REPORTS FROM THE ADMINISTRATIVE BLOCS/CHURCHES

1. All Saints' Cathedral, Rumuokwurusi

- The Council of Knights of the Cathedral, furnished a one-bed Sick Bay and handed over to the Cathedral church.
- The Anglican Youth Fellowship now runs a Tuck Shop in the Cathedral to boost their finances of the Fellowship. We commend these two arms of the Cathedral.

2. Rumuomasi Deanery

- St. Michael's, Rumuomasi Deanery built and donated in perpetuity a lodge of 2 self-contained apartments for members of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) serving at the Community Secondary School, Rumuomasi.
- The Christian Men's Fellowship of the church built and handed over to the church a two section toilets of 4 rooms each.
- Mr. Lucky Adele donated the sum of N1.5m for the purchase of a New Engine for the Church's Coaster Bus.
- HRH, Eze Sir Raymond Chinda, JP, Nyenwe-eli Rumuezeolu, Rumuomasi, supported the church in the payment of the workers' January salaries with the sum of N500,000.00, and also donated a new Toyota Sienna car to Anglican Church of the Resurrection, Rumuomasi.

We commend the Deanery for her sacrifices towards the welfare of the members of the NYSC and also thank the CMF, Mr. Adele and Eze Raymond Chinda for their enormous support to the Deanery.

3. St. Andrew's Church, Rumuobiokani Deanery

We commend the Deanery Council for erecting a 3-Bedroom flat for the family of a hardworking deceased member of the church, Mr. Chukwuma Anele. Work on the project is 95% completed.

4. St. Mark's, Elelenwo Deanery

The Deanery celebrated in a special way their Patron Saint, Mark's Day, 2020 with a lecture on the topic: "The Sainthood and Ministry of Saint Mark, the Evangelist: Its significance, challenges and implications to today's Anglican faithful.

By the grace of God we were honoured with invitation to deliver this maiden lecture on Friday, 24th April, 2020 and also ministered during the Patron Saints' Day thanksgiving/Eucharistic services on Sunday, 26th April.

We commend the Venerable Azubike Ugoha, Rector of Elelenwo Deanery, the Chairman, Sir Chief Mike Ejims-Enwukwe and members of the Planning Committee for a well-packaged Patron Saint's Day programme.

From the lessons drawn from the rich history, ministry and life of Saint Mark, it has become necessary for us to challenge all other churches in the Diocese to begin to properly commemorate and highlight on the appointed day in the lectionary, the history of the lives of the Patron Saints of their churches.

Some of the Prayer Groups bearing the names of some of the apostles and saints of the Christian Church should endeavor to celebrate them as we have already directed in their manual of operation.

We all have a lot to learn from the faith of these heroes and heroines of the faith.

5. Woji Archdeaconry

At Woji Archdeaconry, **Christ Church Federal Housing Estate Parish** with the Rev. Collins Daniel as Vicar is embarking on a major renovation of their church building in preparation for the coming 20th anniversary of the church in September this year. We commend the efforts of the Parish in this regard.

The Christian Men's Fellowship (CMF) of the Parish recently purchased and donated a 20KVA Generator to the Church while the women (MU/WG) are building a kitchen and store for the church.

At **King David Anglican Church, RSTV, Iriebe** with Mr. Cherechi Ndukauba as Church Teacher, the CMF of the Station has completed the flooring of the Church auditorium, extended the decking of the Children's Department and also sank a Borehole for the Church.

We appreciate the men of the Station and pray for God's blessings on them.

Cornerstone Anglican Church, Rumurolu.

Following the need to relocate this church station from its present hidden site along the railway line at Rumurolu and to make it more central and easily accessible to members of the community, our office as Bishop has acquired three new plots of land at the cost of N45,000,000 (Forty Five Million Naira) where the church will in a short while move over to.

We have since taken possession of this new parcel of land located at No. 37 Elijiji Road, Rumurolu and prayed over it on Sunday, 5th April, 2020. The station on its part has since commenced the construction of a sizeable new church building on the land.

With this development Cornerstone Anglican Church, Rumurolu will now have to sacrifice the old site to the Diocese for the development of a proposed small place of retreat.

6. St. Jude's, Oginigba Deanery

We thank God for the ongoing new church building project of St. Jude's, Oginigba Deanery. We commend the efforts of some members of the church particularly in this synod year which has greatly hastened the progress and quality of work in the new building and church compound. Worthy of note are the installation of the stair case and gallery rails by Elder George Ariolu and Chief Stanley Dike; installation of ceiling fans and gallery ceiling lights by Dr. Bright Amadi; tiling of the gallery and conference rooms by Dr. Bright Amadi and Mr. Temple Ariolu; and the ongoing interlocking of the entire church compound by Hon. Martin Chinda.

May the good Lord reward them abundantly for these sacrifices.

Okporo/Rumuogba Archdeaconry (newly created)

- **St. Simon's, Okporo District**

We visited St. Simon's Church, Okporo Deanery (now District) on Sunday, 27th October, 2019 for the confirmation of 31 candidates. A day earlier, on Saturday, 26th we paid special visits to some notables of the Deanery and Okporo Community as a whole. These include HRH Eze Sir Morgan N. Amadi, the Paramount Ruler of Okporo and dedicated his new palace at Mgbuesilaru, Eze Ken Iwezor, the Paramount Ruler of Mgbuesilaru Community, Okporo, Eze John Enyinda Amadi, the Paramount Ruler of Rumuodara Community, Okporo, Pa Isaiah Amadi (of Mgbuesilaru) and a foremost member of St. Simon's, Okporo now close to 112 years, the family of Late Hon. Mrs. Forstina Wali who while alive laboured so much for this Diocese and the women ministry and the family of Barrister Iyke Emelogu of Faith Community, Eliowhani who was kidnapped by unknown persons on the 5th of August, 2019 whose whereabouts is still unknown till date.

We ministered in these places and prayed for our hosts. We thank their Highnesses with their councils of chiefs and elders, women and youths of the communities and members of the families visited for their warm receptions, hospitalities and gifts to us.

We thank the **Evo Assembly** led by Elder Peter Chinwo, Hon O. K. Chinda, Hon Solomon Abel Eke for their donation of musical instruments worth ₦2.5million to St. Simon's, Okporo.

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

We dedicated on Saturday, 18th of July, 2020 a parsonage building complex started and completed by the New Wine Anglican Church, East-West Road Parish, Okporo comprising of a 2 no.-3 bedroom flats and 2 no.-1 bedroom flats for the priest and other church workers. We commend the efforts of the Parish at addressing the accommodation needs of the workers through this massive project.

- **Great Shepherd Anglican Church, Mgbuesilaru**

We dedicated the Church's new two-Storey parsonage complex on Sunday, 11th August, 2019. We commend the station which is now applying for a parish status for their successful completion of this project.

Oroigwe/Eliogbolo Archdeaconry

At St. Philip's, Oroigwe District the women of the church padded 30 pews of the church as well as 2 side warden chairs.

The Christian Men's Fellowship of **Holy Trinity, Elingbu Parish** has completed the interlocking of the Church compound, thus giving the premises a new look.

Church of The Holy Spirit, Elioze Parish marked her 20th Anniversary of existence as a congregation on Sunday, 24th of May, 2020. We (the Bishop) were present with the parishioners to mark the low-key occasion which was due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the restrictions imposed against large gatherings and celebrations by the Rivers State Government. We congratulate the Parish for attaining this milestone.

The Parish has completed the solid interlocking of their church premises – a project we learnt was being spearheaded by the late Sir Cyprian Amaewhule whose painful demise occurred on Sunday, 24th May, 2020.

We commend the church for this project and extend our commiserations to the congregation as well as the family of our late brother and knight.

We commend the women of **Mount Zion Anglican Church, Eliogbolo Parish** for their generous donation of the sum of N300, 000 towards the ongoing new church building project.

The application to the Diocesan Board for parish status by **Church of The Advent, Rumuewhara** was approved in principle at the Board meeting held on Saturday, 18th April, 2020 at Church of The Holy Spirit, Paraclete Deanery, Elelenwo.

The new Parish will formally take-off from the 1st of October, 2020 and inauguration shall take place before the end of the year.

We commend the women (MU/WG) of the church for the purchase of an 18-Seater Hiace Bus on Thursday, 20th December, 2019 as part of the celebration their tenth anniversary.

Trinity Archdeaconry

We commend the effort of members and friends of the **Archdeaconry** in their commitment towards the completion of the Archdeacon's House/parsonage.

The MU/WG of **St. Matthias', Atali District** recently donated over N800,000.00 during the decking.

In his continued effort to support the church of God in Atali, Eze Sir T.O.A. Ejekwu donated 16 padded pews to the church. Eze Ejekwu has for some years now accommodated the curate of St. Matthias' in a three bedroom flat. We want to specially appreciate him through the synod and encourage others to develop large hearts of brotherly kindness toward ministers and ministry.

An anonymous individual donated an 8KVA Power Generating set to the church. May God bless this individual.

At **Great Physician Anglican Church Atali**, a family willed a three bedroom flat to the church to serve as Parsonage. We thank this family.

We commend the **New Covenant Church, Eliminigwe Parish, Elelenwo** for acquiring three plots of land for the Anglican Church of The Blessed Virgin Mary (BVM), fencing it and also raising a temporary church building there.

The newly created Church of the Holy Spirit, Paraclete Deanery, Elelenwo, Okporo/Rumuogba and Iriebe Archdeaconries formally took-off on 1st March, 2020 with The Ven. Emmanuel Anyasodo, The Ven. Chidi Worgu and The Ven. Alex Usifoh as their Rector and Archdeacons respectively.

Weekly Financial (10% and 15%) Remittances to the Diocese in 2019: Churches and Group that Performed the Best

The Annual Audit Exercise of last year by the Diocesan Audit Team shows the churches and group that made the most contribution in their weekly remittances to the Diocese. The results are as follows:

Category A (15%) For the Cathedral, Deanery Churches and St. Nicholas, Woji:

1st Position – St. Andrew’s Church, Rumuobiokani Deanery with a total of Seventeen Million, Three Hundred and Eight Thousand, Six Hundred and Seventy One Naira, Ninety One Kobo (**₦17, 308, 671.91**) only. This performance shows a decline from the ₦ 20, 053, 941.02 efforts of the Deanery in 2018. We thank St. Andrew’s for their outstanding performances over the years. The Rector and the Deanery Council should however work harder to take their score to a higher level.

Category B (15%) District Headquarters/Diocesan Churches:

1st Position – New Wine Anglican Church, East-West Road Parish, Okporo , with a total remittance of Four Million, Three Hundred and Forty Two Thousand, Five Hundred and Forty Naira, Four Kobo (**₦ 4,342,540.04**) only. This performance shows an appreciation from the (₦ 3, 777, 912.89) of 2018. We commend New Wine Church, Okporo for this improvement.

Category C (10%) Parish Churches:

1st 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 (**₦1,875,432.70**) only. This is a slight improvement on their 2018 (₦ 1,802,718.84) performance. To New Covenant Church, Eliminigwe Parish, we say well done!

Category D (15%) Station Churches (Stations under the Cathedral and Deaneries):

1st Position – Daystar Anglican Youth Church, Rumuokwurusi with a total remittance of One Million Four Hundred and Twenty Seven Thousand, Five Hundred Seventy Naira (**₦1, 427, 570.00**). This also shows a slight improvement on their 2018 (₦1, 383, 785.00). We also commend the Daystar Youth Church, Rumuokwurusi for this performance.

Category D (10%) Station Churches (Stations under the Archdeaconries):

1st Position – Church of The Advent, Rumuewhara with a total remittance of Nine Hundred and Twenty Seven Thousand, Five Hundred and Thirty Three Naira, Four Kobo only (**₦ 927, 533.04**) only. This performance indicates a drop from that of 2018 which was ₦ 946, 053. 05. We encourage them to do better this year, moreso as the station will be graduating to a Parish church.

Category (E) Worship Centres:

1st Position – Anglican Worship Centre, Iriebe (an outstation of Holy Ghost Church, Iriebe), with a total remittance of One Hundred and Eleven Thousand, One Hundred and Ninety Naira (**₦ 111, 190.00**) only, an improvement on their N83, 785 performance of 2018. We applaud this “baby” church.

Category (F) Diocesan Activity Groups:

1st Position – MU/WG (Women’s Work) with a total remittance of Four Million, Eight Hundred and Ninety Three Thousand, Six Hundred and Eight Naira, Seventeen Kobo (**₦4, 893, 608.17**). This is an appreciable improvement on the N3, 262,446.00 of 2018. We highly commend the women for sustaining their grade A performance since the inception of this Diocese.

Category (G) Archdeaconries:

1st Position – Woji Archdeaconry with a total remittance of One Hundred and Ninety Five Thousand, Seven Hundred and Ninety Five Naira, Fifty Kobo only (**₦ 195, 795.50**) only. This is an improvement on the ₦ 105, 166 .05 of 2018. We thank them but demand a far better performance in this and coming years.

CRUCIAL ISSUES OF CONCERN

1. Church Planting

God’s plan for the world is that the church and the starting of new churches would be the vehicle through which the world would hear, believe and worship the person of

Jesus Christ. ‘His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to his eternal purpose that He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord’ – Eph. 3.10,11.

This is the position of the Global Anglican Future Conference (GAFCON) as well as the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion). From the era of the initial 10 Missionary Dioceses – *Minna, Kafanchan, Katsina, Sokoto, Makurdi, Yola, Maiduguri, Bauchi, Egbado and Ife* created during the “Decade of Evangelism” in the 1990s under the primacy of The Most Rev. Joseph Abiodun Adetiloye to the primacy of The Most Rev. Peter Jasper Akinola, when several more Missionary Dioceses were created within and outside Nigeria under the new mission objectives of the Church tagged Mission 1-1-3, the primary mission and concern of the church has always been to take the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ to everyone in every locality through the planting of more churches and places of worship as a strategy.

This is a task every Anglican Diocese, Parish, Bishop, clergy and leadership team is expected to approach with the spirit of obedience for fruitful results.

Those who receive the word and become saved from their sins are to be nurtured through a systematic Christian discipleship process which would enable them stand strong in their faith. Towards this goal, some of our churches have been steady in their Foundation Bible/Discipleship classes and other methods of enhancing the faith of the new converts.

Planting of new churches is another avenue through which people are quickly nurtured in their faith. As a Diocese, we started well in this regard. It was a regular feature in our Diocesan Synod reports. However, we have noted a near total absence of this in the synod reports of Administrative Blocs and their churches in recent years.

A road map for the planting of more churches by some parishes in the Diocese was drawn by us towards our 7th and 10th anniversaries. As we speak, only a few of these parishes have carried out this all-important task. Others have not, but have rather busied themselves with some other not too important activities. This indifferent posture has very negatively slowed down our growth and mission as a Diocese in this sector. Nothing can be more critical to the life of a congregation than the business of growing God’s church through soul winning and church planting.

We are not pleased that the following Administrative Blocs and churches failed to carry out our directive/charge on the nesting of new congregations within the Diocese. They are:

- Woji Archdeaconry
- St. Michael’s, Rumuomasi Deanery
- St. Andrew’s, Rumuobiokani Deanery
- St. Nicholas, Woji District
- St. Jude’s, Oginigba Deanery
- St. Simon’s, Okporo District
- New Wine, Ease-West Road Parish, Okporo
- St. Matthias’, Atali District

- St. James', Iriebe Parish
- Holy Trinity Church, Elingbu Parish
- Church of The Holy Spirit, Elioza Parish
- Anglican Church of Pentecost, Rumuogba Parish
- Anglican Church of Messiah, Iriebe Parish
- Church of The Epiphany, Azumini-Rumuokwurusi Parish
- Church of The Advent, Rumuewhara.
- Diocesan Anglican Youth Fellowship (DAYF)
- Diocesan Missions, Evangelism and Church Planting Board.

Consistent, regular, well-funded and pragmatic evangelism, resulting in soul winning and church planting should be the topmost ministry priority of every Clergyman, Church Teacher, and councils/committees of our Diocese. It has been said time and time again that as fire exists by burning, so does the church exist by evangelism. A church that fails to evangelize and reproduce itself by starting new congregations has lost purpose of its existence. In the same vein, a minister that is not usually concerned about this aspect of his calling can as well look for other jobs to do. We cannot continue to be indifferent about this matter while our churches continue to be empty with each passing week. Let us show greater zeal and uncompromising commitment to this task and also reflect it in all our actions, budgeting and planning.

The priests, Board and Councils of these Archdeaconry, Deaneries, Parishes and groups are hereby further charged to immediately proceed to actualize without further delay the task of planting new churches which we had given to them at the synods of 2014 and 2016.

2. Loss of ministry focus

We have observed with great concern that some of our pastors and church teachers have since lost the much required concentration and focus for productive ministry in this Diocese. They have left the primary ministerial duties for which they were ordained/commissioned and have busied themselves with the pursuit of other interests. Some have even resorted to private ministry activities at the expense of their Parish and Diocesan commitments resulting in sharp decline in the spiritual and physical growth of churches under their direct care. A visit to a good number of our churches shows that membership/attendances to church service is fast dropping and the pastors there appear not to be worried at all at this development.

In the face of increasing pressures on our parishioners from different external religious groups, our ministers cannot afford to be lukewarm and unconcerned about the spiritual state of affairs in their churches or engage in the pursuit of interests that work against the growth of the church.

We call on all our ministers to wake up from their deep slumber and return back with zeal and genuine commitment to their duty posts. God will hold each pastor accountable for whatever happens to the church committed to his care. Those who are tired and no longer in the mood for progressive and dynamic ministry in the Diocese should immediately step down and leave, rather than remain to gradually kill the churches under them. **Those who continue to slow down the spiritual growth of this**

Diocese will shortly be shown the way out of it. Let this serve as a warning to all concerned!

3. Observance of the Holy Communion in our churches

The celebration of the Holy Communion, the Lord's Supper or the Eucharist has been a practice of the church for thousands of years. It was instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, who instructed us (His followers) to use bread and wine to remember the sacrifice He was going to make when He died for our sins on the cross (1Cor. 11:23-26).

The Bible warns us about taking the Communion without considering what it means and why we're doing it. The intent is not for us to mindlessly celebrate or partake in it as a ritual or routine as we have noted some priests and members now do for reasons far different from the original purpose. At the Communion, the church intentionally sets aside time to remember what Jesus has done and why He did it (1Cor. 11:27-31); and also to draw worshippers closer to Jesus.

From our observation, proper understanding appears to be lacking, thus leading to the abuse we are noticing.

Consequently, we direct that henceforth, Holy Communion services should be held **Not More Than Twice a month**, on Sundays and on special Holy days in our churches. This does not affect the communion we take to the aged communicants and sick members at home and in the hospitals.

The Eucharistic table is a sacred one to which all participants should approach reverently and with the vessels of their hearts and lives preserved undefiled. Also, **the physical vessels we use in the celebration should be in the best of condition**. We therefore charge **every priest to learn to sufficiently separate himself to God in prayerful communion before coming to play any part at the altar**.

Members are coming to receive the cup of blessing; they should be subjected to adequate preparations before they appear at the altar. Henceforth, all old, faded, outdated and unpresentable communion vessels should be withdrawn from our sacarium (Holy Table). Churches should as a matter of urgency and priority set aside funds to acquire new and complete sets, which should be well preserved and kept clean.

Henceforth, churches should be completely responsible for the procurement of Holy Communion elements (Bread/Wafer, Wine and Water). The priests should no longer do so. Officiating at Holy Communion services is part of the several duties of the Ordained Priests. It should not be seen any longer as a source of income generation for the priests. Priests and church workers in this Diocese are adequately paid based on category A of the approved salary structure by the Joint Council, East of the Niger. Only the selfish and greedy will claim otherwise.

From now on, Holy Communion offertories will cease to go to the priest entirely. Such offerings should be wholly paid into the church's account by the relevant officers and details noted in the Preacher's Book of income and expenditure. At the end of the month, the treasurer and accounts clerk should pay only 40% of all monies realized from offertories for that month to the priest(s) and retain the remaining 60% in the church's account for welfare/charity to the needy.

We counsel all priests and church officers not to contemplate flouting this new order as doing so will not be taken lightly.

4. Payment of Tithes

Our Diocese believes in, and teaches all worshippers to faithfully pay their tithe to God as enjoined in the scripture (Malachi 3:8-12).

Tithe is the practice of paying or giving **ten percent (10%)** of one's daily, weekly, monthly or annual produce, income or earnings to the church for the **support of the church's ministries** (programmes and projects) and the payment of the clergy and other workers. This is in addition to the other generous offerings and support we are all encouraged to give to the church from time to time.

It is not an approved or allowed practice in this Diocese for members to take to the clergy, the tithe they intend to give to the church ab-initio, and advise him to do whatsoever he wishes with it. It is also wrong for a priest to ask members to pay their tithes to him for personal use. We have also NEVER approved the payment of tithe of tithes. As a church, we do not force members to pay tithe. We rather persuade/encourage them to do so because it is clearly stated in the scriptures for the meeting of needs in the church and for the blessing of the obedient and faithful follower of God.

Members should be allowed to act as they are fully persuaded and also rightly. Subtle curses should not be pronounced or written in the church's bulletin by the priest on those who fail to pay or give their tithes. We should allow God to encounter such persons or respond to them. On their part, members should be very clear at all times regarding what or how they intend the money they are handing over to a church officer to be used. They should not leave any church officer in doubt on this matter. If the money is intended for the pastor, tell him clearly, "This is for you" or "I am giving or led to give you this money". If you intend the money for the church's use, clearly tell the Minister, "I am giving this to God through the Church". This is the only way to encourage accountability in our stewardship and avoid exposing our workers to unnecessary temptations and blackmail.

5. Clergy Wives and Matters Arising From Women Conferences

We shall continue to commend the wives of our clergy and church teachers for the great work they are doing at their various levels to support the ministers of their husbands, the church and the overall ministry of the Diocesan women led by the Bishop's wife, Mrs. Chinyere U. Ordu, JP, FCAI.

The above deep-hearted commendation from us notwithstanding, we shall like to draw the attention of all clergy wives to the practice of their taking to themselves (for those who still do it) the monies raised after the reading of their Women's Conference Addresses. This practice has persisted for the last 10 years. We too (my wife and I) have through our different body languages tried to convey our dislike for it to the clergy wives with a view to making them stop the practice without success.

The Bishop and wife of this Diocese have not been in the habit of personalizing the free-will donations of churches, groups and individuals after the reading and appreciation of

our addresses. We have rather channeled all such monies towards the development of the Diocese and the women's ministry.

We decry very strongly a situation where a clergy wife corners to herself much of the income from women's conference particularly from the appreciation of her presidential address at the expense of the local church women's ministry to the extent that the women's account has not much to show for the conference.

From now on, clergy wives are charged to let all proceeds from their conference addresses go to their women's accounts. Secondly, the various Women Executive Committees should from the women's account fund all conference expenses including the printing of the Presidential Addresses of the clergy wives, ensure that they extend needed allowance(s) to the clergy wives at the end of the conferences in keeping with the scriptural injunction that we should not muzzle the ox that is threshing out the corn (1Cor. 9:9); and a labourer is worthy of his (her) wages (1Tim. 5:18).

We have also observed with much dismay that clergy wives have over these years carefully ignored the Diocesan Press in the printing of their conference materials. We shall no longer tolerate this unpatriotic practice. From now onward, clergy wives are charged to print all their conference and all other events' materials at the Diocesan Printing Press.

Clergymen are hereby advised to ensure that their wives and women Executives of their churches comply with these directives as we shall definitely hold the clergy accountable for any default.

6. Non-observance of crucial services of the Church Year

a) New Year's Day Services

This service holds in all Anglican Churches the world over on the morning of every New Year Day. It is an age-long traditional service of the Church. We have observed however, that in recent years, some pastors in this Diocese have misled their congregations to abandon this practice for reasons they cannot defend. We shall no longer tolerate this breach of our liturgical heritage! Consequent upon this, We hereby direct all pastors to ensure to separately hold the traditional 31st December (New Year's Eve) services in the night preceding the new year, while also holding the New Year's Day service, which is actually the service of the circumcision and naming of Christ in the dawn (break of day) of January 1 unflinching in their churches without violation.

b) Services of the Passiontide

We have also noted in recent times and with utter dismay that some of our priests no longer see the need to strictly observe some of the special/occasional services listed in the Book of Common Prayers under the Passiontide offices. These fast-being-neglected services include the penitential service for Ash Wednesday, and the Holy Week Services – Palm Sunday to Easter Day. The worst affected of these special services appears to be the three-part Good Friday services of the celebration of the Lord's Passion. The day's services begin at 9am with **The Liturgy of The Word**, followed by the **Liturgical**

three-hour service of meditations on the seven words of Christ on the Cross starting from 12:00 to 3:00pm and lastly, the **Good Friday Vesper** (a simple evening service) at 5:00pm.

Adequate provisions have been made in the Book of Common Prayer (BCP) by the Church of Nigeria Liturgy, Prayer and Spirituality Committee to guide every priest in knowing what to offer the flock on these occasions. We also know that at the theological institutions where our priests underwent trainings, lessons on these and other subjects were adequately taught. Back home here, our periodic clergy school sessions have been known to address these matters repeatedly, yet some choose to act differently and impoverish the parishioners spiritually during these special seasons of the church year.

Whatever the reasons or excuses of such defaulting priests may be, we would however like to take them back to the oaths they took and the declarations they publicly made at their ordination: “I will use only the forms of service which are authorized or allowed by Canons” and remind them that they are bound by those commitments. Those still unsure of what to do with the provisions of the Prayer Book or are even unwilling to use it in the first place should either go back to the theological school or withdraw from the ordained ministry of the church.

All priests of this Diocese should from henceforth use the Book of Common Prayers and the provisions made therein as it ought to be. Anyone who does otherwise should be prepared for our inescapable sanctions. A word is enough for the wise.

7. The state of our churches signposts

The signposts of most of our churches are either so undersized, poorly designed or the writings badly faded. In some extreme cases they are completely washed out. We do not understand why the leaderships of such churches are not bothered about this situation. Considering the stiff competition amongst religious bodies in the city of Port Harcourt our churches directional signposts cannot afford to be substandard in appearance.

We hereby direct our clergy, church teachers and their church councils to ensure the immediate upgrade of all signposts that fall within those described above without further delay. Noncompliance will be viewed seriously.

8. Indebtedness to the Diocese

Churches, individuals and groups have continued to pay lip service to the debts they owe the Diocese. These debts cover under-remittances, sundry levies, Endowment Fund and Synod launching pledges, assigned Church of Nigeria publications and debts to the Printing Press, etc.

We appeal to all debtor-churches, persons and groups to consider this as a matter of priority and quickly clear all such debts to avoid the continued stifling of our progress as a Diocese.

FOURTH SYNOD APPOINTMENTS

DIOCESAN OFFICIALS

1. **Legal Officers** **(Members of all [3 major] Boards of the Diocese and Local Archdeaconry Board, Deanery/Church Councils)*
(Appointed by the Bishop)
 - **Diocesan Chancellor** – Sir Barr. Nlerum Amadi
 - **Registrar – (In Charge of Lands)** – Barr. Chimezie Otuonye
Deputy Registrar – Sir Chief Barr. G. O. Dike
(In Charge of Legal Matters of All Diocesan Institutions, also in charge of Justice, Equity, Peace & Conflict Resolution)
 - **Legal Secretary,** Barr. Bright Nda-Owhor
2. **Diocesan Financial Secretary** – Mr. Lawrence Chinda
(Automatic member Synod, Diocesan/Finance Boards and Local Church Council)
3. **Bishop’s Administrative Assistants**
 1. Ven. Chidi S. Worgu
 2. Rev. Canon Chimaobi Chieme
4. **Bishop’s Chief Press Secretary/Diocesan Protocol Officer – 1**
Mr. Innocent Kasarachi *(Member, Diocesan Board & Synod)*
 - **Other Diocesan Protocol Officers**
Mr. Michael Azonwu
Dame Akudo Nnadozie } *Members Synod, Diocesan Board and Local Church Councils*
5. **Diocesan Communicator** – Dr. Jossy Nkwocha
**(Member Diocesan Board & Synod, Local Archdeaconry Board/Deanery Council)*
6. **Directorate of Ecumenism, Interfaith and Inter-Diocesan Relations**
Director – Rev. Gospel Onuchukwu
(Member, Diocesan Board and Synod)
7. **Diocesan Directors of Logistics** – Mr. Chika Amadi
(Members Synod, Diocesan Board and Local Archdeaconry Board/Church Council)
8. **Diocesan Architects**
 - Sir O. C. Chukwu
 - Arch. Chiedozie Okoroafor
(Members Synod, Diocesan Board and Local Deanery Council and CSC)

9. Diocesan Engineer

Sir Engr. Ben Uduh
(Member, Synod, Diocesan Board
and Local Deanery Council)

10. Diocesan Surveyor – Surveyor Gaius Assor

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

11. Diocesan Archivists

Dr. Grace Jaja
(Automatic member, Synod & Diocesan Board)

12. Diocesan Co-ordinator of Bishop's Nominees

Sir Chief Ike B. S. Chinwo
(Automatic member, Synod & Diocesan Board)

BISHOP'S ADVISERS

13. Adviser to the Bishop on Government Relations and Public Affairs –

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

14. Advisers to the Bishop on Finance & Budget Matters

- i Mrs. Agnes Ezenta
- ii Ms. Atonye Wilcox
(Members, Synod, Diocesan & Finance Boards, Local Archdeaconry & Deanery Board/Council)

15. Adviser to the Bishop on Community Relations

Mr. John Okene
(Member, Synod, Diocesan Board, Archdeaconry Board/DCC)

16. Adviser to the Bishop on Security Matters –

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

17. Advisers to the Bishop on Youth Concerns/Revival

- 1. Mazi Sam Azoka

2. Barr. Chinedu Ogbonna

18. Diocesan Medical Advisers

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

19. Bishop's Commissaries

- **Abuja** – Mr. Chika Chinda
Mr. Victor Wodi
- **Lagos** – Miss Nneka Onwughara

20. Bishop's Nominee to the Diocesan Board

Sir Chief G. I. Ebenezer

COMMITTEES, BOARDS, DIRECTORATES

1. DIOCESAN SYNOD PLANNING COMMITTEE 2019-2021

- Sir Barr. Nlerum Amadi (Diocesan Registrar) – Chairman
- Sir Chief Barr. G. O. Dike (The Deputy Registrar–2)
- The Clerical Synod Secretary
- Assistant Clerical Synod Secretary
- The Lay Synod Secretary
- The Assistant Lay Synod Secretary
- The Diocesan Treasurer
- The Diocesan Financial Secretary
- Bishop's Administrative Assistants
- Bishop's Chaplains
- Diocesan Protocol Officers
- Director of Diocesan Logistics
- Diocesan Communicator
- Bishop's Press Secretary
- Bishop's Security Adviser
- The Chairman, Clergy Welfare Association
- The Secretary, DCMF

- The Secretary, MU/WG,
- The President, Diocesan AYF
- The President, Diocesan Council of Knights
- The Chairman, Diocesan Lay Readers' Association
- Lay Secretaries of The Cathedral, Archdeaconry Boards & Deanery Councils
- Head, Diocesan Guild of Stewards (Ushers)
- Archdeacon/Rector of Hosting Bloc
- L.O.C. Chairman of Hosting Bloc
- Representative of Diocesan Printing Press

2. DISCIPLESHIP/REVIVAL COMMITTEE CONFERENCE PLANNING

- Ven. Azubuike Ugoha – Chairman
- Rev. Canon Samson Abada – Vice Chairman
- Rev. Canon Joseph Ofoegbu
- Rev. Canon Samuel Obialor
- Rev. Anderson N.F. Owhor
- Rev. Collins Daniel
- Rev. Donatus Ngah
- Engr. Chiedu Kasim
- Mrs. Rose Chieme
- Lady Bridget Dania
- Lady Victoria Weli
- Evang. Isaiah Orji
- Mr. David Wopara
- Barr. (Mrs.) Chidinma Otuka
- Mr. Emmanuel Wopara
- Sis. Chile Elizabeth Ariolu (AYF President)
- Miss Queen Chinda
- Mrs. Blessing U. Ndah-Owhor
- Mrs. Rosemary Tasie
- Barr. Chibuzo Iheme
- Evang. Sabinus Nwarie
- Barr. Chinedu Ogbonna
- Mrs. Patricia Madugba
- Mr. Ugochukwu Okwulehie
- Mr. Ijok Jonathan
- Evang. Silas Ekezie
- Mr. Stanley Onwuchie
- Mr. Favour Chima

- Mr. Faithful Chuku

3. DIOCESAN HARVEST PLANNING COMMITTEE

Lady Felicia Derek – Iyo	- Chairperson
Engr. George Iwo	- Vice-Chairman
Mr. Iriah Edegere	- Secretary
Ven. Dr. Ike Anene	- Member
Rev. Canon Ben. Roland	“
Rev. Samuel Fedigha	“
Rev. Chukwudi Theophilus	“
Dame Patricia Orakwue	“
Dame Forstina Aririsukwu	“
Lady Rita Okuguni	“
Lady Josephine Ejims- Enwukwe	“
Lady Elsie Nlerum-Amadi	“
Sir Engr. Tele Ikuru	“
Engr. Nyebuchi Chuku	“
Engr. Patrick Achinike-Amadi	“
Mr. Chinedum Chimela	“
Mr. Michael Momoh	“
Mrs. Chinyere George	“
Mrs. Ijeoma Onunwor	“
Mrs. Eunice Okenwa	“
Mrs. Kate Dike	“
Mrs. Ogochukwu Uzuegbunam	“
Sister Inyie Epelle	“
Brother Chibuike Anyanwu	“
Mrs. Ngozi Ezeokpo	“
Mr. Augustine Amaewhule	“
C/T Godwin O. Ovunwo	“

4. DIOCESAN PROJECTS COMMITTEE

Sir Promise Eze Wodi – Chairman
(Member Synod, Diocesan & Finance Boards)

Other Members:

- Archt. Chiedozie Okoroafor
- Engr. Chiedu Kasim
- Mr. Kingsley Chinda

- Engr. Eugene Okujagu
- Engr. Charles Chuku
- Engr. Harold Echeonwu
- Mr. Christian Onwukwe
- Engr. Sir Ben Uduh
- Sir Sunny Amadi
- Engr. Chika Offor
- Lady Patience Wokoma
- Mr. Fabulous Amanze

21. ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO THE BISHOP ON SKILLS ACQUISITION AND ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

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

CSC

2. Sir Chidi Osuji
(Member Synod, Diocesan & Finance Boards, Local Archdeaconry Board & PCC)

Other Members

- Sir O. J. Kamalu
- Lady Christy Laguda
- Engr. Chris Onyemaizu
- Bro. Silas Ekezie
- Mrs. Hope Ernest-Amadi

5. DIOCESAN MISSION, EVANGELISM, CHURCH PLANTING/ DEVELOPMENT BOARD

The Rev. Canon Kingsley Ohajianya – Chairman – *(Automatic member Synod, Diocesan and Finance Boards)*.

Other Members

- Rev. Collins Daniel
- Rev. Richard Alete-Omoni
- Rev. ThankGod Amadi
- Mr. Samuel Odueley
- Mr. Noel Iheatu
- Sister Onyinyechi Ogbonda
- Mr. Favour Chima
- Mr. Stanley Onwuchi

- Mr. Kingsley Eze
- Mrs. Eberechi Ogbor
- Sir Israel N. Amadi
- Mr. Okechukwu Jonas
- Mrs. Patricia Maduwuba
- C/T Ndukuba Cherechi Freeborn
- C/T Obuikem Elijah Okere

22. DIOCESAN EDUCATION BOARD

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

Other Members:

- Sir Dr. Ephraim Elenwo
- Hon. Martin Amaewhule
- Mrs. Mildred Braide
- Dr. Nnamdi Ekeocha
- Lady Njideka Ebisi
- Mrs. Ebi Nwibani
- Dr. Mrs. Joy Ugwu
- Dr. Mrs Blessing Onyegeme-Okerenta
- Dr. Innocent Kasarachi
- Mrs. Mijan Ikan
- Sir Prof. W. O. Igwe
- Dr. Azubuike Weli
- Mrs. Wale Eddy Wopara
- Ms. Atonye Wilcox
- Mrs. Adaobi Okoye
- Mr. Lawrence Chinda (Diocesan Financial Secretary)
- HRM, Sir Captain Clement Ejiofor (Bishop's Security Adviser)
- Principal, ACMGS, Elelenwo
- Principal, BCMSS, Rumuobiokani
- Principal, Word of Faith, Woji
- Chief Morrison Ashimole
- The Rev. Canon O. E. Igbamerun

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

Performance Improvement Coordinator for Evo Diocesan Schools

The Rev. Canon Olufemi Igbamerun

BISHOP ELENWO MEMORIAL HOSPITAL MANAGEMENT BOARD

- Dr. (Lady) Ndidi Utchay – **Chairperson**
- Dr. Bright Amadi
- Dame Meg Orianwo
- Pharm. Ijeoma Okey-Ewurum
- Sir Chief Barr. G. O. Dike
- Dr. Ishmael Jaja
- Dr. Aleruchi Nnodi

6. DIOCESAN INVESTMENT BOARD

Sir Chief Gilbert Chuku – Chairman

(Member Synod, Diocesan & Finance Boards & Local Parish Church Council)

Other Members:

- Lolo Agnes Ezenta
- Lady Felicia Derek-Iyo
- Sir Prince Tony Orji
- Sir Engr. Sunny Worlu
- Mrs. Beauty Isaac
- Mr. Felix Otto
- Mr. Bethel Okumbor
- Mr. Chinedu Obiukwu
- Mr. Godwin Chinda
- Mr. Franklin Dike
- Mr. Lawrence Chinda (Diocesan Financial Secretary)
- Sir Chief Promise W. Owbor (Diocesan Treasurer)
- Rev. Onyeme Anointed Pythias
- Rev. John V. C. Eze
- Sir Chief Brain Ogbonda

DIRECTORATE OF SOCIAL WELFARE

(Responsible for visitations to hospitals, orphanages, prisons, homes for the elderly, widows, destitute, HIV/AIDS, Victims of Natural Disasters, etc.)

Diocesan Co-ordinator – Lady Bibian Nnoli

(Automatic member Synod, Diocesan/Finance Boards & Local CSC).

Other Members

- Mrs. Charity Laguda
- Rev. Canon Chukwuma Anukem
- Rev. Henry Odu
- C/T Ovunwo Godwin Owhochukwu
- Barr. Mrs. Christiana Cliff-Nwennah
- Dr. Chineyike Edmond
- Mr. Gazie Alozie
- Mrs. Ijeoma James
- Mrs. Stella C. Amadi
- Mrs. Eva Anunobi
- Mrs. Joy Madume
- Mrs. Chioma Ekezie

COUNCIL FOR CLERGY/LAITY CONTINUING EDUCATION

Directors of Studies

- **Ven. Azubuike Ugoha**
- **Rev. Canon Joseph Ofoegbu**
- **Rev. Canon Ozioma Iheanetu**
- **Mr. Sylvester Chiemeka**

CHURCH TEACHERS' TRAINING COORDINATORS

1. Ven. Dr. Ike G. Anene
2. Rev. Canon U. L. Nwahaghi

FAMILY LIFE & HOME FELLOWSHIP MINISTRIES

Diocesan Coordinator – Mrs. Ijeoma Anagbogu

(Member, Diocesan Synod and Local Deanery Council)

Assistants { Mr. Godwin Chinda
Mrs. Mercy Dienye

CLERGY & CHURCH WORKERS' CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

Diocesan Coordinator – Mrs. Oluwaseun Ijaware

(Member, Diocesan Synod, Local Archdeaconry Board & DCC)

DIOCESAN DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, Equity and Peace Commission (JEPC)

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

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

DIRECTORATE OF CIVIC & POLITICAL AFFAIRS (DCPA)

Mr. Charles Daniel – Chairman
(*Member, Diocesan Board and Synod*)

Sir Chief Ernest Chinwo – Vice Chairman

Other members

Rev. Theophilus Chukwudi
Barr. Richard Chinda
Sir Chief Friday Nwanwa
Hon. Ugem Rogers
Brother Chika Amadi

DIOCESAN MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION DEPARTMENT/ICT CENTRE

Dr. Jossy Nkwocha – **Chairman**

Other Members

- Dr. Kasarachi Innocent
- Rev. Canon Joseph Ofoegbu
- Rev. Canon Olufemi Igbamerun
- Mr. Dan Onah
- Mr. James Ebebeinwe
- Mr. Martins Wachukwu
- Mr. Emmanuel Wopara
- Mr. Ernest Amadi
- Evang. Isaiah Orji
- Mr. Kelvin Elewa
- Mr. Olugbenga Ajewole

DIOCESAN CO-ORDINATORS OF DIVCCON

- Rev. Samuel Fedigha
- Rev. ThankGod Amadi
- Evang. Isaiah Orji

9. TASK FORCE ON THE ENFORCEMENT OF AND COMPLIANCE WITH DIOCESAN POLICIES AND REGULATIONS.

*To be reconstituted

CHAPLAINCIES

DIOCESAN CHAPLAINCIES AND UNITS

CO-ORDINATING CHAPLAIN OF ALL CHAPLAINCIES – Ven. Alex Usifoh			

S/N	CHAPLAINCIES	CHAPLAINS	REMARKS
1	Diocesan Christian Men's Fellowship (DCMF)	Ven. Thompson Onyewuotu	
2	Diocesan Women & Girls' Ministries	Rev. Canon Samuel Obialor	
3	Diocesan Youth Ministries (AYF, ACF-Corps members)	Rev. Collins Daniels CT Nwabueze D. Ndukwe CT David Wopara	
4	Anglican Children's Ministry (ACM)	Rev. Canon Olufemi Igbamerun Rev. Chukwujekwu Umenna Rev. Samuel Nvene	<i>Member, Diocesan Board</i>
5	Diocesan Council of Knights & Ladies	Ven. Charles Mordi	
6	Lay Readers Association	Rev. Canon Ahamefule Olluor	
7	Adult Sunday School, Literature, Discipleship & Publications *Assistant	Rev. Canon Samson Abada Rev. Dr. James Irikefe Mrs. Barinem Daniel	
8	Diocesan Prayer Ministry *Assistant	Rev. Chukwuemeka Udeh CT. David Wopara	
9	Family Life & Home Fellowship	Ven. Okechukwu Ow'honda	
10	Public & Private Secondary Schools *Assistant Archdeacon Brown Education Centre (ABEC) Woji	Rev. Canon Ozioma Iheanetu Rev. Isaac Ezeokpo Rev. Chukwujekwu Umenna	
11	PAMO University of Medical Sciences (TAP), Iriebe	Rev. Nzubechukwu Esomonu	
12	Clergy & Church Workers Children	Rev. Samuel Nvene	
13	Diocesan & Schools Music Ministry *Assistant	Ven. Godwin I. Anene Rev. Canon Samuel Obialor	
14	Industrial, Business/Work Place Chaplaincy *Assistant	Rev. Canon U. L. Nwaghai Rev. Richared Alete-Omoni	
15	Royal Fathers, Retired Clergy & the Elderly *Assistant	Ven. Godwin Chinda Rev. Gift Chukwumati	
16	Anglican Communion (Boys & Girls) Brigades *Assistant	Rev. Samuel John Ejekwu Rev. Amoson Ijah	

17	Ministry to All Church Workers (Clerks, Admin Secretaries, Drivers, Sextons, Yardmen, etc.	Rev. Canon G. Onyemelukwe	
18	Guild of Stewards	Rev. Anderson N.F. Ow'hor	
19	Diocesan Sports Ministry *Assistant	Rev. Canon Hosanna Naenwi Rev. Moses Anyatonwu	
20	Diocesan Institutions		
i	BCMSS, Rumuobiokani	Rev. Dr. James Irikefe Rev. Dandison Fiberesima (Assistant)	

ii	ACMGS, Elelenwo	Rev. Canon Samuel Obialor Rev. Christian Tasie (Assistant)	
iii	Word of Faith, Woji	Rev. Nelson Okocha	
iv	Bishop Elenwo Memorial Hospital	Rev. Dr. Ebenezer Owzor	
	General Co-ordinator, Diocesan Prayer Groups – Ven. Chidi Worgu		

Retirement of Two of Our Clergymen

The Rev'd Canon Chuka Opara and the Rev'd Dr. Reginald Chinweze bowed out of the active ministry of our Diocese on 31st December, 2019 following their final disengagement after retirement. We thank them for their services in various ways and wish them well in their future endeavours.

The Rev'd Canon Dr. Cephas Okarefe

This clergyman requested to be released to his home Diocese of Sapele with effect from 1st November last year. We did our best to persuade him and his wife to remain with us but to no avail. Consequently, we had to grant them their wish. We thank Canon Dr. Cephas and his wife, Remi for their years of service to God and this Diocese.

The Reverends Charles Ibeh and Tukabari Poni

Following the poor state of health of these two clergymen for some time and the resultant effect on their performances as pastors in this Diocese, we advised the two of them to proceed on early retirement with effect from the clergy disposition of February this year. This would enable them pay more serious attention to their treatment and hopeful recovery in no distant time.

New Clergy and Wives

We welcome The Reverend James and Hon. Justice (Mrs.) Grace Irikefe, and The Reverend Samuel and Mrs. Chigozie Eunice Nvene who joined our Diocese early this year from the Dioceses of Sapele and On The Lake. Rev. Nvene is a non-stipendiary priest and works with Union Bank here in Port Harcourt. Both priests and their families have since settled down to their duties as Curate and Supervising priest of St. Andrew's Anglican Church, Rumuobiokani Deanery and Christ, The Redeemer, Eliogbolo respectively. We welcome them in the name of the Lord.

FELICITATIONS

We felicitate and rejoice with:

1. Barr. Boma & Mrs. Ibinabo Obuoforibo on the wedding of their daughter, Dr. Ibinabo to Dr. Songo Dede on Saturday, 7th September, 2019 at All Saints' Cathedral, Rumuokwurusi.
2. Chief and Lolo Chima Ezenta on the weddings of their son, Chizurum Eze to Nnenna Gloria on Saturday, 28th September, 2019 and also their daughter,

former Miss Chika Olachi to Mr. Kelechi Kelly on Saturday, 15th February, 2020 all at St. Andrew's Church, Rumuobiokani Deanery.

3. Sir Chief Victor Dania on the celebration of his 70th birthday and thanksgiving on Monday, 28th October, 2019.
4. Mr. & Mrs. Charles Onyedinma on the wedding their son, Uzoma to his wife Ifeyinwa on Saturday, 23rd November, 2019 at All Saints' Cathedral, Rumuokwursi.
5. HRH, Eze Sir & Lady Emeka Ihunwo, Paramount Ruler of Woji on the wedding of their son, Prince Chika Emeka Ihunwo to his wife, Barr. Grace on Saturday, 14th December, 2019 at St. Nicholas', Woji.
6. Former Miss Chinasa Umeh, Secretary to the Bishop's wife and Principal of ACMGS and Mr. Uchenna Oguguo on their wedding on Saturday, 21st December, 2019 at St. Michael's, Rumuomasi Deanery.
7. Sister Grace Jaja, Coordinator of the Diocesan Sisters Forum for bagging a Ph.D in Guidance and Counseling at the Ignatius Ajuru University, Port Harcourt.
8. Mr. Mayor Chris Mekaka Ezebanum, and confidence Cruciabel Oby Chioma on their wedding on 1st February, 2020 at St. Nicholas', Woji District.
9. Mr. Akpan Anietie Isaiah and former Miss Confidence Nmasinachi Sebastian on their wedding on Saturday, 15th February, 2020 at St. Andrew's Anglican Church, Rumuobiokani Deanery.
10. Mr. Olu Edeki on his 70th birthday in April, this year.
11. HRH, Eze Jobson A. Utchay, on his centenary (100th) birthday in May, this year.
12. Rev. Frankincese and Mrs. Chika Chukwuma on their wedding on Saturday, 4th July, 2020 at the Bishop's Court Chapel, Diocese of Nnewi, Anambra State.
13. Mr. Samuel Elijah (our Driver) and former Miss Favour Hosanna Naenwi on their wedding at the All Saints' Cathedral, Rumuokwursi on Saturday, 18th July, 2020.
14. Rev. Emmanuel Chukwuebuka, the Chaplain to the Bishop of Uyo Diocese and former Miss Onyinyechi Joy Elike of All Saints' Cathedral, Rumuokwursi on their wedding on Saturday, 8th August, 2020 at the Cathedral.
15. Mr. Charles Daniels on his election in March this year as the Chairman, Broadcasting Organizations of Nigeria (South-South Zone), and also as General

Secretary of the Independent Broadcasters Association of Nigeria (the umbrella group of all private broadcasting station in Nigeria).

16. Mr. Graham Elendu for his emergence as the Speaker of Democracy, African Youth Parliament.
17. Lady Dr. Ndidi Utchay on her appointment as permanent Secretary of the Rivers State Ministry of Health.

Births

18. Postulant and Mrs. Chika Orlu on the arrival of their baby girl on the 28th March, 2020
19. Church Teacher Cherechi Ndukauba and wife for the delivery of a baby girl on Friday, 17th April, 2020.
20. Postulant Herbert Anson & wife for the blessing of a baby boy to the family on Monday, 27th April, 2020
21. Mr. & Mrs. James Ebebeinwe of the Diocesan IC Department for the gift of a baby boy on Monday, 27th April, 2020.

DEATHS AND COMMISERATIONS

We announce the death of the following in the course of the synod year and commiserate with their family members:

1. Chief Lawrence Ogbonda Okene, an old Lay Reader of all Saints' Cathedral, Rumuokwurusu who died on the 8th of August, 2019. He was buried on Thursday, 5th September, 2019.
2. Madam Augusta Igoni Benstowe, mother of Dr. Mrs. Blessing Onyegeme Okerenta who died on Thursday, 29th August, 2019. She was buried on Saturday, 28th September, 2019.
3. Mrs. Keziah Amechi, wife of the Late Ven. I. C. Amechi who died on Friday, 23rd August, 2019 and was buried at Ogbakiri on Friday, 13th September, 2019.
4. Mr. Paul Kiribeate, Father-in-law and father of the Rev'd & Mrs. Tukabari Poni who died on Wednesday, 11th September, and buried on Saturday, 9th November, 2019.
5. Ezinne Matilda Mgbafor Ngah, mother of Rev'd Donatus Nga who died on 12th September, and was buried on Friday, 15th November, 2019.
6. Barr. (Mrs.) Kate Ngozi Izuehie, (wife of our Lay Synod Secretary, Barrister Emmanuel Izuehie) who died on 16th September and was buried at Nanka, Diocese of Aguata on Friday 11th October, 2019.
7. Madam Agnes Nnanta Job Ordu, mother of High Chief Chekwes Nnanta of New Wine Church, Okporo who died on 1st October and was buried on 1st November, 2019.
8. Mrs. Charity Irazulume, mother of Mrs. Chinasa Agugua, Secretary of the Principal of ACMGS, Elelenwo and Mama Diocese. She was buried on Friday, 29th November, 2019.

9. High Chief Weli Ejilemele of St. Andrew's, Rumuobiokani Deanery who died on Thursday, 17th October, 2019 and was buried on Monday, 11th November, 2019.
10. Mr. T. S. Amachree of St. Marks', Elelenwo who was shot dead at Yenagoa by gunmen on the 1st of December, 2019.
11. Mrs. Gladys Nwerenda Onwuchekwa, mother of Lady Sharon Chinwo, who died on Tuesday, 10th and buried on Monday, 30th December, 2019.
12. Mrs. Comfort Nlerum Wodi-Woko of St. Andrew's, Rumuobiokani Deanery who died and was buried on Saturday, 11th January, 2020.
13. The Ven. Sunday C. Opara, retired Archdeacon and former Financial Secretary and Chaplain of the Government House Chapel, Port Harcourt who died on Tuesday, 3rd March and was buried on Friday, 20th March, 2020.
14. Mrs. Nkeiruka Charles Ibeh who died on Tuesday, 3rd March, 2020 and buried on Friday, 29th May, 2020.
15. Lady Blessing Okere, wife of Sir Sunny Okere of St. Mark's, Elelenwo Deanery who died on Thursday, 21st May, 2020.
16. Lady Beatrice S. A. W. Amadi of St. Jude's, Oginigba Deanery who died on Friday, 22nd May, and buried 24th June, 2020.
17. Sir Cyril Amaewhule of Church of The Holy Spirit, Eliozu Parish who died on Sunday 24th May, 2020, and buried on Monday, 25th.
18. Dr. James Wihioaka, husband of Mrs. Augusta Wihioaka of St. Michael's, Rumuomasi Deanery.
19. Engr. Gideon Krama of New Covenant Church, Eliminigwe Parish, Elelenwo.
20. Lady Lale Aminobiren, who died on Sunday, 12th July, and buried on Thursday, 6th August, 2020.
21. Mr. Kelvin Nyesom Amadi, elder brother of Mrs. Priscilla Alex Usifoh, who died on Thursday, 23rd July.
22. Mr. Nduka Obialor, elder brother of The Rev. Canon Samuel Obialor. He was the pastor's Warden of Church of Messiah, New Haven Parish, Iriebe and also a synod delegate of our Diocese. He died on Wednesday, 29th July and will be buried Wednesday, 26th August, 2020.
23. Mr. Godwin Chinda, Diocesan lead Auditor who died on Monday, 10th August, 2020 after a prolonged illness.

GRADUATING STUDENTS (ORDINANDS) FROM TRINITY THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE, UMUAHIA

We are glad to announce the graduation of the following students of our Diocese from the Trinity Theological College, Umuahia:

1. Mr. Joseph Asonye
2. Mr. Chidi Nwarie
3. Mr. Ogini Ogochukwu
4. Mr. Gabriel Christian
5. Mr. Virginus Chukwuemeka
6. Mr. Best Ekendia
7. Mr. Chukwuemeka Obani

We welcome and congratulate them on the successful completion of their studies. Their formal ordination service into the Diaconate ministry of our Diocese will hopefully take place before the end of the year.

NIGER DELTA PROVINCE

1. Provincial Prayer Conference

This was hosted by our Diocese from Friday, 6th to Saturday, 7th September, 2019 at the ACMGS/Chapel of Grace and Knowledge, Elelenwo. Intercessors and members of Diocesan prayer squads from the 13 Dioceses of the Province were in attendance. Prayers were offered for the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) and for the nation.

The theme of the conference was “Enthroned to bridge the gap” (Exod. 32:9-14).

2. Provincial Council Meeting

The September 2019 meetings of the Council and that of the Provincial Women Executive Committee were held at St. Matthew’s Anglican Church, Igbo, Diocese of Etche on Tuesday, 17th and Wednesday, 18th September. Both meetings were presided over by the Archbishop and wife, The Most Rev’d & Mrs. Tunde Adeleye. The theme of the meeting was “Blessed are the pure in heart” (Matthew 5:8).

3. Provincial Bishops and Wives Retreat

Led by the Archbishop and wife, The Most Rev’d Tunde Adeleye, the Bishops and wives of the Province withdrew for a whole week retreat at Uyo from Monday, 9th to Friday, 13th December, 2019. The theme of the retreat was “Unity in Episcopacy”. It was a time for prayers, Bible studies, talks, excursion to Ibeno Beach and the Oldest Qua Iboe Church as well as strategy sessions for more effective and unite ministry within the Province.

4. Provincial Council Meeting

The first for the year 2020 was hosted by the Diocese of Niger Delta North at St. Peter’s Church, Rumuepirikom Deanery from Wednesday, 4th to Thursday 5th March 2020. It was presided over by the Archbishop, The Most Rev. Tunde Adeleye and his wife, Mrs. Dorothy Tunde-Adeleye for the Provincial Women Executive Committee Meeting.

JOINT PROVINCIAL COUNCIL EAST OF THE NIGER

1. Paul University, Awka

A new Vice Chancellor in acting capacity has been appointed to take over from the Ven. Prof Uche Abanihe whose tenure has expired. He is Prof. U. C. Nzewi. Similarly, the Board of Trustees of the University has been reconstituted with His Excellency, Sir Chief G.T.G. Toby as Chairman, Engr. (Sir) Chris Okoye is the Pro-Chancellor and Chairman of the Governing Council.

Our Diocese of Edo for the 5th year running supported the University again this year with the sum of N5million.

2. Joint Provincial Council Meeting

The meeting of the Joint Provincial Council of the 55 Diocese East of the Niger was held at St. Cyprian's Church, Port Harcourt, Niger Delta Diocese from Wednesday, to Thursday, 6th February, 2020. In attendance were Archbishops, Bishops and wives, legal officers, synod secretaries and financial secretaries. The meeting deliberated on the theme "Knowing God" (Phil. 3:10) and was chaired by the Most Rev. Caleb Maduwoma, Archbishop of Owerri and Bishop of Ideato. He will be retiring in September this year and will be succeeded by our Archbishop, The Most Rev'd Tunde Adeleye.

CHURCH OF NIGERIA

1. Episcopal Synod

The Episcopal Synod for the Church of Nigeria was held on Wednesday, 21st August, 2019 for the election of new bishops to replace some retiring or deceased ones within the church. Those elected at this meeting were:

- i. Rt. Rev. Ndubuisi Obi – Diocese of Nnewi
- ii. Rt. Rev. Oluseyi Pirisola – Diocese on the Coast
- iii. Rt. Rev. Foluso Olugbenga Babatunji – Osun Diocese
- iv. Rt. Rev. Joshuan Oluso Taiwo – Diocese of Oke-Osun
- v. Rt. Rev. Benjamin Chinedum Okeke – Diocese of Orlu
- vi. Rt. Rev. Geoffrey O. Obeabuchi – Diocese of Umahia

They were consecrated on Tuesday, 24th September, 2019 during the meeting of the Standing Committee at the Cathedral of St. Peter's, Asaba, Diocese of Asaba.

At the same service of consecration, the new Archbishop of the Province of the Niger, The Most Rev. Dr. Alexander Ibezim (who is also the Bishop of Awka) was formally presented.

Translation

The Episcopal Synod of 21st August, 2019 also voted and translated The Rt. Rev. Jacob Bada, Bishop of Etsako to the Diocese of Akoko to replace its now retired Bishop/Archbishop of Ondo, the Most Rev. Gabriel A. Akinbiyi.

More New Archbishop and New Primate of All Nigeria

At its meeting of Tuesday, 24th September, 2019, the Episcopal Synod of the Church of Nigeria elected two new Archbishops to replace those retiring from active ministry of the church. They are:

- The Rt. Rev. Dr. Isaac Nwaobia, the Bishop of Isiala-Ngwa South as the Archbishop of the Province of Aba. He took over from The Most Rev. Dr. Ikechi N. Nwosu, who retired on November 24, 2019.

- The Rt. Rev. Christopher T. Omotunde, the Bishop of Ekiti as the Archbishop of the Province of Ondo, to replace The Most Rev. Gabriel Akinbiyi who retired on December 5, 2019.

In the same vein, the Episcopal Synod elected The Most Rev. Henry Ndukuba, the Bishop of Gombe and Archbishop of Jos Province as the new Archbishop, Metropolitan and Primate of All Nigeria (Anglican Communion) and Bishop of Abuja to replace The Most Rev. Nicholas Okoh whose ten year primatial tenure ended on Wednesday, March 25, 2020.

The formal presentation of Archbishops Nwaobia and Omotunde and our new Primate, Ndukuba took place on Thursday, 14th November, 2019 at the National Ecumenical centre, Abuja during DIVCCON 2019 and on Wednesday, 25th March 2020 at the Cathedral of the Advent, Abuja respectively.

DIVCCON 2019

This general annual gathering of Anglican faithful within and outside Nigeria was held at the National Ecumenical Christian Centre, Abuja from Monday, 11th to Friday, 15th November, 2019 under the theme: “O God our help in ages past” (Psalm 90). The Conference featured Devotions, talks, prayers and worship sessions, Bible studies, seminars etc, etc. Over twelve thousand participants were in attendance. Our Diocese was awarded a silver trophy (second position) for mobilizing over 320 persons to attend.

DIVCCON 2020

This years’ Divine Commonwealth Conference will hold from Monday, 16th to Friday, 20th November.

The Theme is “We are More Than Conquerors” (Rom. 8:37).

Registration is ongoing across the country at the rate of N2500 for now.

We desire to return with the trophy for the Diocese with the highest registration and attendance at the end of the Conference this year.

We therefore encourage churches and groups to start registering the number of candidates our DIVCCON Committee in the Diocese has assigned to them. Individuals too are encouraged to start registering and preparing to attend. With time we shall know the form the staging of this year’s Conference will take, whether the traditional gathering of all in one venue or virtual.

Advent Sunday Collections & 100% Remittance

The Standing Committee Meeting of the Church of Nigeria has resolved to retain on a permanent basis, the annual Advent Sunday Collection and 100% remittance to the Church of Nigeria by Dioceses and their churches across the country. For the year 2019, the total amount realized has been dedicated to the upgrading of equipment and addressing of all other critical needs of the Advent Cable News Network (ACNN). Offerings raised and remitted in subsequent years will be channeled towards all other areas of critical needs within the Church of Nigeria.

With the permission of the former Primate Nicholas D. Okoh we moved our Advent Sunday offerings and 100% remittance from 1st to 15th December, 2019 and realized a total sum of **N6, 219,464.90** from all our churches.

Another Episcopal Synod

Another Episcopal Synod of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) took place at the National Ecumenical Christian Centre, Abuja on Wednesday, 13th November during the DIVCCON, 2019.

The agenda was strictly for the election of the new Bishop for the Diocese of Etsako in the person of The Ven. Felix U. Olorunfemi, to replace the former, The Rt. Rev. Jacob O. B. Bada who had earlier on August 21st been translated to the Diocese of Akoko.

Annual Bishop's Retreat, 2020

This took place at the Ibru Centre, Agbarha-Otor, Delta State from Monday, 6th – Friday, 10th January, 2020. The theme for the retreat was “Restoring the Oneness of the House of Bishops/Church” (Psalm 133).

The 5-Day retreat featured talks, times of worship, prayers Bible studies and **Episcopal Synod which took place on Thursday, 9th January, 2020**. Highpoint of the Synod was the election of the following Diocesan, Suffragan Bishops and Provincial Archbishops. Those elected were:

1. The Rev. Canon (now Rt. Rev.) Cletus Tambari as the Bishop of Gombe Diocese to replace The Most Rev. Henry C. Ndukuba, our new Primate.
2. The Rev. Canon (now Rt. Rev.) Benson Chukwunweike for Agwu/Aninri Diocese to replace The Rt. Rev. Dr. Emmanuel A. Ugwu, who retired on Sunday, March 21, 2020.

Foreign Missions

Two suffragan Bishops were also elected for the Anglican Diocese of the West (CANA), the foreign mission of the Church of Nigeria. They are:

1. The Ven. Scott Andrew Seely (now Rt. Rev.)
2. The Ven. Celestine Ironna. (now Rt. Rev.)

Archbishops

1. The Rt. Rev. Marcus Ibrahim, Bishop of Yola as the new Archbishop of Jos Province, replacing The Most Rev. Henry Ndukuba, our new Primate and Bishop of Abuja.
2. The Rt. Rev. Cyril Odutemu, Bishop of Ughelli as the new Archbishop of Bendel Province, replacing The Most Rev. Dr. Friday Imaekhai who had completed his tenure as Archbishop.

The Bishops and Archbishops elected on 13th November, 2019 and 9th January, 2020 were all consecrated and formally presented on Friday, 20th March, 2020 at Holy Trinity Cathedral Church, Lokoja, Kogi State by The Most Rev. Nicholas' D.

Okoh, the retiring Primate of the Church of Nigeria. This marked his last service of consecration of Bishops.

The House of Bishops recorded the **deaths** of the following:

- The Rt. Rev. Ezekiel Ayodele Awosoga, Bishop of Ijebu who died on Monday, 10th February, 2020 after a prolonged illness.
- The Rt. Rev. Prof. Anthony Nkwoka. Pioneer/retired Bishop of Niger West Diocese who until his death on Monday, 2nd March, 2020 was the Acting Director of the Institute of Theology, Paul University, Awka.
- Mrs. Jane Efobi, wife of retired Dean, Archbishop of the Niger Provinces and Bishop of Aguata Diocese, who died on Monday, 22nd June and buried on Thursday, 6th of August, 2020.

- **Primate Okoh's Disengagement Thanksgiving Service**

This was held on Sunday, 22nd March at the Cathedral of the Advent, Gwarimpa (Life Camp), Abuja. It was attended by a congregation of less than 100 persons due to the lockdown imposed by the Federal Government, following the outbreak of the Novel Coronavirus Disease.

- **Cancellation of Standing Committee Meeting**

This meeting billed for the new Church of Nigeria National Secretariat from Saturday, 21st to Wednesday, 25th March was cancelled due to the COVID-19 Pandemic across the world. It was to have been the last meeting under the chairmanship of then retiring Archbishop, Metropolitan and Primate of All Nigeria.

- **Presentation of The New Primate of Nigeria, The Most Rev. Henry C. Ndukuba**

This took place on Wednesday, 25th March, 2020 at the Cathedral of the Advent Abuja. He was also enthroned as the Bishop of Abuja.

This service which normally should have attracted thousands of Anglican faithful from within and outside Nigeria was regrettably witnessed by a handful of Archbishops, Bishops, Clergy and Laity representing the various Ecclesiastical Provinces of the Church of Nigeria.

- **Farewell, Nicholas Dikeriehi Orogodo Okoh,**

Our former Primate, The Most Rev. Nicholas D. Okoh formally ended his leadership of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) and the Bishop of Abuja on Wednesday, 25th March, 2020 when he relinquished authority to his successor, The Most Rev. Henry C. Ndukuba.

Archbishop Okoh could be described as a man who by grace, rose from a humble beginning to the apex of service in the Church of God.

Born on 10th November, 1952 at Owa-Alero in Delta State, his journey into the ordained ministry started in 1974 when he attended Vining Christian Leadership Centre for his Catechist training and was commissioned in 1975. He was made a Deacon in 1979 and same year was sent as Chaplain to the 3 Armoured Division Garrison, Jos of the Nigerian Army. While serving in the Nigerian Army chaplaincy he was posted to various places and rose to the position of Deputy Director, Protestant Chaplaincy, a position that placed various other military churches under his supervision.

Following the retirement of The Rt. Rev. Dr. R.N.C. Nwosu, Nicholas Okoh was elected the Bishop of the Diocese of Asaba in March 2001. This marked the end of his service in the Nigerian Army (Protestant) Chaplaincy having risen to the position of a Lieutenant-Colonel.

In 2005, he was elected the Ecclesiastical Archbishop of Bendel Province following the death of the incumbent, The Most Rev. A. A. Agbaje.

This man, Nicholas Okoh considered by many as a good, loving and caring family man as well as a disciplined and faithful pastor in God's church has not gone through his life journey alone. God in His providence provided him the bone of his bones in the person of Nkasiobi Asierunachi Amaechi, whom he married on the 4th October, 1986 and their marriage blessed with five children. With mummy Nkasiobi (Mama Nigeria) our former primate served the Church of Nigeria in several capacities as well as the global Anglican Communion faithfully until their memorable disengagement in March this year.

Achievements as Primate, Church of Nigeria

Okoh has immensely contributed to the advancement of the Anglican Church in Nigeria and globally. From the beginning of his Primacy in March, 2010 (having been elected on 15th September, 2009 at St. Stephen's Cathedral, Umuahia), he did not leave anyone in doubt as to the fact that he came for serious business. Having succeeded The Most Rev. Peter Jasper Akinola – a man reputed for much strength, vision, zeal and charisma that took the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) to a very great height both within Nigeria and outside, Archbishop Okoh committed himself wholeheartedly to the task of taking the Church of Nigeria to an even greater height.

His retinue of achievements over his ten-year primacy would include but not limited to the following:

1. The annual convocation of the Divine Commonwealth Conference (DIVCCON) for all Anglicans within and outside Nigeria.
2. The introduction of special trainings for new Bishops and the senior clergy advanced management course.

3. The annual publication and introduction of special daily devotionals for adults, youths and children, e.g. Daily Fountain and Youth Dynamite.
4. The establishment of the Advent Cable News Network (ACNN) Television.
5. The introduction of St. Matthias' Offering to support Missionary Dioceses across Nigeria, the Ph.D programme for clergy in special areas of studies, assistance to theological and health institutions owned by Dioceses of the Church of Nigeria, etc.
6. The introduction of the Advent Sunday Offering for the building of the Church of Nigeria National Secretariat at Abuja.
7. The commencement, completion, dedication and furnishing of the new Church of Nigeria National Secretariat at Abuja.
8. The establishment of legacy projects through some Dioceses East of the Niger and the Diocese of Abuja at the Trinity Theological College, Umuahia.
9. The acquisition of a permanent camp ground (The Bethel Camp land) for the Church of Nigeria at the outskirts of Abuja, Federal Capital Territory.
10. The establishment of the Bishop Ajayi Crowther Memorial Centre, Osoogun, Oyo State.
11. Able leadership of the Global Anglican Future Conference (GAFCON) as Chairman, etc, etc.

This is not forget his numerous achievements for the Diocese and Province of Abuja where he also served as the Diocesan and Archbishop respectively.

We thank God for His sustained grace and favour upon our dear former Primate and his wife throughout their tenure in office, and for the good health granted them. We appreciate their love for our Diocese of Edo and for all the support, solidarity and encouragement extended to us while at the helm of affairs in Abuja.

We use this medium to very specially extend our gratitude to them and also to wish them the best of God's blessings and joy in their life of retirement from the active ministry of the church.

**Welcome To Our New Archbishop, Metropolitan and Primate
of All Nigeria (Anglican Communion),
His Grace, The Most Rev. Henry Chukwudum Ndukuba**

To the glory of God, the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) now has a new Archbishop, Metropolitan and Primate in the person of His Grace, The Most Rev. Henry Chukwudum Ndukuba, former Bishop of Gombe and Archbishop of the Province of Jos. Archbishop Ndukuba emerged Primate of All Nigeria and Bishop of Abuja on 24th September, 2019, following his election by the Episcopal Synod of the Church of Nigeria which held at All Saints' Cathedral, Diocese of Asaba, Delta State. Below is a brief biography of our new Primate.

Biography

Henry Henry Chukwudum Ndukuba was born on 18th July, 1961 to his parents, Silas and Selina Ndukuba, both Christian Missionary Society (now known as Anglican) school and church teachers from Ogberuru, Orlu, Imo State. Ndukuba is married to Angela E. Ndukuba (née Okoro), an educationist. They have six children, a grandson and two granddaughters.

Education

He attended Bishop Shanahan College, Orlu and had his WASC in 1978. While in secondary school he gave his life to Christ as a teenager in 1977 and this meant a very new beginning for him. He worked in the Kano State Library, Ministry of Education from 1979–1980. He received the call into the ministry of the gospel in Kano and was subsequently sent to the Theological College of Northern Nigeria (TCNN), Bukuru from 1980 – 1984 where he obtained a Bachelor of Divinity (B.D.) degree.

He did his NYSC programme, again in Kano State from 1984–1985. In 1990, he obtained a Master of Arts (M.A.) degree in systematic Theology from Durham University, England. He also obtained another Master of Arts (M.A.) degree in Christian Education from Princeton Theological Seminary, New Jersey, USA in 1996. In the same year, he won the John Havran's Princeton prize for Christian Education.

Priesthood

In 1984, at the age of 23, he was ordained Deacon by Bishop B.B. Ayam, and ordered priest in 1985. In the same year he was sent to teach in St. Francis of Assisi Theological College, Wusasa Zaria where become the Acting Dean. Ndukauba was preferred Canon in 1989 at the age of 28 and collated Archdeacon in 1992 at the age of 31. Prior to his mission to St. Francis, Wusasa, Zaria, he had served at St. George's Anglican Church Borupai, Kano.

In July 1996 he was moved back to be the Archdeacon of Kano where he helped stabilize the Anglican Diocese of Kano after some turbulent period. In July 1999 he was requested to return as Dean of St. Francis College, Wusasa.

Episcopal Ministry

On 21 September, 1999, he was consecrated as the first Bishop of the Diocese of Gombe, at the aged of 38. The new Diocese of Gombe was inaugurated as the 71st Diocese of the

Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) on 25 November, 1999. As Bishop of Gombe, the ministry of Henry Ndukuba focused more on evangelism, church planting, discipleship, raising of lay and pastoral leadership. The result of this was the rapid growth of the Diocese from 18 to 150 churches.

He worked with communities and leaders of Gombe state to establish peaceful coexistence and community development. In order to sustain the ministry of the gospel in Gombe, Bishop Henry worked with Luke Partnership, Nigeria Bible Translation Trust and Seed Company to produce literary materials and translate the Bible and Jesus film into 10 of the 17 tribal languages of the state.

As Bishop in the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion), he also served until his presentation as the new Primate of Nigeria as the chairman of the Liturgy and Spirituality Committee whose responsibility is to produce the following annual publications for the National Church – Bible Study and Sunday School Manuals, The Daily Fountain and the Youth Dynamites devotionals.

His committee has produced the new Book of Common Prayer and Hymnal for the Church of Nigeria. He also served as the chairman of the Church of Nigeria Historical records and Artifacts Committee, charged with the responsibility of recording and preserving the historical records and artifacts of the Church and the setting up of an archive for the church.

He served as the Chairman, Board of Trustees (BOT) of LIST, the registered body working on translation of the Bible, Jesus Films, and literary materials in Nigeria languages with emphasis on the minority languages in Nigeria.

He is a biblical scholar, teacher, master liturgist, pastor and an accomplished evangelist. He is also a prolific writer.

On 22 September 2017, the House of Bishops sitting in Port Harcourt, Rivers State during the 12th General Synod of the Church of Nigeria elected Ndukuba as the new Archbishop of Jos Province, comprising of ten Dioceses in parts of North-Central and North-East regions of Nigeria to replace Archbishop Benjamin Kwashi.

Election as the 5th Primate of the Church of Nigeria

On 24th September 2019, Henry Chukwudum Ndukuba was elected Archbishop, Metropolitan and Primate of All Nigeria and Bishop of Abuja at the Episcopal Synod of the Church of Nigeria held in Asaba, Delta State during the Meeting of the Standing Committee.

He assumed office on Saturday, 25th March, 2020 following his formal presentation at the Cathedral of Advent, Life Camp, Abuja succeeding The Most Rev. Nicholas D. Okoh who retired on that occasion.

As a Diocese (Evo), we welcome our new Archbishop, Metropolitan and Primate Henry with his dear wife, Angela; and wish them God's grace and success in their Primatial ministry.

Primate Ndukuba's Hosts His first Episcopal Retreat and Synod

Bishops of the Church of Nigeria Anglican Communion under the leadership of their new Primate converged on the new National Secretariat (St. Matthias' House), Gudu District, Abuja from Monday, 20th to Thursday, 23rd July, 2020 for their Mid-Year Retreat following the easing of the lockdown occasioned by the coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic. It was the first contact of the new Primate of the Church of Nigeria, The Most Rev. Henry Chukwudum Ndukuba with his brother-bishops of the Church of Nigeria.

The theme of the retreat was: "The Decade of The Reign of God"

(Isaiah 52:7-10).

Speaking on this theme on Tuesday, 21st July, 2020 during his welcome address to the Bishops at the episcopal retreat, the new Primate declared "The gospel which we proclaim is the gospel of the kingdom of God. The ministry which we exercise is that of the kingdom and our prayer is focused on the kingdom, the authority and power of the sovereign God our Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier. His will and purpose shall be done in this world and in His church. It is a privilege that we are called to serve this great God and King in our generation.

God's children and church must live in fullness the kingdom life and have the kingdom mindset to pursue, overtake and recover all the souls and resources that God has given us. Jesus demands that we occupy till he comes the gates of our families, the church and religious influence in the nation; the city and village/community, the educational system, politics and governance, business and finances, and the media and entertainment.

The Beggarly mentality must be done away with as we stand in faith and [on] the Word of God to declare and pray that God our Father, will have His way, His will be done among us as it is in heaven. A situation wherein people act and behave as though the church belongs to them is the height of blasphemy against God. The idols that occupy the place of God must cast down and out. Jesus Christ must be Lord and Saviour of our lives, His Church and His World.

Indiscipline and corruption must not become a way of life. All life must be sanctified unto God. This is the "Decade of The Reign of God" and raising the citizens of God's kingdom through purposeful discipleship is very vital to the work of the church".

The Primate had much earlier in his sermon on the occasion of his formal presentation as the Archbishop, Metropolitan and Primate of all Nigeria, on Wednesday, 25th March, 2020 declared that his 10-year Primacy of the Church of Nigeria shall be a **"Decade of The Reign of God"**.

On Wednesday, 22nd July, 2020 Primate Ndukuba presided over his first **Episcopal Synod** during which he announced the following appointments in his office:

- The Ven. Oliver Ofoegbu – New Director of Missions
- The Ven. Dr. Hassan John – Director of Communications

- The Ven. Amos Adebayo – Director of Peace, Justice & Reconciliation and also presided over the election and translation of the following **new Archbishop, Bishop and Bishops-elect** of the Church of Nigeria:
- The Rt. Rev. Dr. David O. Onuoha, Bishop of the Diocese of Okigwe South, elected the new Archbishop of the Ecclesiastical Province of Owerri, to replace The Most Rev. Caleb Any Maduoma, Bishop of Ideato/Archbishop of Owerri Province, who is proceeding on retirement.
- The Rt. Rev. Henry Okeke, Bishop of Mbamili Diocese was translated to the Diocese of Ideato, to replace The Most Rev. Caleb Any Maduoma.
- The Ven. Dr. Peter Rotimi Oludipe, Bishop-elect, Ijebu Diocese
- The Ven. Oluwadamilare Agara Adegoke, Bishop-elect, Diocese of Idoani
- The Ven. Enoch Atuboyedia, Bishop-elect, Diocese of Okrika, and
- The Ven. Gabriel Elabor, Bishop-elect, Diocese of Esan

They shall be formally presented and consecrated on Tuesday, 22nd September, 2020 at St. Bartholomew's Cathedral, Diocese of Kubwa, Federal Capital Territory, Abuja .

GLOBAL ANGLICAN FUTURE CONFERENCE (GAFCON)

Appointment of New Director of Bishops' Training

The GAFCON Secretariat has appointed a new Director for the GAFCON Bishops Training Institute (BTI). He is The Rt. Rev. Prof. Dapo Asaju, the Bishop Theologian of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) and current Vice Chancellor of Ajayi Crowther University, Oyo, Oyo State, Nigeria.

GAFCON Sunday, 2020

This was observed on Sunday, 28th June, 2020 to celebrate 12 years of faithful gospel ministry since the first Global Anglican Future Conference was held in Jerusalem in June, 2008.

Member provinces and churches of GAFCON were requested to celebrate its existence by praising God for His faithfulness over the years and also to make a special donation to support the work of GAFCON.

Our Diocese raised the support offerings on Sunday, 19th July and realized a total sum of N409, 315.00

RIVERS STATE

We commend the government of Rivers State under the leadership of His Excellency, Chief Barr. E. N. Wike, CON, GSSRS, POS-Africa for the concern and interest it demonstrated towards the health of Rivers people, especially in the wake of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19). It is evident that the measures taken by the government have gone a long way to contain the spread of the virus here in Rivers State. It is our prayer and expectation that the same zeal applied in the fight against COVID-19 by government will be equally adopted in addressing all other challenges facing the citizens of the State.

We thank His Excellency for the completion and commissioning of the Rumuokwurusi-Elelenwo-Akpajo Road now renamed Justice Iche Ndu Road. The construction of this

modern highway by the government has largely eased off traffic along that axis and opened up the three communities for increased commercial activities.

We welcome the ongoing construction of flyover projects at Rebisi (Garrison), Rumuokoro and Rumuogba, and commend the governor for striving to give the city of Port Harcourt a brand new look.

We wish to however draw the attention of His Excellency to the urgent need for yet another flyover at Rumuokwursi/Elimgbu (also known as Tank) Junction. If this is considered, it will certainly reduce the level of suffering, frustration and delays users of this part of the East West Road experience on a daily basis.

We also think that the Oil mill market has grown to the level that the State Government would need to remodel it and settle the traders out of the highway for their safety and that of others who patronize the market, and of course, to make for ease of traffic.

We join our Governor to seriously thank the Federal Government for the refund of the whopping sum of over N78 billion to the State being part of money spent by the State government on the construction and rehabilitation of some Federal Roads in the State. We thank the President for setting aside the sentiment of political differences to pay back that huge amount to the governments of Rivers and other benefitting states.

This money will definitely give our State a new outlook as it is frugally managed. We advise the government to ensure that the money is channeled to some more legacy projects across the State in the sphere of education, health institutions and urban renewal. This, we believe, will have a long term impact and benefit to the people of the State.

NIGERIA: Matters Miscellaneous

Incidences of Rape: An emergency epidemic in Nigeria

At a time when global attention is focused on COVID-19 – a new strain of the coronavirus which has killed tens of thousands of people and has defied even the greatest nations and technologies around the world, and with nations focusing on how to contain the spread of the pandemic; a new affliction has appeared on the Nigerian landscape, albeit surreptitiously. It is the rising incidences of rape and sexual assault.

Nigerian media houses have in recent months ceaselessly dished out tales of rape and sexual assaults or attempts of it on our women and girls.

Some of the screaming newspaper headlines which we took time to note and document within the last four to five months read thus:

- “UNIBEN Student raped to death inside Church in Benin;•As Obaseki orders investigation”.
- “Man ‘rapes’ mentally-challenged woman in Ekiti” – Nation, Wednesday, July 8
- “Bricklayers rape, impregnate mentally handicapped girl in Ogun” – The Punch, Friday, July 3.
- “I rape housewives, maids, during operations – Robbery suspects” – Vanguard, Thursday, July 2.
- “Gunmen raid Anambra hotel, rape two ladies” – The Punch, Tuesday, July 7.

- “Teenager gang-raped by four men tests positive for COVID-19” – The Punch, Tuesday, July 7.
- “Bauchi, Zamfara men defile minors, Kano rapist jailed” –
- “6-year old girl raped to death in Kaduna Mosque” – Vanguard, Tuesday, June 30.
- “Guard jailed 16 years for sexually exploiting girls in judges quarters” – The Punch, Thursday, July 2.
- “Pastor 54, arrested for defiling 12-year old girl” – Vanguard, Thursday, July 2.
- “Ogun Pastor allegedly rapes 12-year old girl in uncompleted building” –
- “Women raped by herdsmen in Anambra dies in Ebonyi” – Vanguard, Wednesday, July.
- “Akwa Ibom Motorcyclist, 31 nabbed for raping 16-year old girl at gunpoint”.
- “I was gang-raped by herdsmen, offered blood to drink – kidnapped victim” – Vanguard, Tuesday, July 14.
- “Cultist jailed 20 years for raping Federal University, Oye, Ekiti undergraduate, friend” – Vanguard, Tuesday, July 14.
- “My uncle pressured me repeatedly to meet him at a hotel until he raped me-Bauchi undergraduate declared by parents” – Punch, Saturday, July 11.
- “Benue Politician confessed to my 14-year-old daughter’s rape, fled father” – Punch, Saturday, July 11.
- “Man, 25, rapes Ogun septuagenarian in her sleep” – Punch, Friday, June 5.
- “We don’t know why rapist targeted our three-month-old baby-parents of infant defiled by 27-year-old in Nasarawa” – Punch, Saturday, July 4.
- “Police arrest A’Ibom man for raping 16-year-old daughter, 11 other rapists” – Punch, Thursday, June 25.
- **“Traditional Ruler rapes a boy in Yobe” – Daily Post.**
- “Celebrities involved in the rape saga”.

These captured headlines are just snippets of what is happening presently across the nation.

From these headlines we note that the emerging and alarming trend of rape and sexual assault encompasses both sexes and involves all strata of people considering their ages, occupations and callings. Children of all ages, adolescents, housewives, the elderly and even mentally-challenged women are victims while their alleged predators span from their parents and other family members to friends, security guards, cultists, politicians, armed robbers, workmen, cultists, area boys, herdsmen, strangers, celebrities and even traditional rulers and clergymen.

Though not covered in our above listed newspaper headlines, but from findings from other sources, we noted that even young girls are involved as rapists.

According to This Day newspaper report of 13th July, 2020, the Minister of Women Affairs, Mrs. Pauline Tallen was quoted to have said that as many as 3, 600 rape cases were recorded nationwide during COVID-19 lockdown.

Rape, according to the Britannica, may be defined as “an act of sexual intercourse with an individual without his or her consent, through force or threat of force”. It adds that in some societies, the crime of rape has been subsumed under that of sexual assault, which also encompasses acts that fall short of intercourse.

Causes of Rape

Rape is both an anti-cultural and unchristian trend. It is a monstrous abuse on the integrity of victims and by extension the entire society with a lifetime effect.

What could be responsible for this terrible crime by perpetrators against their fellow human beings?

A number of reasons have been advanced for this. They include but not limited to the following:

1. The unbridled sexual desire on the part of the perpetrators
2. The pathological/patriarchal control or assertion of power by rapists over their victims, whether male or female.
3. Excuse of provocative dressing by some female folks.
4. Contexts of socio-political contestations like conflicts, wars and other forms of unrests, insurgency where women are often held captive.
5. Influence of the internet on the minds of users particularly pedophiles, psychologically maladjusted males and the unformed younger generation, who resort to sites where pornographic and sexual contents are available.
6. Occult and ritualistic sacrifices.
7. Contemporary music and movies which focus on female genitalia and depicts acts of transactional and non-consensual sex.

How do we as a nation address this emerging epidemic?

5. We must take steps to check this rising menace. In line with this, we understand that states like Ekiti and Ogun have opened Sex Offenders Registers to publicly name and shame sex offenders as a deterrent. Ekiti State has also gone further to pass a Gender Based Violence (GBV) Law and by virtue of the Compulsory Treatment and Care for Child-Victims of Sexual Violence Law, 2020, a child-victim of sexual violence in the state will have rapid access to a medical facility that can administer emergency medical care including treatment to prevent HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases and counseling. Governor Kayode Fayemi said the state was forced to enact that legislation because, in his words, “Not a day passes without reported cases of rape and child defilement”. Other states including Rivers, also have laws to deal with the situation but either because of weak institutions or lack of enforcement cases of rape have remained unchecked.

We also learnt that the Senate has passed a bill to shield students from sexual harassment while the House of Representatives is seeking the establishment of special courts for rape and gender-based violence offenders.

While these steps are worthwhile, the fact remains that there is need for increased enlightenment and education of people on the emerging pandemic. These should be carried out in schools, social clubs, cultural group gatherings, churches, mosques and through the media.

6. To champion the public enlightenment crusade, the Civil Society Organizations and the Media occupy a major role in this respect. We commend the National Association

of Women Journalists (NAWOJ) which, worried by the situation recently embarked on a protest march with the International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) to raise awareness on this emerging epidemic particularly here in Rivers State. NAWOJ specifically declared rape cases in the country as a pandemic and called for stiffer punishment on offenders and implementation of current laws. On its part, FIDA advocated for the training of girls on self-defense and the education of boys on how to treat girls.

7. Some other eminent Nigerians have equally suggested solutions to this problem. A renowned legal luminary, Afe Babalola has advised that rape culprits be castrated. On his part, Senator Adeleke Mamora, a former Minister of State for Health has recommended penile amputation for rapists while Mabel Ewurehoma, a Professor in the Department of Theatre Arts, University of Abuja advised the Nigerian society to seek to understand the reason for rape by the rapists.
8. While we join to advocate stiffer penalties by the governments at all levels and community leaders against rapists and other sexual assault offenders, we have a word of advice for all parents. They need to be more watchful in their homes so as to monitor all residents of their homes such as uncles, aunt, nieces, nephews, house helps and visitors who might come in contact with their children to ensure that the latter are safe from any form of assault.
9. We, the Church have a very big role to play as both the victims and offenders claim to belong to one church denomination or the other. While we must pray earnestly against this emerging anti-cultural, immoral and ungodly attitude which we believe is one of Satan's many strategies at destroying our human society; we are at the same time to increase our teachings on appropriate lifestyles and relationships with one another.

NDDC: CLEAN THE ROT, END THE SHAME!

The people of the Niger Delta Region looked forward with great hope to a more serious approach to the development of the area, when in July, 2000 the National Assembly enacted the Niger Delta Development Commission (Establishment, etc) Act, No. 6 to provide for the repeal of the Oil, Mineral Producing Areas Commission Decree 1998, and among other things establish a new Commission with a reorganized management and administrative structure **for more effectiveness**; and for the use of the sums received from the allocation of the Federation Account for tackling ecological problems which arise from the exploration of oil minerals in the Niger Delta areas and for connected purposes.

The said Act No. 6 of 2000 assigned the NDDC the following functions and powers:

- Formulate policies and guidelines for the development of the Niger Delta area
- Conceive, plan and implement, in accordance with set rules and regulations, projects and programmes for the sustainable development of the Niger Delta area in the field of transportation including roads, jetties and water ways, health, education, employment, industrialization, agriculture and fisheries, housing and urban development, water supply, electricity and telecommunications.
- Identify factors inhibiting the development of the Niger Delta area and assist the member states in the formulation and implementation of policies to ensure sound and efficient management of the resources of the Niger Delta Area.
- Tackle ecological and environmental problems that arise from the exploration of oil mineral in the Niger Delta Area and advise the Federal Government and the member states on the prevention and control of oil spillages, gas flaring and environmental pollution, etc, etc.

To effectively carry out these multifaceted assignments towards the total development of the Niger Delta region, Part 5 of the Act clearly spelt out how the Commission is to generate the much needed huge funds for its operations. It says that:

- The Commission shall establish and maintain a fund from which shall be defrayed all expenditure incurred by the Commission.
- There shall be paid and credited to the fund established from the Federal Government, the equivalent of 15% of the total monthly statutory allocations due to member states of the Commission from the Federation Account; this being the contribution of the Federal Government to the Commission.
- 3% of the total annual budget of any oil producing company operating, on shore and off shore, in the Niger Delta Area; including gas-processing companies.
- 50% of monies due to member states of the Commission from the Ecological Fund.
- Such monies as may from time-to-time, be granted or lent to, or deposited with the Commission by the Federal or a State Government, any other body or institution, whether local or foreign;
- All moneys raised for the purposes of the Commission by way of gifts, loan, grants-in-aid, testamentary disposition or otherwise; and
- Proceeds from all other assets that may, from time-to-time accrue to the Commission.
- The fund shall be managed in accordance with the rules made by the Board of the Commission.

From the foregoing, it becomes very clear that the Act establishing the NDDC was well conceived and the Commission intended to be an interventionist agency. In the words of

someone, “had all things gone as originally intended by the Federal Government, the Niger Delta Region would have by now become another Dubai of Africa”. We are to also add here that with honest and faithful management and utilization of the abundant funds accruing to the Commission, the Act intended to permanently lift the people of the Niger Delta out of poverty and underdevelopment.

Sadly, this has so far not been the case, despite, in the words of the President, “the huge amount of money the Federal Government has religiously allocated to the NDDC”. The Niger Delta Region, which has steadily provided the resources used by the Federal Government to develop other regions in the country, has itself remained grossly underdeveloped and the people wallowing in extreme poverty, due to the high level corruption that has from its inception bedeviled the very Commission saddled with the mandate to get the people out of the doldrums, the management of which has over the years been under the same people of the Niger Delta. In this case, neither the Federal Government nor Nigerians from other regions are to be blamed. We in Niger Delta have ourselves to blame.

Successive generations of management teams of the Commission, rather than live up to the vision and mission statement of the NDDC, which are: providing “a lasting solution to the socioeconomic challenges of the Niger Delta Region” and “to facilitate the rapid, even, and sustainable development of the Niger Delta into a region that is economically prosperous, socially stable and ecologically regenerative, and politically powerful”, preferred to treat the Commission, in the words of the Minister of the Niger Delta Affairs, Senator Godswill Akpabio, “as an ATM, where you just walk in there to go and pluck money and go away”. The October 17, 2019 edition of the Punch quoted the Minister to have further said “I don’t think they were looking at it as an interventionist agency”.

The same Senator Akpabio, was in December 2019 quoted to have said that the Commission abandoned the sum of \$70 million in the bank for 13 years, at a time the entire landscape of the South-South is littered with abandoned projects as a result of non-release of funds to contractors by the management of the NDDC.

When the Governors of the South-South Region paid a visit to the President, General Muhammadu Buhari in mid-October, 2019, they re-echoed the increasing public outcry against the Commission’s abysmal performance and called on the President to reposition it. In his response, the President announced that he had ordered a forensic audit of the operations of the Niger Delta Development Commission from 2001 to 2019.

In a following statement after the meeting with the governors, the President’s Special Adviser on Media and Publicity, Mr. Femi Adesina quoted his boss to have noted that projects in the region “did not justify the huge resources made available to the agency”,

and requested to see the verifiable result on ground as well as explanations, promising that the next line of action would depend on the report of the forensic audit.

The recent drama (accusations and counteraccusations by the Minister of the Niger Delta Affairs and officers of the NDDC) unfolding at the floor of the National Assembly following the enquiry into the financial activities of the Commission by the legislative arm of government simply confirms the long-standing public outcry regarding the operations of the Commission. We pray that members of the National Assembly (some of whom have been fingered in the ongoing mess) will be courageous enough to sustain this enquiry and not “off the mic” until adequate explanations have been extracted from those who have mindlessly looted and wasted the enormous resources of the Commission which were meant for the development of the Niger Delta Region. We further pray that this exercise and the forensic audit ordered by the President will not end up as a mere entertainment targeted at keeping Nigerians busy or distracting us from monitoring developments in other areas of our national life where similar ills are taking place.

At the end of this probe, all those found guilty of stifling the development of the region through their reckless misdirection and misappropriation of the content of our common till must be adequately punished for their crime and their loot recovered and judiciously channeled towards the development of the region.

As part of the ongoing audit and probe of the Commission, all jobs awarded to contractors (including to past and present government officials) should be reviewed. Appropriate penalties should be imposed on any contractor discovered to have poorly executed or even failed to execute the contracts awarded to them for which full payments have been made by the Commission.

Furthermore, we call on the President to immediately freeze the accounts of the NDDC and carry out a total overhaul of both the Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs and the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) with a view to replacing those officials who have shamelessly betrayed the trust reposed on them through their fraudulent and criminal dealings at the two interventionist agencies, with better, God-fearing, more competent and accountable Nigerians also from the Niger Delta region. Room must no longer be given to pen-robbers and thieves just because they belong to the Party in power. The much talked about fight against corruption by the present government must yield satisfactory dividends this time around otherwise the government can as well spare us of the noise.

This rot and show of shame of many years must no longer be allowed to continue! The time to clean up is now!!!

Southern Kaduna Killings and Other Security Challenges

We are quite concerned about the spate of unwarranted killings going on in the Christian-dominated Southern Kaduna, in Kaduna State.

It is so sad that this cycle of unprovoked violence and destruction of human lives and properties have gone on unchecked for many years without much intervention from Nigeria's security units, the Kaduna State and Federal Governments. From the look of things, it is becoming clear that the perpetrators of these murderous acts are on a mission of genocide and ethnic cleansing. The government has so far failed to prove to us that it is willing to bring a permanent end to this persisting carnage.

The Christians of Southern Kaduna and the indigenous ethnic nationalities in that part of the country, like all other Nigerians, have a God-given right to live in safety and enjoy the blessings God has bestowed on their land without any fear of molestation and threat to their lives. It is also the duty of government and its agencies saddled with the security of the citizens of this country to defend and protect all those in that part of our nation from their predators.

From the time the President and his campaign team sought the mandate of Nigerians to constitute the next government at the Federal level in particular in 2015, he committed himself very strongly to providing adequate security for all citizens of this country no matter where they live or come from. That campaign promise was coming at a time when security challenges were so common across the land. How come a government that raised the hopes and expectations of the citizenry in the area of securing their lives, communities and properties is now appearing so weak and clueless over the same challenge it made Nigerians believe it was coming as a 'Messiah' to tackle? All across the country, the security situation has so worsened, to the extent that everyone now lives in absolute fear, uncertain about what to expect next.

From the states of the North-East where the Boko Haram insurgents have held sway to those of the North-West especially, Katsina, Kaduna, Sokoto, Zamfara and Kebbi to the South-West, South-East, South-South and North-Central where Fulani herdsmen and other jihadists, bandits and armed robbers have taken over the forests, communities, farmlands and the highways, the story of killings and sacking of villagers and farmers from their ancestral lands go on relentlessly by those who have vowed to overrun these places and impose their primitive brand of life.

We call on the Federal Government led by President Muhammadu Buhari to wake up from its deep slumber and end this bloodbath just as he promised he would do if elected.

The International Community too, should not continue to keep quiet over the security situation in Nigeria, especially as it has to do with the targeted killings of defenseless Christians and decimation of Christian communities.

What happens to the life of every Nigerian citizen should actually matter to the president and his cabinet, members of the National Assembly, our security personnel and other leaders across the country.

These devastating security issues across the nation should be seriously addressed NOW before it becomes too late; for the lives of all of us matter!

SCHEDULE OF PAST AND FUTURE SYNOD HOSTS/VENUES

S/ N	YEAR OF SYNOD	HOST	DIOCESAN CHIEF LAUNCHER		HOST BLOC CHIEF LAUNCHER
1	2010	All Saints’ Cathedral, Rumuokwurusi		Not in practice as at these years.	Usually determined by the host Bloc
2	2011	Oroigwe/Eliogbolo Archdeaconry			
3	2012	Rumuomasi Deanery			
4	2013	Okporo Deanery			
5	2014	Rumuobiokani Deanery			
6	2015	Chapel of Grace & Knowledge, Firstfruits Parish, ACMGS, Elelenwo			
7	2016	St. Jude’s, Oginigba Deanery			
8	2017	St. Mark’s, Elelenwo Deanery	Diocesan Clergy		
9	2018	Evo South/East Archdeaconry	Diocesan Council of Knights		
10	2019	Woji Archdeaconry	Diocesan MU/WG/SF/GG		
11	2020	Trinity Archdeaconry	Diocesan CMF (All Men)		
12	2021	All Saints’ Cathedral, Rumuokwurusi	Diocesan AYF (All Youths)		
13	2022	Rumuomasi Deanery	Diocesan Clergy & Lay Ministers (Readers)		
14	2023	Oroigwe/Eliogbolo Archdeaconry	Anglican Traditional Rulers & Chiefs in Evo		
15	2024	Evo Diocesan Schools	Prayer groups of CMF, MU/WG of Churches		
16	2025	Rumuobiokani Deanery	Diocesan Council of Knights		
17	2026	Okporo/Rumuogba Archdeaconry	To be determined		
18	2027	St. Jude’s, Oginigba Deanery	To be determined		
19	2028	Elelenwo Deanery/ Archdeaconry	To be determined		
20	2029	Iriebe Archdeaconry	To be determined		
21	2030	Church of The Holy Spirit, Paraclete Deanery, Elelenwo	To be determined		
22	2031	All Saints’ Cathedral, Rumuokwurusi	To be determined		
23	2032	Woji Archdeaconry	To be determined		

Gratitude

As we gradually start coming to the end of this year's synod, we will like to express our sincere gratitude to everyone in the Diocese particularly the clergy/church teachers and their wives, all officers of the Diocese particularly the Diocesan Legal Party led by Sir Barr. Nlerum Amadi whom we have now appointed Chancellor; the Synod Secretaries

and their team, the entire Bishop's/Central office team and other church workers, members of the Diocesan and Local Organizing Committees for this Synod; all Synod delegates and the various councils of our churches, our Diocesan Auditors as well as leaders and members of the various activity groups and units.

We specially thank the Archdeacon of Trinity Archdeaconry, The Ven. Charles and Mrs. Ada Mordi, other clergy and wives of the Archdeaconry; HRH Eze Sir T. O. A. and Dame Anthonia Ejekwu, the Paramount Ruler, Chiefs, Elders and the good people of Atali Community; Evang. & Mrs. Silas Ekezie, the Chairman and members of the Archdeaconry Local Organizing Committee as well as their counterparts at St. Matthias' Church, Atali District for their enormous contributions towards the hosting of this Synod. We appreciate you all and pray for greater blessings from God for everyone of you, the Archdeaconry and the Community.

We thank everyone in the Diocese for your invaluable sacrifices, support, prayers and encouragement since the past eleven years of our Episcopacy and existence of our Diocese. May the Lord continually bless you all and reward your labours of love and services done in His name.

Lastly, I appreciate my wife, Mrs. Chinyere U. Ordu, JP and my entire family for their enormous prayers, concerns and solidarity with me in the discharge of the multifaceted responsibilities the Episcopal office has bestowed on us. May God's abundant blessings continually rest upon you all, in Jesus name – Amen.

Conclusion

As we conclude this address, may we draw our attention afresh and in the spirit of the theme of this Synod, to Apostle Paul's exhortation in 1 Corinthians 1:10:

“Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment”

and Jesus' word in Mark 3:25: *“And if a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand”*. We in the Diocese of Evo - the Bishop, Clergy and parishioners or the people of Evo Kingdom, we can be likened to a house, family, an army or a team. We must learn to stay united if we hope to make any progress as a Church of Christ or a Kingdom. We cannot afford to be divided, no matter the pressure we are under to do so. Let no one give in to satan's scheme of DIVIDE and conquer. This Diocese is not going to be supported by only one person or a parish or community, but by all of us. We are one; we are strongest working together in unity.

Satan fears the unity of the church, family or community. In the words of Dr. Chris Kwakpovwe, “a united church is his (Satan) waterloo, so he will do all he can to cause CONFUSION, quarrels, bitterness, DIVISION, compromise with the world, etc... that is the devil's strategy because he knows the power in unity and agreement. He knows that **two are better than one** (Eccl. 4:9), he knows that it is more difficult to defeat two

people and a threefold cord is difficult to break (Eccl. 4:11-12); he knows that when you agree, you will chase thousands” (Lev. 26:8; Deut. 32:30).

We stand to be stronger and work better as a Diocese if we work together. “Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much” – Helen Keller. “We are as strong as we are united, as weak as we are divided” J. K. Rowling.

Let us lay aside our parochial, group, ethnic and individual sentiments and always team up with others in the Diocese in order to advance the work of evangelism, mission, welfare and church growth committed to our collective hands.

We need each other to survive!

Thank you for listening and may the Lord bless you.
Your brother, friend, Bishop and President of Synod.

+Innocent
Evo

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1



CHURCH OF NIGERIA

(Anglican Communion)

THE MOST REV'D NICHOLAS D. OKOH, MA, Fss, Mss, LLD, DD
Archbishop, Metropolitan and Primate of All Nigeria

THE COMMUNIQUÉ ISSUED AT THE END OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE CHURCH OF NIGERIA (ANGLICAN COMMUNION) HELD FROM 23RD –27TH SEPTEMBER, 2019, AT THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF ST. PETER, ASABA, DELTA STATE.

INTRODUCTION The Standing Committee of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) met at the Cathedral Church of St. Peter, Diocese of Asaba, Delta State, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and presided over by The Most Rev'd Nicholas D. Okoh, Archbishop, Metropolitan and Primate of All Nigeria. In attendance were his wife, Mrs. Nkasiobi A. Okoh, President of the Women and Girls' Organizations; the Dean of the Church of Nigeria, The Most Rev'd Dr. Ali Buba Lamido, 157 Bishops, 138 Clergymen, 90 members of the House of Laity and delegates of the Mothers' Union. We were honoured at the Opening Ceremony with the presence of some distinguished guests including the Executive Governor of Delta State, His Excellency, Senator Dr. Ifeanyi Arthur Okowa.

THEME The theme of the meeting was 'FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT OF FAITH' [1 TIMOTHY 6:12]. At the end, the following Communiqué was issued:

At a time like this, when we seem to be distressed over insecurity, deterioration of our social amenities, poor medical system, weak educational system, the Standing Committee reminds all:

- That God's unconditional faithfulness is the perfect assurance that we have a future which no one or system can destroy.
- That the prevailing situation in our nation is increasingly dire and full of hate. All Nigerians are, therefore, called upon to renounce the devil and all his works, by crucifying the flesh.
- That everyone, especially Christians, must rise up and fight this fight between light and darkness, good and evil, the kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Satan wisely particularly by setting good examples for those who have strayed from the straight path of godliness.
- that believers must not shy away from fighting the good fight of faith as inherited and passed on by the fore-bears of our faith.

FELICITATION The Standing Committee heartily congratulates the Most Rev'd Henry Ndukuba- Bishop of Gombe Diocese and Archbishop of Jos Province for his successful emergence as the Primate-Elect of our Church. The Church prays that as he prepares to take over the huge task of leadership, the Almighty God will empower

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and strengthen him. In similar vein, the Committee appreciates the out-going Primate, the Most Rev'd D. Okoh, Archbishop, Metropolitan and Primate of All Nigeria for the developmental strides and achievements so far, and pray God to grant him the ability to finish strong in the name of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit; Amen.

CASHLESS POLICY While appreciating the efforts of the Federal Government towards introducing a sustainable cashless policy, the Standing Committee calls for caution in its implementation in order to guard against hoarding of funds in unconventional places. It further urges our elected officials at all levels to embrace more the spirit of sacrifice and patriotism, in view of paucity of funds to finance the new minimum wage and other pressing needs of the citizens. With greater number of the citizens living below poverty level, the Government should look for better ways of sourcing or saving funds instead of worsening their lot with increase in Value Added Tax (VAT).

TRANSPORTATION The Standing Committee commends the Federal Government on the improvement on the rail system. Similar attention should be paid to other means of transportation, to improve the deplorable condition of our roads, as in fact the Government has started, and the services of the local airlines. The Federal Government is implored to assist local airlines to replace old aircraft to save the nation from avoidable air disasters. The opening of our water ways for the movement of goods and services is a need that is both urgent and compelling.

THE POWER SECTOR The Standing Committee is worried that despite all efforts and funds invested since the inception of this democratic experience in 1999, the power sector has defied solutions by successive administrations while consumers pay dearly for darkness. It prays and calls on all concerned to redouble efforts in this direction so that sooner than later, constant power supply will be available and affordable.

XENOPHOBIC ATTACKS IN SOUTH AFRICA The Church condemns the wave of Xenophobic attacks in South Africa against foreign nationals, especially Nigerians, and calls on the Government to pursue diplomatic solutions to its logical conclusion. It also urges the Government not to abandon the returnees without resettlement, and calls on Nigerians, both at home and in the Diaspora, not to take laws into our hands, by destroying establishments. It further commends the patriotic spirit of Airpeace Airline towards the rescue mission of Nigerians in Diaspora, especially on this issue. Wealthy Nigerians are accordingly urged to use their God given resources to better the lives of other Nigerians.

The absence of viable youth empowerment programmes has partly led to the migration of progressive Nigerian youths to other less endowed nations, where they

are mistreated. The Government should create enabling environment for our youth to explore their potentials with zest.

EROSION OF OUR VALUES The Standing Committee wishes to register her displeasure over the sponsored promotion of social vices that are alien to our value system through electronic media through programmes like the **Big Brother** reality. The youths get keyed into these alien sexual cultures capable of causing unmanageable social crises and devalue human dignity. We strongly urge multinational corporations and other sponsors of such immoral programmes to divert their resources to more productive and educative programmes towards raising good, visionary and patriotic future leaders.

SECURITY The Standing Committee notes the pain, suffering and hardship inflicted on citizens as a result of insecurity in the land. More painful is that some privileged Nigerians have turned this regrettable situation into business, defrauding international organizations in the name of NGOs, and diverting funds and materials meant for IDPs. While commending the Federal Government for the efforts made so far in the fight against insecurity, we urge that the fight should also be directed against the sponsors of this heinous crime against humanity no matter who they are.

UNITY IN DIVERSITY The Church strongly believes that the beauty of Nigeria lies in its ethnic and cultural diversities. These should naturally be tools for progress and development. The present trend of exploiting and misusing them for selfish gains should not only be discouraged but also condemned in its entirety. Appropriate Government structure that guarantees justice, equity, honesty and fair play will give us a head start for the desired peace, progress and development. The thriving democracy and development in climes like United States should encourage us employ our diversity rightly.

ACQUISITION OF SEVEN KILOMETRES OF WATER WAYS The plan by the Federal Government to acquire seven kilometers of land bordering water ways across the country is fuelling a lot of suspicion and apprehension in the society. While thanking the 8th National Assembly for rejecting the Executive Bill on this issue, the Standing Committee calls on the 9th National Assembly to be on the watch out for any move to reintroduce it for passage into law. At this stage, of our national development, we should avoid anything capable of upsetting the polity and emphasis what makes for peace and build up our common life. We commend the wisdom and grace that led to the suspension of the infamous RUGA project and calls for its total abrogation in whatever form or guise.

FREEDOM OF WORSHIP Concerned with the plight of Christians, who are suffering at the hands of Islamic extremists in Nigeria and around the world, the Standing Committee urges all Christians to pray faithfully for God's grace and protection for those who are persecuted. It further calls on all tiers of government to

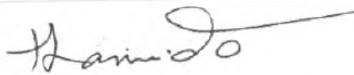
ensure freedom of worship and where necessary, the protection of Christians who are under pressure around the world, particularly in Nigeria. The Standing Committee hereby requests that Government application of policies/laws on the right to own land should be without bias. It should not be designed or seen to favour any religion or group in the country.

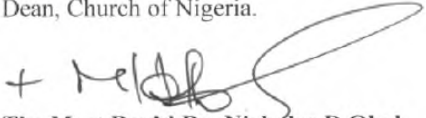
JUDICIARY The Standing Committee wishes to express deep concern that the Judiciary is still financially dependent on the Executive. The Federal Government of Nigeria need to realize that the judiciary is an independent Arm and should be allowed to carry out their postings and promotions without interference. An empirical financial autonomy that will enable it function progressively is, therefore, seriously solicited.

CONVOCAATION OF ANGLICANS IN NORTH AMERICA (CANA) In April of this year 2019, CANA came solely under the control and jurisdiction of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion). Despite the fact that this decision led to the exit of the Diocese of CANA East to join the Anglican Church in North America (ACNA), it is our sincere desire to forge ahead and maintain a good relationship with ACNA as they are our brothers and sisters in defense of the faith. We are committed to *fulfilling* our mission of reaching the host in North America. The Standing Committee congratulates Bishop Felix Orji on his appointment by the Primate of All Nigeria as Missionary Bishop of CANA, trusting God to guide him as he leads CANA in the USA and CANADA.

CONCLUSION Finally, brothers and sisters, we urge you to fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art so called and has professed a good profession before many witnesses. (1 Tim 6.12)


Ven. Dr. G. Paul Dajur ,
General Secretary, Church of Nigeria.


The Most Rev'd Dr. A. B. Lamido,
Dean, Church of Nigeria.


The Most Rev'd Dr. Nicholas D Okoh,
Archbishop, Metropolitan and Primate of All Nigeria

Appendix 2



CHURCH OF NIGERIA

(Anglican Communion)

THE MOST REV'D NICHOLAS D. OKOH, 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, 23RD TO FRIDAY, 27TH SEPTEMBER, 2019, AT
THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF ST PETER, IN THE DIOCESE OF
ASABA, DELTA STATE**

Beloved in Christ,

In the name of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit; Amen.

Greetings!

The Standing Committee Meeting of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) was held from Monday, 23rd to Friday, 27th September, 2019 at the Cathedral Church of St Peter, Asaba, Diocese of Asaba, Delta State. The theme was, **“FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT OF FAITH”** (1 Timothy 6:12).

We rejoice and thank God for the sufficiency of His grace that has kept us as a Church and Nation despite the challenging realities of our time. Living out our faith in a time like this has become difficult, hence, the need to fight to maintain our most precious faith. Paul's charge to Timothy in 1 Timothy 6:12 which forms the theme of this meeting, is a wake-up call and a timely reminder to all Christians. The reality of our time is the devil's strategic plan to destroy this “holy faith once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 3).

It is imperative therefore, that we put on the whole armour of God against the devil's schemes, as we engage in this fight of faith (Ephesians 6:12). This will enable us to recover what the enemy has taken away from us. This recovery is only possible by using the power of the gospel to conquer the power of Satan - sin, the world and the flesh. We must do this bearing in mind that “the sufferings of this present time cannot be compared with the glory that is to be revealed in us” (Rom. 8:18). It is, therefore, important for those who know their God, whether bishops, clergy or laity, to make the difference by upholding righteousness at all costs.

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Our prayers are with our brothers and sisters who are passing through various ugly experiences, ranging from road accidents, kidnapping, armed robbery, natural disasters and losses of various kinds. It is our sincere prayers that the grace of God will be multiplied unto them to bear these experiences.

We equally use this opportunity to call for consistent prayers over the state of our nation, for God's divine intervention at all levels of our national life, especially for those who are suffering for the faith. As we pray, the need to cushion the effects on our members cannot be over emphasized.

We shall continue with our tradition of making contributions towards Relief Funds, St. Matthias' Day Collections, Advent Collections, Ajayi Crowther Projects and GAFCON Support. This is important as we work together as a Church to impact our people positively. We commend those who have responded well, and appeal for better performance. We are pleased to inform you that the Standing Committee has graciously institutionalized the Advent Collection as a way of having ready funds to pursue our common cause. We encourage you to be steadfast in your support to the growth and stability of our Church.

Beloved, we have observed carefully the ugly situation of co-habitation among the youth. This has become a major challenge to recognized marital life, and we condemn this sin of cohabitation without being lawfully married.

We should be mindful to check the activities of some diabolic cultures in our communities in order to secure the future of our children and young people. Similarly, we are deeply concerned about the manifest satanic activities through electronic and other social media platforms. We note in particular the subtle damage which ***The Big Brother Reality Show*** causes to our moral values. We call on all members of our church to be reawakened and stand up to this raging battle between light and darkness. As a church we should commit the youth and children ministries to people who have been trained in the way of the Lord (Prov. 22:6), and insist on discipleship as an antidote to these vices.

We are grateful to God for His faithfulness in the blessings of the Divine Commonwealth Conference (DIVCCON). We are confident that the 2019 edition slated for Monday, 11th – Friday, 15th November, will

surely be spiritually rewarding. We expect a greater attendance and participation.

As we engage ourselves meaningfully to establish the kingdom of God among men, efforts must be made to remove issues that will not help our growth. The challenge of ethnicity in our communion is a major hindrance to the unity and growth of our Church. We must be reminded that in Christ we are one. Any good fight of faith that leaves you more a child of Satan than a Child of God cannot be God's own strategy. Dealing with people in the matters of faith of our Lord Jesus Christ on basis of race, colour, tribe, ethnic group, language etc., fails the test of biblical objectivity. We must resist such spirit.

Earlier this year, Bishop Julian Dobbs decided to lead the Diocese of CANA East out of the Church of Nigeria. As a Church, we were disappointed with this action. However, we urge CANA to remain faithful and united in love under the new missionary Bishop, The Rt. Rev'd Felix Orji.

We rejoice with you all for every blessing received, and pray God's gracious hands to keep you under the shelter of His tabernacle. We equally commiserate with those who lost their precious ones, especially the family of the Bishop of Bukuru Diocese, Rt. Rev'd Jwan B. N. Zhumbes, on the home call of his beloved wife, Mrs. Lois Zhumbes, the family of Bishop of Western Izon, Rt. Rev'd Benjamin Emamezi on the home call of the wife, Edafe, and the family of the late Rt. Rev'd Joshua Ogunele, Bishop on the Coast Diocese.

Please, do well to continue to remember Leah Sharibu, Chibok girls and others who are still in the captivity of Boko Haram, bandits, killer-herdsmen, kidnappers, and so on in your prayers that the Lord, in His mercy, will intervene in their situations.

We remain grateful to the Archbishop of Bendel Province, the Most Rev'd Dr Friday Imaekhai and his wife, Theresa; the Bishop of Asaba, the Rt. Rev'd Justus Nnaemeka Mogekewu and his wife, Theresa. Other Bishops of the Province of Bendel and their wives, the Clergy and their wives, the LOC and the entire Laity of the Province, especially the Executive Governor of Delta State, Senator Dr. Ifeanyi Arthur Okowa, and the Government of Delta State, for their sincere efforts towards the overall good success of the Standing Committee Meeting. May our gracious God reward your labour of love abundantly.

Beloved in Christ, we express our appreciation to you for your prayers and thank God for his presence with us at the Standing Committee Meeting. We are particularly pleased to inform you about the election of our successor, the fifth Primate of our Church, in the person of The Most Rev'd Henry Ndukuba, Bishop of the Diocese of Gombe and Archbishop of the Province of Jos. We urge you to join in prayers for him and his family as they prepare to take up this great assignment, and for us, as we also prepare to disengage.

In conclusion, we wish to remind us that spiritual maturity does not mean or come with ability to display charismatic gifts; rather, it comes with increasing ability to crucify self, and the willingness to obey God's instructions in humility and selflessness.

Therefore, brethren, we urge you to "fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses."

May the grace of God be with you all.

Yours in the service of Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'N. Okoh', with a large, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

The Most Rev'd Nicholas D. Okoh, MA, Fss, Mss, LLD, DD
Archbishop, Metropolitan & Primate of All Nigeria

Appendix 3



CHURCH OF NIGERIA (Anglican Communion)

THE MOST REV'D HENRY C. NDUKUBA, MA, BD, MA (Ed.)
Archbishop, Metropolitan and Primate of All Nigeria.

COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AT THE END OF THE BISHOPS' RETREAT HELD AT ST. MATTHIAS' HOUSE, CHURCH OF NIGERIA NATIONAL SECRETARIAT, GUDU, ABUJA FROM MONDAY, 20TH TO THURSDAY, 23RD JULY, 2020.

INTRODUCTION

The Retreat of the Bishops of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) was presided over by the **Most Rev'd Henry Chukwudum Ndukuba**, the Archbishop, Metropolitan and Primate of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion), accompanied by his wife, **Mrs. Angela Eberechukwu Ndukuba** and attended by 149 bishops in person while 10 bishops joined online. The Retreat was grateful to have the **Most Rev'd Peter Jasper Akinola**, a former Primate of the Church of Nigeria, as its keynote speaker, the Bible Study ably led by the **Most Rev'd Benjamin Kwashi**, Bishop of Jos, and other inspiring speakers who led the various seminars of the Retreat. The immediate past Primate of the Church, the **Most Rev'd Dr Nicholas D. Okoh**, sent in a gratefully received goodwill message to the bishops.

THEME: THE DECADE OF THE REIGN OF GOD (ISAIAH 52:7-10)

The focus of the Primacy of the **Most Rev'd Henry C. Ndukuba**, whose maiden retreat it was as the Primate of the Church, was chosen as the theme of the Retreat. The theme is very apt, as it calls for the recognition of the awesome power of God to reign over the affairs of His people, especially in the Church of Nigeria. The bishops rose with a passionate appeal to all to submit wholly to the Almighty God to reign over His church and for His will to prevail in all situations.

The Retreat Charge calls on Bishops and leaders of the Church to re-examine their callings, attitudes and operations in the Church of God to ensure that they are in conformity with the will of God as a symbol of a kingdom where God reigns. It calls on the leadership of the Church and all who are involved in church ministry to shun all attitudes and behaviours that are inimical to the reign of God in His church.

The Retreat identifies different forms of indiscipline, carelessness, division, corruption and ungodly practices that have surreptitiously crept into the Church of God today, as inconsistent with the reign of God in His church. Therefore, it calls on leaders and members of the Church of God all over to abhor all such practices and stand up for godliness in the name of the Lord.

THE CHURCH AND THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The Bishops lament the pains that have been caused to humanity as a result of the Global Pandemic of Covid-19 that has led to the death of more than One million people all over the world, and the closure of schools and church buildings all over the country. It calls on

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ST MATTHIAS HOUSE:

Plot 942, Ibrahim Waziri Crescent CAD Zone B01, Gudu District, P.O. Box 212, ADCP Garki, Abuja, Nigeria.,
Tel: 0823007730 | Email: stmatthiashouse@stmatthias.org

all believers to continue to pray and seek the face of God for His mercy on His creatures. It laments the socio-economic impacts of this Pandemic and commends the Federal and State governments for their actions so far at containing this pandemic. It commends the Church of Nigeria and its various dioceses for the diverse acts of charity and palliatives made available to both members and non-members throughout this time. It calls on the churches to continue in this spirit of caring for one another in the light of its mission, as expressly received from the early church.

The church commends the efforts of frontline workers, including doctors and nurses and others who are involved in the fight against the pandemic, noting that some have had to pay the ultimate price. It calls for integrity in the process of identifying, managing and fighting the infections. It further calls on all citizens to maintain and obey the set protocol, including frequent hand wash with soap and use of sanitizers with effective physical distancing, in order to minimize the effect of this pandemic and stem its spread. It noted that this Pandemic is real and should be treated with utmost seriousness.

INSECURITY

The bishops expressed worries about the spate of insecurity in the land, appealing to the Federal Government to be unrelenting in fighting the various threats to the safety and security of the citizenry.

CANA AND GAFCON

The Retreat restated its commitment to its overseas missions and to maintaining strong partnership with GAFCON and its member provinces in serving God and His world together, without compromising the orthodox faith that was once for all delivered to the saints.

CHURCH OF NIGERIA VISION

The Retreat revisited its vision and mission document with a determination to refocus and update appropriately, so that it can continue to be a relevant church ministering to the needs of its society. Thus, it reaffirms its determination to uphold its vision, namely *The Church of Nigeria shall be Bible based, spiritually dynamic, united, disciplined, self-supporting, committed to pragmatic evangelism, social welfare and a Church that epitomizes the genuine love of Christ.*

CONCLUSION

The Anglican Church is particularly gifted in its calling to minister to people in diverse contexts and situations; the Retreat, therefore, enjoins the Church to continue to draw from its rich heritage to minister to the needs of the society at large. Finally, it challenges all believers to wake up, look up and stand up for the reign of God and reposition the Church as a vehicle for its manifestation.



The Most Rev'd Henry C. Ndukuba, MA, BD, MA(Ed)
Archbishop, Metropolitan and Primate of All Nigeria

