



**RT. REV. OLUBUNMI A. AKINLADE B.Sc., Dip. Th.
Diocesan Bishop**

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS 2021

GREETINGS

My Lord, the Bishops here present, Mama Ife, my Lord the Chancellor of our Diocese, Registrar and other Legal Luminaries, Diocesan Officials, the Clergy and Clergy Wives, Synod delegates, I bid you welcome to the 1st session of the 11th Synod of our great Diocese. The Diocese of Ife in the year 2021.

INTRODUCTION

Ours is an exclamation of thanksgiving and praise to the Almighty God, who has sustained us since the last synod. Let me borrow the words of Psalm 44:8, which state that ***“In God we have boasted continually, and we will give thanks to your name forever.”*** Indeed, we shall continue to give God thanks and praise for all He has done and is still doing for us. The boasting we do in God, our guide, will never be taken away from us.

Last year Synod took a decision to reduce the number of days of Synod from 4 to 2 days, and I am happy to announce that this decision is being implemented. We had sent out group work ahead of Synod so that groups can meet electronically and discuss. This will help to

ensure that we can finish within the allotted time. Evaluation will be done after this Synod.

By the time we finished synod last year, things seem to be normalizing in our country after the lockdown effect of the COVID 19 pandemic. Little did we know that the second wave of the pandemic will be more brutal than the first wave. Many lives were lost in the second wave towards the end of last year and the earlier part of this year. We extend our condolences to families that lost loved ones. May their souls rest in peace.

As I write this charge, the effect of the third wave caused by the delta variant of the COVID 19 pandemic is already gaining momentum in our country and all over the world. The number of reported cases is rising daily and number of deaths too. We pray for God's mercy as that is all we have in Nigeria. Nothing concrete seems to be in place by our government towards curbing the pandemic through vaccination. It is disheartening that most, if not all, of the vaccines distributed so far in Nigeria are from donor agencies with little or nothing coming directly from our government despite the enormous donations received from individuals towards curbing the effect.

My prayer is that the God who kept us during the first and second waves will continue to keep us safe. No evil will befall anyone of us in Jesus' name. Please get vaccination whenever it is available, if you have not, do know that it is the safest way to protect yourself against the devastating effect of the pandemic.

OUR RESOURCE PERSONS

Let me appreciate our resource persons for this year's Synod. At the communion service this morning, I celebrated the Eucharist, while The Rev. Canon Dr. Adedapo Adesoji preached. The Venerable Prof. Rotimi Adagunodo led the bible study.

Tomorrow, I will also celebrate the Eucharist while The Rt. Rev. Dr. Steven Akobe Lord Bishop of Kabba will preach at the thanksgiving service. I want to thank everyone of them, and others involved in the conduct of services profusely for the efforts they have put into the preparations. God will honour you all in Jesus' name. The detailed profiles of our resource persons are listed in Appendix A.

HAPPENINGS IN THE DIOCESE

MISSIONS

We have focused majorly on missions in the year under review. Areas of emphasis include rebuilding of churches and vicarages in the rural area, planting of new churches, welfare, and evangelism.

Rural Mission

The clergy of the diocese were in our rural churches for a week during the month of March for the mission week. The week featured revivals, counselling, healing and deliverance sessions, baptism, and house-to-house evangelism. Some new converts were recorded, and they are being disciplined in their various locations.

It is worth mentioning that out of over one hundred and fifty churches in the diocese, about a hundred are in rural areas. Resulting from the Ife-Modakeke war in recent years, the population in many of these farm settlements dwindled, affecting the numerical strength of our churches. That is why we pay a lot of attention to nurturing and rebuilding these churches. Now, most are manned by evangelists at the ratio of three churches to one evangelist. However, we are changing that

narrative by intentionally posting priests to these rural missions and increasing the number of workers in the mission field.

Every Priest at some point in time must serve a few years in rural mission. Also, from time to time, some of the evangelists who have proved their worth are sent to Archbishop Vining College of Theology, Akure for a specialized course after which we ordain them. Let me state for emphasis that sending evangelists to Akure for training is not automatic but based on performance over several years and strictly at the bishop's prerogative.

Church Planting

In the year under review, a church (Anglican Church of Divine Wisdom) was planted at Lagaba, a new farming settlement close to Ijebu Igbo but within our diocese. Also, at Olopa Meji Awolumate area, we just started a new church. At Lagaba, we purchased a plot of land, and the members also purchased another plot. Construction work on the church building has reached the roofing stage at the time of writing this report. Plans are underway to acquire a parcel of land at Awolumate, which we shall build a church on for the community.

Construction works within the diocese

We are continuing with our effort of rebuilding our rural churches that are falling apart. Presently, construction work is going on at different stages in the following places.

1. Anglican Church of Divine Wisdom, Lagaba
2. Christ Anglican Church Arode Elewure
3. All Saints Anglican Church, Arode Loodoko
4. St. Stephen's Church, Orisumbaje
5. St. Peter's Church, Elerin.

We have completed the construction of two vicarages at Omifunfun and Isoya. We converted a vestry into a living room and added a bedroom, toilet, and kitchenette to achieve a one-bedroom apartment in both churches.

At Omifunfun, Atowo, and Isoya, we sank a borehole each for the church and the community as our social responsibility project.

Many of our rural communities have water challenges, especially in the dry season. With these boreholes in the communities, the whole community is full of appreciation to the diocese.

I recently laid the foundation for the church building at Obalaayan, Off Ifewara road. The church was planted by Ireemo Archdeaconry in 2019 when I gave a directive to all Archdeaconries to plant at least one church. This church will remain in Ireemo Archdeaconry despite being physically in Aiyegbaju archdeaconry territory.

The block of two flats built by a member of St. John's Church Ilare as Vicarage for curates and sexton's quarters is now completed and will be dedicated before the end of the year.

At Canon Ogunbanjo Memorial Anglican Church Mokuro, a family is sponsoring the construction of a new vicarage on top of the Sunday School Complex. Work has reached advanced stages as roofing has been done.

At Oba Olubuse Anglican Church, Ifewara road, a foundation was laid by me for the vicarage/sextons' quarters in July.

The congregation at Isaac Williams Makinde Memorial Church, Idita, is building a new sanctuary on a parcel of land behind the vicarage. This is to curtail the noise caused by a denomination that conducts unacceptable

noisy worship services, with massive megaphones in front of their present church building. I laid the foundation of the new sanctuary on Sunday, 8th August 2021.

The laying of the foundation stone at Ven. Adedeji Ogunyimika Memorial Church, Edunabon was done in June this year. Work has passed the lintel level. We hope to dedicate this vicarage before the end of the year.

Since we resumed in 2016, it has been our wish to build a chapel for the large population of students at Moro occasioned by the presence of two higher institutions along the Moro/Sekona road. St. Jude's church Moro gave us a parcel of land for this purpose close to Foreign Links School. This vision was commissioned on July 30, 2021, when I laid the foundation of Heritage Chapel, Moro on the said parcel of land. It is our prayer that this project will be completed soon enough so that students coming in the next academic session can use the place for worship. We solicit your financial support for this project.

I want to use this medium to especially thank all those who gave us towards these projects, our prayer is that

God in His infinite mercies, will continue to meet them at their points of need.

Radio Services

We continue to sponsor a thirty-minute bible study in English at Crown F.M and Yoruba at Orisun F.M every Sunday at 5.00 pm and 5.30 pm, respectively. These broadcasts have come to stay, ministering to a large audience with accompanying testimonies.

We also upload the broadcast onto our YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram channels. In addition, we publish a recorded sermon every Sunday on our social media channels.

I want to specially thank and put on record the contribution of one of our fathers in the diocese **Prince Ropo Ogunwusi (Baba Oba)**. He singlehandedly furnished our studio to a standard ultra-modern studio where all the above recordings are produced. Our studio is now capable of handling productions for radio and demo CDs for third parties at a cost. We solicit patronage.

I also like to thank the media technical team led by Mr. Odunayo Fasina and Mr. Toyosi Oyebiyi for their efforts in ensuring that the recordings are produced and

published weekly as scheduled. Special thanks also go to Ven. Bode Osunniyi, who coordinates the content and resource persons we use for our broadcasts.

BLOCK INDUSTRY

Our block industry has commenced full operations at its permanent site at Alaoko. We encourage you to please patronize us for your cement and other cement-related products like various sizes of blocks, paving stones, rings, etc.

We thank the Women and Girls' Organization for patronizing us by buying large quantities of blocks from us.

Recently we injected additional funds into the industry to expand its operation. We look forward to this project becoming a major revenue source for the diocese.

COMPUTERISATION PROJECT

The second phase of this project which involves migrating to the Cloud based version of the ShelbyNext Financials Church Management system has been completed. The system is now fully functional covering

General Ledger, Accounts Receivable, Payroll and Remittances modules.

With this project in place, I don't have to be in the office to monitor activities in the accounts department. Once I log in from anywhere in the world, I would have access to their postings and reports.

Going forward we will focus on the design of the website for the diocese.

CROWD FUNDING

The Crowdfunding initiative of the diocesan board is still on despite low patronage from individuals. The amount realized so far is embarrassing for a Diocese like ours, may I use this media to challenge us all, to ensure that the Account is funded. The designated account for this project is – Diocese of Ife Crowdfunding, Zenith Bank Account number 1015670471.

MACEDONIAN FUND

The Macedonian fund initiated by the former Chancellor of our Diocese, Professor Gabriel Olawoyin (now of blessed memory) seem to have been forgotten. In the past couple of months, there has been no inflows. This

fund is a way by which Ife Sons and Daughters can support the diocese in funding developmental projects.

The diocesan board had taken a decision that money realized from this fund will be used to build a guest house on our land at Eleyele to further generate income for the diocese. Perhaps the Synod can adopt a levy which all sons and daughters of this diocese must subscribe to and pay into the account for this project. Synod must come up with an effective way of collecting this levy.

The designated account for this project is – Diocese of Ife Macedonian Fund, Zenith Bank Account number 1017306826

DIVINE ROYAL COLLEGE

The student's population at the beginning of the season stood at forty-eight (48). The registration for the Basic Education Certificate Examination was completed. With this the students can now sit for the JS 3 (Junior WASC) examination in the school. We hope to commence the WAEC/NECO registration soonest. Two of the students who passed out in the 2019 session has since gained admission into the University.

The science laboratory was equipped appreciably. The perimeter fence work was started to secure the land from encroachment. The project had gulped close to a million naira.

I paid a scheduled visit to the school on Tuesday 3rd August 2021. This visit enabled me to do an on-the-spot assessment of the school. There is the urgent need to build the entrance of the school from the main road. I have directed the management team to submit to my office the estimate of this project. Also, we shall continue gradually the fencing of the school land.

For the school to be registered for WAEC/NECO we need to build and furnish the ‘C’ block which will consist of the Science laboratory, School Hall, and Library.

I very much appreciate and thank the management board headed by Ven. Prof. ERI Afolabi for the sacrificial service they render. I also commend the Principal and Staff of the school for their dedication to duty.

MISSIONARY PEWS

One of the traditions of the Anglican Communion is to reserve a pew in front of the church as ‘Missionary Pew’. In the Diocese of Ife, this pew is usually the first pew on

the left central aisle of the church. Traditionally, this is where the Vicar's wife and wives of other clergymen in the church sit. If a bishop's wife is visiting, she is giving priority here.

I have observed that during occasional services, this pew is taken over by the celebrants and their family. The major reason for this is that the front pew on the right central aisle is usually reserved for Church Chiefs. Based on our cultural background, the celebrants on such occasions will not sit on a space reserved for chiefs. However, they do not see anything wrong in sitting on the pew reserved as missionary pew.

This practice needs to be corrected. Nobody will sit on the vicar's sit when he is not in the service, non-choristers will not sit in the choir stall during services. Why have we relegated our clergy wives to the background? They should be given their pride of place.

I was at the funeral service of the mother of the Governor of Oyo State last year at St. Peters Cathedral, Aremo. There were lot of dignitaries including about sixteen Governors, nobody, apart from bishop's wives and clergy wives sat on the missionary pew.

I have issued a directive that henceforth, this missionary pew must be clearly marked in churches within the

diocese, and on no occasion should anybody other than Bishop's wives and/or clergy wives sit on this pew. Even when none of them is present in the service, it should remain unoccupied. This directive has already taken effect. Note that the vicar of any church who contravene this directive will be sanctioned accordingly.

SECURITY IN CHURCHES

The rate at which churches are burgled and musical instruments and Altar furnishings like Cross, candle stand, Communion Vessels are stolen has become alarming. These syndicates of thieves' target churches with no security to carry out their ungodly act.

Since the beginning of this year, not less than ten of our churches and several other denominations have been burgled. Most of our churches do not have security men, and most of are not fenced. It is high time we took positive protective action to safeguard our property and equipment.

I have issued a directive to all churches that henceforth they must engage the services of security men for both day and night. Failure to comply will attract sanction.

In addition, the situation we have found ourselves in the country calls for vigilance and security consciousness by

all of us. Every church should have security committee that will be assigned to play vigilante roles during services on Sundays and other days of worship. We have had instances where vehicles were stolen during services. Vicarages have been broken into at night. On one occasion, my priest saw the man who came into his vicarage while he was sleeping at night.

Please don't take chances on security. Be security conscious. Don't be penny wise pound foolish.

CHURCH BUSES AND DRIVERS

I have also issued a directive that churches that have buses must employ drivers. Clergy men are not employed as Church Bus Drivers, and should not be reduced to that for any reason. Furthermore, the church Bus is restricted to transport members to occasions and clergy and wives to meetings. The diocese can also request the use of the bus for official engagement.

Please note that the bus is not for rent or private use even by church members. Bad usage of our buses has led to most of them being run down. You must regularly maintain them.

So far, I have done a major overhaul on the buses of St. Peter's Church Okesoda, Ifetedo and St. Barnabas Church, Olonade. The diocese can now proudly convene its members on provincial and National assignment to

various destinations and take its rightful place among forward looking dioceses.

Please have a budget for maintaining church assets especially, buses.

CHOIR AND MUSIC

There is a need to improve the standard of music (both Classical and Contemporary) in the diocese. This has been identified as one of the factors attracting our youths to other churches, especially the New Generation churches.

After careful observation, we have discovered that the core limiting factors for musical excellence in our diocese are:

1. Current structure of our choir leadership.
2. Reluctance of Vicars and Parish church Council to invest properly in music and musical instruments.
3. Shortage of skilled personnel to teach music.

Current structure of our Choir leadership

Most of the people we refer to as Choir Masters in our churches often cannot read and teach music! They are appointed to that post simply because of their leadership skills. We need to correct this misrepresentation of office.

Henceforth, you can only be a Choir Master if you can sight-read and teach music scores. Those who are currently in that position and cannot sight-read and teach music shall henceforth be called Choir Wardens. This takes effect immediately in all churches. The same rule applies to organists. You can only be an organist if you can sight-read and play the keyboard. If all you do is ‘vamp’ then you are just a lover of music.

Reluctance of Vicars and Parish Church Council to invest in Music

The reluctance of churches, represented by Vicars and Parish Church councils, to commit resources to music is very much prevalent in the diocese. Good music plays a very important role in worship. That is why you find New Generation Churches investing heavily in it. I recommend that churches should have a budget for music every year, and you can ask people to donate. I suggest you get professional advice before you buy instruments, so that you can buy quality. Donors must donate what you specify not what they just pick up from a store.

Also, Churches must switch on generators for choir rehearsals during the week in the event of power failure. If cost of diesel is a factor buy a petrol generator for that purpose and fund the purchase of fuel. On no

condition should Vicars ask choristers to go a cap in hand to beg members for money for petrol. It is the duty of the church to provide as they render service to the church.

Shortage of skilled personnel to teach music

The main factor responsible for this shortage is the unwillingness of churches led by vicars to pay commensurate wages for skilled personnel. We are lucky in Ife that we have the University which also has a Music Department. As a result of this, skilled personnel are readily available if you are willing to pay a commercial rate.

Meanwhile, the Diocese is addressing this issue by the establishment of the Diocese of Ife School of Music headed by Ven. Adetayo Sijuade (Rtd.). Let me use this medium to thank Ven. Sijuade (Rtd.) who donated the building to house this school of music at St. Paul's Anglican Church, Ayegbaju, to mark his 80th birthday. Our children can go to the school and learn how to sing and play musical instruments for a fee. Churches should sponsor their youths to the school.

Let me formally announce that we are in the process of establishing the Diocesan Choir. Auditioning is ongoing for qualified people to join this choir. They will be taught

by professionals and there will be opportunities for them to perform at concerts, divine services, and Diocesan programs. Details will emerge later. The diocese is including a line in our budget for next year towards this venture.

If we are going to make a difference in life, then we must commit resources to music and get professionals to drive the initiative.

HUMAN RESOURCES

OUR MEN

Since our last report to Synod on the formation of the Men's Fellowship, a lot of background work has been done. We embarked on the production of the curricular for each subgroup of the fellowship. Also, operational manuals for each subgroup of the Men's Fellowship have been produced. The implication is that the activities of the Fellowship will be guided to ensure uniformity in their studies and other activities.

I have also inaugurated the Diocesan Coordinating committee consisting of four representatives from each archdeaconry to start work in preparation for the formal inauguration of the Christian Men Fellowship of our diocese in December this year by God's Grace.

Three representatives from the diocese also attended the Church of Nigeria regional training for southwest Men's fellowships in Lagos in July 2021. We are looking forward to participation in the National Men's fellowship congress in October this year. This congress will be hosted by Ibadan Province and one of us (Prince

Agunlejika) is a member of the Local Organizing Committee.

WOMEN AND GIRLS' ORGANIZATION

The Women and Girls' Organizations under the leadership of the President, Mrs. Nkechi Akinlade, are full of praises to God for his sustaining grace and mercy. It has been an exciting year for them, and they give all the glory to most high God.

Units of the Organization

Action & Outreach Unit

This unit paid an evangelical visit to the Prison, prepared the youth for the provincial Essay Competition, organized the Widows and Widowers' workshops in the Origbo, Ife and Ifetedo axis. The retired clergy and their wives were also not left out in their outreach. The unit under the leadership of Mrs. Deborah Atobalo continues to work to reach out to the under-privileged in the Diocese.

Mothers' Union

The Mother's Union has continued to grow numerically in number and in their activities in the Parishes, Archdeaconries and the Diocese. The Mothers' Union Christmas party was fun filled as all archdeaconries made different presentations ranging from

choreography, traditional dance, song presentation to drama. I was there to grace the occasion.

The joint rededication service was held at St. Paul's Anglican Church, Ayegbaju and the women in the Diocese came out en-masse. Other programmes held include the Enrolling Members' Retreat, Couples Retreat and Mary Sumner Day. We thank God for the success of the programmes and the testimonies that abound.

Girls'/Ladies' Guild

This unit under the leadership of Mrs. Omolayo Oluwatope carried out their programmes successfully in the year under review. The Ladies' Guild Valentine Programme with the theme "*Change Your Mind*" Ephesians 4:23 (NLT) and Girls' Guild Retreat with the theme: *The Imitator*- Ephesians 5:1-2 (NLT) held on May 29, 2021 at St. Jude's Anglican Church, Moro. The annual Ladies' Guild retreat and the Annual Girls' Guild Competition were held at the Diocesan Camp, Asipa and it was residential. The girls and ladies turned out in their large numbers at these programmes and the events that feature were all interesting and inspiring.

The Publication Unit

The annual inspirational magazine, **Ile-Ayo**, with theme "**DOUBLE FOR YOUR SHAME – Isaiah 61:7**" was launched

at the last Women's Organization's conference held at Canon Ogunbanjo Memorial Anglican Church Mokuro. It featured several articles. I strongly recommend it to all of us, as the articles are spiritually very rich.

Charity Outreach to the Origbo Environs

The Women Organization Charity Outreach tagged "Love God...Love People" was held at St. Jude's Anglican Church, Moro on the 3rd of July, 2021. The Women Organization with the contribution of all Churches was able to reach out to the less privileged in the Origbo axis. Huge publicity was made and beneficiaries came from Moro, Ipetumodu, Asipa and Edunabon. The medical team was also available to cater to the health needs of the various people that needed their attention. Among the items available at the outreach were Rice, Beans, Semovita, Clothes, Shoes, Children items, books etc.

Oyere Farm Project

There has been a decline in the progress at the farm as the tenants are not paying their rent giving various reasons. Apart from the monies collected by the diocesan legal team when the tenants were served quit notice in 2016 no significant payments have been made by the tenants. It is now five years and nothing significant has happen since. Synod needs to take a decision on this development.

Women Organizations' Multipurpose Centre at Arubidi

We give all glory to God, the giver of all for the wisdom and strong faith He has bestowed upon the President of the Women and Girls' Organizations, Mrs. Nkechi Akinlade. In the year under review, Mama Ife has challenged the faith of our women and motivated them towards the completion of the Women Project at Arubidi and it gladdens our heart that it is now a reality.

The faith, prayers and effort of our women has been crowned by the Lord Almighty as the magnificent building project was dedicated yesterday 10th September 2021.

OUR YOUTHS

The Diocesan Youths took part in some important activities at different arms of the church (Parish, Archdeaconry, Diocesan, and National Church) in the year under review.

There was a Diocesan Youth Prayer Summit on Saturday, 23rd January 2021. The Summit featured many youth focused activities such as Marriage Seminar, Word Ministrations and Entrepreneurship talk for Youth Empowerment.

The Women Organization Valentine Program took place in February and many young girls and boys were in

attendance to learn about the true essence of the Valentine Day and how to celebrate it as Christians.

There was a Pre-Conference Training on March 11-14, 2021, that took place in Lagos. The pre-conference was in preparation towards the Joshua Generation International Youth Conference held in April at Nsukka. A total of 10 youths were sponsored to this power packed programme by the Diocese. And they were given training as Group Mentors, Bible Study / Workshop Facilitators and Counsellors for the International Conference that followed.

On the 5th to 10th of April 2021, the diocese sponsored a total of 47 youths including 2 priests to the Joshua Generation International Youth Conference at University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Enugu. The International Conference featured many events towards the overall development of the youth such as prayers, talks, seminars, and workshops.

The diocese also obtained UTME forms for 24 youths who indicated interest across the various archdeaconries within the diocese.

The Diocesan youths were part of the two Alpha Youth Series completed this year. This took place at St. John's Ilare, Ile-Ife. Youths in secondary schools and the University played significant roles in these Alpha Youth Series which has the potential of reversing the trend of

our youths leaving for other denominations. In addition, they also had the opportunity of bringing their friends and colleagues for the program and to church.

We appreciate the efforts of the Director of Youth in developing our youths in the Diocese.

SOCIAL WELFARE

The Diocese was able to reach out to the Elderly and other less privileged members of our society through its Directorate of Social Welfare during the year despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. A summary of the activities of the directorate is as listed below.

St. Zacharias Medical Screening

Members of the Directorate self-sponsored a medical screening exercise for St. Zachariah's (Deaf & Dumb) Church members worshipping at the hall of St. John's Anglican Church, Ilare. About 35 members of this church were attended to and various tests like BP, Diabetes, Urinary, HIV were conducted. Clothes, foodstuff, and other daily needs were freely distributed.

The Elderly Christmas Party

The elderly Christmas party which has come to stay as a yearly get-together gathering for the elderly in the

Diocese took place as usual in December 2020 at St. Peter's Anglican Church, Iremo, Ile-Ife. Medical check-ups were also conducted by our competent Diocesan Medical Personnel. We thank God for the success of the event.

Ilu Ooni Outreach

The Directorate was at St. Micheal's Anglican Church, Ilu-Ooni on Saturday July 17, 2021, for medical and evangelism outreach in Ilu Ooni. The outreach was successful.

Prison Fellowship

The fellowship day approved by the prison authorities for the Directorate is third Thursday of the month. This was well utilized by the directorate at Ile-Ife Medium Security Prison, now named "Correctional Center". Also, the directorate was at Ilesa Prison, in company with some members of Prison Fellowship of Nigeria (PFN) Ife Chapter, every 2nd Wednesday of the month. A monthly purse was given from the diocese, this enabled them to share love with the inmates by distributing needed items.

The Prisoner's Journey (TPJ)

The Prisoner's Journey is a ten-week discipleship programme designed to help in bringing inmates closer

to God and be more rooted in the Gospel. In the year under review, forty-two inmates graduated from this discipleship program. Certificates and Bibles were presented to the successful participants.

OSUN STATE

We are indeed very grateful to God Almighty for His love and divine protection over us all in Osun State, despite reported cases of kidnapping, banditry and health challenges that pervaded the entire country; the state continues to maintain low record.

We thank God for the life of our Governor, His Excellency Alhaji Adegboyega Oyetola and his team for the enablement granted them to manage the affairs of the state without rancor.

The state Government have been proactive in managing the COVID-19 pandemic in the state. This has led to timely intervention in cases reported in the state before it spread. No wonder Osun State is one of the states with very low infection cases and low death from COVID-19.

Going by the reports we get from our members who work for the State Government, we learnt that regular and timely payment of salaries has come to stay, while pensioners also received their pension regularly.

However, we want to appeal to the state government to give priority to the issue of unpaid gratuity of retirees

in the state and the backlog of months of unpaid salaries of workers and the pensioners by the immediate past government.

We equally commend the Government for the reconstruction of the road leading from Akinlalu Junction through Asipa, Ipetumodu, Yakoyo to Moro/Eduabon intersection. We urge the Government to extend the construction into Akinlalu Town from Akinlalu Junction.

We use this medium to appeal to government to please help us reconstruct the road leading inside the Arubidi community.

Also, we continue to ask government to return our schools to us for proper management. Some of them are in a deplorable state like the St. Philips Primary school besides our Cathedral at Ayetoro.

We pray that the relative peace we are enjoying in the state will continue unabated.

STATE OF OUR NATION - NIGERIA

There is the saying among our people which translates as *‘a lone finger attracts the smear of oil by itself but taints the other four fingers with it’*. This explains the consequence of leader’s action on the populace who are neither privy to decisions made nor accept them.

Nigeria, at present, is tottering on the brink of a precipice. We either strive to remain a nation state or we may disintegrate through the agitations for self-rule prevalent among some ethnic nationalities in our land. The ingredients of a sovereign state, one that is united by factors that define our collective hope is rapidly becoming chimeric. It is indeed a time of ‘moral and social deterioration’.

A little journey back to our past reminded us that though we did not have utopia, we were hopeful of a bright future written in gold by faith. Our hopes have since been intermittently dashed by successive governments through the years.

The body language of the leaders seems to encourage reprobates among us to continue in their wicked ways. Notable challenges we face almost daily, include

Banditry, Kidnapping, Herdsmen menace, Armed Robbery, and insurgents. All these have gone on unabated for a while.

One gets disappointed by the day about the revelation of self-deceit going on in government as each day passes. A case in point is the embarrassment caused recently by a trusted senior security officer.

Let me reassure those of us who are still trusting God to intervene in the affairs of our country that He is able to provide even in difficult times. We read in 1 Kings 17 v. 14 *‘For thus says The Lord God of Israel: ‘The bin of flour shall not be used up, nor shall the jar of oil run dry, until the day The Lord sends rain on the earth’*. Until God decides to intervene in the affairs of our nation, He will continue to provide for His own miraculously.

Let me prophesy to our nation Nigeria, Nigeria will not disintegrate, God will judge those who are stealing the resources of this land. God will remove the pestilence in the land and there shall be season of peace, abundance, and a bounteous shower of blessing for all. In the coming elections, God will give us godly and qualified leader who will lead this nation out of misery and take us back to our rightful place in the committee of

Nations. By our next Synod, we shall be singing a new song about Nigeria.

‘Until the day the Lord sends rain’ on Nigeria, may the power of The Almighty Lord bring succour to the inhabitants of the land. The ‘Jar of oil will not run dry.’

EVENTS SINCE 2020 SYNOD

DEDICATIONS

- 12/01/2021 Dedication of St. Thomas Anglican Church Iyoodun, Olode
- 10/09/2021 Dedication of Women's multipurpose centre, Arubidi

FOUNDATION LAYING

- 01/02/2021 Foundation laying of a new vicarage at Christ Anglican Church, Waasinmi, Ipetumodun.
- 05/02/2021 Foundation laying of a Vicarage and Dedication of a Church building at St. David's Anglican Church, Olomu-Oja.
- 18/07/2021 Foundation laying of Oba Olubuse Memorial Anglican Church's Vicarage at Konsere, Ifewara road.
- 30/07/2021 Foundation laying of The Heritage Chapel, Moro.
- 08/08/2021 Foundation laying of a new church building at Isaac Makinde Memorial Anglican Church.

CONFIRMATION

- 25/07/2021 The Confirmation Service of Ife-East Archdeaconry held at CAMAC Ondo road.
- 18/07/2021 Confirmation service of Eleyele Archdeaconry, held at St. Matthew's Anglican Church, Eleyele.
- 01/08/2021 Confirmation service of Ayegbaju archdeaconry held at St. Paul's Anglican Church, Ayegbaju.

INVESTITURES AND ORDINATION

- 29/11/2020 Advent ordination held at St. Peter's Anglican church, Okesoda, Ifetedo
- 16/01/2021 Investiture of Chief held at St. Peter's Anglican Church, Iremo
- 11/07/2021 Trinity Ordination & Collation of Archdeacons held at St., Paul's Anglican Church, Ayegbaju

CONFERENCES AND RETREATS

- 29/10 – 1/11 Diocesan Women Conference
2020 held at Canon Ogunbanjo Memorial Anglican church, Mokuro

03/02/2021 Pre-Lenten retreat held at St. Stephen's Anglican Church Oke-Ola, Ipetumodu

EPISCOPAL SERVICES

25/12/2020 Christmas service held at the Cathedral Church of St. Phillip Ayetoro, Ile-Ife.

03/01/2021 Clergy & Wives with the Bishop and Mama Convocation held at The Cathedral Church of St. Phillip Ayetoro, Ile-Ife.

09/01/2021 Power for the year held at The Cathedral Church of St. Phillip Ayetoro, Ile-Ife.

31/01/2021 Rededication service of Women Organisation held at St. Paul's Anglican Church, Ayegbaju.

25/02/2021 The Annunciation of Jesus Christ to the blessed Virgin Mary, held at St. Paul's Anglican Church Baakun Ayetoro, Ipetumodu.

01/04/2021 Maundy Thursday, held at the Cathedral Church of St. Philip, Ayetoro.

04/04/2021 Easter Service held at the Cathedral Church of St. Phillip Ayetoro, Ile-Ife.

- 23/05/2021 Pentecost Sunday Service held at The Cathedral Church of St. Phillip Ayetoro, Ile-Ife.
- 27/06/2021 Diocesan Women Mid-year thanksgiving held at Cathedral Church of St. Phillip Ayetoro, Ile-Ife.

OTHER EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

- 01/12/2020 Mother's Union Christmas Party held at the Diocesan Camp ground, Asipa.
- 10/12/2020 Church wardens and the clergy meeting with the Diocesan Treasurer and the Bishop held at the Bishop's Court Parakin, Ile-Ife.
- 10/12/2020 Church wardens and the clergy meeting with the Diocesan Treasurer and the Bishop held at the Bishop's Court Parakin, Ile-Ife.
- 11/12/2020 The Diocesan Board meeting held at the Bishop's court Parakin, Ile-Ife.
- 13/02/2021 Diocesan Girl's and Ladies Guild/Boys Valentine Luncheon held at Isaac William Makinde

- Memorial Anglican Church, Idita, Ile-Ife.
- 27/02/2021 The Bishop, Mama Clergy and Wives Day held at the Diocesan Camp, Asipa.
- 09/04/2021 Diocesan Board meeting held at the bishop's court Parakin
- 25-26/06/2021 Clergy Wives School held at the Diocesan Camp Asipa.
- 10/07/2021 60th Birthday service of Ven. Michael Akinbami held at St. John's Anglican Church, Ilare.
- 12-15/07/2021 Clergy School, held at the Diocesan Campground, Asipa.
- 22/07/2021 Commendation service of the Late Ven. Dele Adeyemi, held at St. Peter's Anglican Church Odi-Olokun.
- 23/07/2021 The burial ceremony of the late Ven. Dele Adeyemi held at St. John's Anglican Church, Aroro-Mogaji, Ibadan.
- 29/07/2021 Wardens and Clergy's meeting with the Diocesan Treasurer and Bishop held at the Bishop's Court Hall
- 03/08/2021 Episcopal visitation to Divine Royal College, Alakowe, Ile-Ife.

06/08/2021 Diocesan Board Meeting held at
the Bishop's Court Parakin

In the sure hope of resurrection

Recently, we lost one of our priest in the person of Ven. Dele Adeyemi after a protracted illness, he was fifty years old. Earlier in the year, we lost the former Chancellor of our diocese, Prof. Gabriel Olawoyin, at the ripe old age of eighty-two. Both have since been buried. May their souls rest in peace.

Kindly let us stand to observe a minute silence in their honour.

Our hearts go out to Mama Mrs. Agnes Arike Olawoyin and Mrs. Victoria Oluyemi Adeyemi, may the Lord console and strengthen them.

SYNOD THEME

Godly parenting in a cosmopolitan World

Judges 2:10 *“After that whole generation had been gathered to their ancestors, another generation grew up who knew neither the LORD nor what he had done for Israel.”*

We live in a remarkably busy world, in many families nowadays, both husband and wife work to make ends meet. The resultant effect of such lifestyle is that from Monday to Friday and sometimes weekend, the children spend most of their time with people who are not their parents (Grandma, Grandpa, House Helps, Neighbours, etc.). The law of cause-and-effect states that **‘every cause has an effect, and every effect becomes the cause of something else’**. The resultant effect of this trend is that there is little or no time to instruct our children directly in the way of the Lord as God commands us in the bible (Deuteronomy 6:4-9).

Assumption is seriously affecting our generation as regards training our children in the way of the Lord. We assume that because we take them along with us to church on Sundays and other mid-week activities, they

automatically should know what is expected of them from the commandments of God.

Most of us now rely only on Sunday School teachers to teach our children about God and His Laws. While children do learn a lot from Sunday school, it is not enough, and it is at variance with what God commanded us in His word. Just ask yourselves, when was the last time you gathered your children together for instruction on the ways and methods of life approved by God.

The aim of our Synod Theme this year is to remind Christian parents of how important it is to intentionally teach our children the ways of the Lord.

The neglect of parents to intentionally teach their children the way of the Lord usually leads to Apostacy. We have noticed a growing trend of apostacy among our youths; Drug use, Illicit lifestyle, Violence, Profane Language and Lack of respect for the elderly to mention a few, are now common place among our youths today.

God's Blueprint

God's blueprint for teaching our family members godly lifestyle can be found in Deuteronomy 6:1-9

¹These are the commands, decrees and laws the Lord your God directed me to teach you to observe in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess, ²so that you, your children and their children after them may fear the Lord your God as long as you live by keeping all his decrees and commands that I give you, and so that you may enjoy long life. ³Hear, Israel, and be careful to obey so that it may go well with you and that you may increase greatly in a land flowing with milk and honey, just as the Lord, the God of your ancestors, promised you. ⁴Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. ⁵Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. ⁶These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. ⁷Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. ⁸Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. ⁹Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

When you carefully meditate on the passage above, you will observe that there are benefits that accrue to you directly for implementing God's blueprint in your family. Verse 3 says when you obey God's commands, it will go

well with you, and you will increase greatly in the land. You may want to reflect deeply on this verse and ask yourself, ‘are things going on well with me?’ ‘Am I increasing greatly as promised by God?’ ‘Am I following God’s blueprint?’

Family time

As it is stated in verses 6-9, we must intentionally internalise and practice the commands of God and impress them on our children. Teaching our children must not be left to Sunday school teachers alone. Our children see us more than they hear us, so our own lifestyle will do a lot more teaching.

In verse 7, it is clear that parents have a major role to play in teaching children godly standards. We must first know what the bible says before we can teach it. “You cannot give what you do not have.” As Proverbs 27:17 says, *only iron can sharpen iron.*

Our conversation around the house and especially at mealtime must be centred on the word of God. This emphasises the need for families to eat at least a meal together a day. When we move around with them, we are to continue the discussion.

What do you listen to at home and when you move about with your family? Do you even have time for your

family? Some of us are so busy that we hardly have time for our families. I make bold to say you may need to cut short your work or business schedule to accommodate your family more.

Let me add here that this also applies to the clergy, some of us are so busy with the congregation that we neglect our family. Let us remember 1 Timothy 5:8, failure to take proper care of our families equates to us denying the faith we claim to be busy proclaiming.

Visuals

The use of symbols to teach at home is also emphasised in that passage. Have you noticed the various mediums of marketing employed by organizations today to sell their products? Visuals are particularly important; understand this, **we live in a visual world, where people now think with their eyes.** ‘The world is busy bombarding us with the wrong visuals everywhere you turn to, what is the church’s response to this?’ By the church I mean you and me.

Look around your house, what symbols or posters or carvings do you see? Is there anything that speaks the word of God to people when they come into your home or office. Can people by looking around your house infer that you are a Christian? What bumper stickers do you

have on your car? Are you proud to let the world know you are a Christian by what you display around you? Remember the words of our Lord Jesus Christ in Luke 9:26 *‘If anyone is ashamed of me and my message, the Son of Man will be ashamed of that person when he returns in his glory and in the glory of the Father and the holy angels.’*

Instead of us lowering our standard to accommodate the world, can we spread the Gospel through various media (symbols, posters, graffiti, bumper stickers, inscription on our gates and walls of our houses or offices, social media) so that the world will come to know about the God we serve?

Understanding the times

In 1 Chronicles 12:32, we are told about the men of Issachar who understood the times they were living in and knew what they ought to do. They had keen interest in understanding the times they lived in and what cause to take by studying the word of God. God not only gave them the Torah to obey; He also expected them to discern the proper application of the Torah in the context in which they found themselves. We in turn need to stand out and be proactive about the things of God in our time.

For example, social media is the most effective media of communicating in our time. Every day, we are bombarded with all sorts of messages on the various platforms of social media (Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, TikTok, Snap Chat etc.). What percentages of the messages you receive on daily basis is edifying? Now think of how many hours a day you spend on social media. Do you spend that much time talking, reading, or meditating about the word of God?

Can we change the narrative? Think of what will happen to our world if every Christian sends out every day an inspiring godly message, sermon, encouragement, music, etc. We will surely drown the voice of the world.

Romans 12: 2 further emphasises the above fact *“Do not conform to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.”*

It is about time we stop conforming to the standards of the world, rather we should teach the world to conform to godly standards.

All we see happening around us especially with visuals is not a coincidence, unseen forces are working in the background, and they make it look like it is just the

modern times we live in. Ephesians 6:12 reminds us of the invisible enemy that contends with us as we struggle to train our children in the Godly way. *“For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.”*

Most times we say we are in the modern world. We copy the corrupt practices of the western world and sometimes infer that the devil and his agents are only in Africa because many are still backwards. The African magic movies we watch help sell this idea. Indirectly, we are saying there is no devil in the civilised world. To address this, I borrow words from a popular pastor in our country. He said, ‘the devil is both in Africa and the western world, only that his agents abroad are educated and the ones in Africa are not.’ By their education, they use more subtle ways which usually go unnoticed to get at us. Their actions are more devastating than the ‘African devil’, be vigilant.

GODLY PARENTING TOOLS

Let us briefly examine three effective godly parenting tools.

1. Discipline

Train up a child in the way he should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it. - Proverbs 22:6

Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell. - Proverbs 23:13-14

Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul. - Proverbs 29:17

To chasten, or discipline, our children when they are disobedient is a principle taught in the bible. This is because we are all born with sinful natures. Correction is brought about by the infliction of pain of some kind.

We can bring children into line by inflicting pain, without it being physical, such as withholding certain privileges for a time. However, for most children, the most effective way is to administer a spanking to “the seat of learning.”

Now, a spanking can be administered without being brutal or abusive. It must not be done in anger or irritation. It must be administered wisely and prayerfully. I have known some parents who would tell the child why the spanking is being given before it is performed. My father did that to me every time he caned me when I was a child. He was never in a hurry to cane you. Most times he did it when he is eating, he would usually take a few spoons of the meal after a stroke which were usually two to six strokes. This may take thirty minutes to administer all the strokes.

Hebrews 12 gives the illustration of God administering correction to us, His children. Let us carefully read verses 5 through 11

⁵And have you completely forgotten this word of encouragement that addresses you as a father addresses his son? It says, “My son, do not make light of the Lord’s discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, ⁶because the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and he chastens everyone he accepts as his son.” ⁷Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as his children. For what children are not disciplined by their father? ⁸If you are not disciplined—and everyone undergoes discipline—then you are not legitimate, not

true sons and daughters at all. ⁹Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of spirits and live! ¹⁰They disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, in order that we may share in his holiness. ¹¹No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.'

You will see that God also “spanks” His children. Notice, however, that God’s chastening is not punitive, but corrective. Afterward, it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who are exercised thereby, even though that chastening at the time is painful. (Verse 11).

The Bible does not teach “child abuse”, but it does teach physical punishment when it is needed. Contrary to what some parents may mistakenly believe that children who are regularly disciplined are not happy. In fact, failure to discipline children often results in kids who are unhappy, angry, and even resentful. To those around them, a child who is not disciplined will be unpleasant company, and a child without discipline may find it difficult to make friends.

Let me add here that as soon as I got to age fourteen or thereabout, my father stopped using cane, he would say ‘I don’t have the strength to cane you again.’ He shifted to talking to us or withdrawing privileges. By that time, we were already too afraid of him. He used that new method to draw us closer to him and we became best of friends.

If you have ever seen kids who are not regularly disciplined by their parents, you have probably seen some very real examples of why it is important to discipline children.

Proverbs 23:24 *“The father of a righteous child has great joy; a man who fathers a wise son rejoices in him.”*

Hebrew 12:11 *“No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.”*

2. The word of God

2 Timothy 3:16-17 *“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”*

Our teaching manual for godly parenting is the bible. Let us take a closer look at 2 Timothy 3:16-17 and draw out three very important things about scriptures and how to apply it for godly parenting.

Scripture Is Inspired

Paul affirms that “all Scripture is breathed out by God.” More plainly, “All Scripture is breathed into by God.” Peter declared, *“No prophecy of Scripture comes from someone’s own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit”* 2 Pet. 1:20, 21. We can infer that since scripture is inspired by God (breathed into by God) we can rely on the methods it recommends for training up a child in the godly way.

By way of example, the saying goes that we live in a ‘jet age’. People want to make it in life very fast. Towards achieving this goal, many are ready to do whatever it takes. Even if such an act is ungodly. That is why activities like stealing which we tag as being ‘Smart’, using one’s body to get money or influence etc. is very prevalent in our society. Morals have been thrown into the wind.

The bible on the other hand teaches in Matthew 6:33 that *“Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live*

righteously, and he will give you everything you need.” This states categorically that there is a more dignified way of getting this ‘things’ people commit ungodly acts to get. When we live righteously, God will give us everything we need.

There are many inspirations from scripture that we can impress on our children by speaking about them, printing them in posters and placing them around the house. Sending them as SMS or WhatsApp messages. We can even create very good graphic illustrations which we can post on Facebook and other social media or as decorations in the house to inspire people.

Scripture Is Useful

The apostle uses two pairs of words to emphasize Scripture’s usefulness – *“and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness”* (v. 16b). The first pair “teaching and reproof” have to do with doctrine. Positively, all Scripture is “profitable for teaching.” That is why the whole of both Testaments must be studied, not just Romans, not just the Old Testament, not just the Gospels. “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching.”

The second pair “correction and training in righteousness” have to do with conduct. “Correction”

comes from the Greek word for “straight,” which the New Living Translation helpfully renders, “It straightens us out.” God’s Word is useful in a practical way. Those who accept its reproof will begin to find their lives straightening out.

There are countless stories of how studying the word of God has transformed lives or straighten people’s lives out. Listen to one I found on the internet.

“The Bible has changed my life. When I hear the word Bible, I instantly think about comfort and peace...

As a freshman in college, I was living miles away from home. Dealing with that change was hard, and I was lonely and afraid. Turning to Scripture brought me comfort and peace. I knew it could only be the power of God, because the situations around me actually got worse, not better. What changed was my perspective on my life...

Probably the biggest change I made was memorizing verses. When I feel overwhelmed, I do my best to replace negative thoughts with Scripture.

Here's one of my favourite verses: "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:6-7).

I'll repeat these verses out loud or in my head, allowing the truth to change my perspective."

Scripture Equips

Paul ends this section on the sufficiency of Scripture by saying, "*that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work*" (v. 17). The man of God is super-equipped by the Word of God. The man of God is before all else a man of the Bible.

The testimony of God's Holy Word is that it is his breath and that it is everything to believers. The book of Deuteronomy records that when Moses had finished writing the words of the law and had given it to the Levites to place beside the ark and had sung his song, the song of Moses, he said,

"... Take to heart all the words of warning I have given you today. Pass them on as a command to your children so they will obey every word of these instructions. These

instructions are not empty words—they are your life! By obeying them you will enjoy a long life in the land you will occupy when you cross the Jordan River.”
(Deuteronomy 32:46-47).

The Scriptures were life to Moses and food to Jesus. They cannot and must not be anything less to us. They are the very breath of God.

In the story narrated above, one thing that kept the young lady going in those trying times are the scriptures she had memorized. **We must teach our children to memorize the word of God at an early age.** People of other faith do this; they make sure the young children cram their ‘holy book’. Even traditional worshippers do the same.

I remember growing up, there were certain scriptures we must learn by heart. Also, after service on Sundays, on the way home you must be able to recount what the sermon was all about. Failure to do such was costly (koboko).

Memorizing scriptures helps, you will appreciate it much later in life. When Jesus was tempted by the Devil, he said *‘It is written...’* (Matthew 4:4-6) if he had not spent time studying, he could not have said that. A retired clergyman once told me of a period of months

when he was on compulsory bed rest and he did not have the privilege to read anything including the bible, it was the scriptures he had internalized that he kept on reciting. Psalm 119:11 say, *I have hidden your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.*’ What have you hidden in your own heart?

3. Speak life over your child

Ephesians 4:29. *“Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen”*

Proverbs 18:21 *“The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit.”*

Our words are very powerful and influential! We can build people up or we can tear people down with our words. As parents, we have the special privilege to speak blessings over our children.

Praying God’s word is so powerful. You must learn how to use the scripture to speak life over your child. By these, you are planting seeds for years to come.

For example, your child gets dressed all by herself for school. She comes down and asks how she looks. This is the perfect opportunity to speak life into her.

Say to her; “*you are beautifully and wonderfully made.*”

Claim God’s promises boldly for you and your family. The more you speak His promises out loud and claim things like “I have a sound mind, or He will be with me every step of the way” the more confident your spirit becomes.

Use scripture to speak life over your children. Speak blessings over your children daily. Note the whole bible is full of good edifying scriptures to use. Here are some examples you can use.

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. - 1 Peter 2:9

So be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid and do not panic before them. For the Lord your God will personally go ahead of you. He will neither fail you nor abandon you. - Deuteronomy 31:6

And He said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.... – 2 Corinthians 12:9

You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother’s womb. Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous—how well I know it. - Psalm 139: 13-14

Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom. - Luke 12:32

For God did not give us a spirit of timidity (of cowardice, of craven and cringing and fawning fear), but [He has given us a spirit] of power and of love and of calm and well-balanced mind and discipline and self-control. - 2 Timothy 1:7

For I know the plans I have for you,” says the Lord. “They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope. - Jeremiah 29:11

And from now on all generations will call me blessed. For the Mighty One is holy, and he has done great things for me. - Luke 1: 48-49

I remain confident of this: I will see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living. - Psalm 27:13

*Behold, you are beautiful, my beloved, truly delightful. -
Song of Solomon 1:16*

*For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me
strength. -Philippians 4:13*

CONCLUSION

Let me take you back to the text of our theme, Judges 2:10 *“After that whole generation had been gathered to their ancestors, another generation grew up who knew neither the LORD nor what he had done for Israel.”*

The failure of a generation to intentionally teach the next generation about God’s ways leads to apostacy. We have not done much in this area and the result is what we are seeing around us. It is not too late to start today. When you get home, gather your family, pray, and have godly discussion at dinner time.

There is the tendency to focus primarily on what is going on in our nation and around the world. The news media bombard us daily with a lot of bad news. Deliberately turn it down and turn up the things of God. Instead of sending that dirty joke sent to you on WhatsApp, send an inspiring scripture message to someone.

Be intentional about sharing the gospel especially with your family. Don't focus only on the condemnation part of scripture, rather bless, and encourage people with the words of scripture. Have a positive attitude to life.

“Remember, children are great imitators, so give them something great and inspiring to imitate.”

“Teaching kids to count is fine but teaching them what counts is best.”

“If we don't teach our children to follow Christ, the world will teach them not to.”

Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.

+ *Olubunmi, Jfe*

September 2021

APPENDIX A

PROFILES OF RESOURCE PERSONS

PROFILE OF RT. REV. STEVEN K. AKOBE Ph.D

(Preacher at the Synod Thanksgiving)

The Rt. Rev. (Dr.) Steven Kayode Akobe was born in the Tin Mining city of Jos, the capital of Plateau State, some 53years ago. He is the first Male child of his parents who are devoted Anglicans (though father now deceased). Young Steven attended St. Paul's (Anglican) township school, Jos for his primary school education from 1975 – 1980. Due to the desire of his parents that their first male child must further his secondary school education, they both sacrificed dearly to send him to the prestigious Baptist high School, Jos where he completed his secondary school education and wrote his West African Examination Council Examination in 1985.

His search for higher Education took him to Kwara State College of technology (Now Kwara State Polytechnic) for his IJMB. It was also at this college that he fully committed his life to the Lord Jesus Christ as his Lord and personal saviour.

In the year 1988 he gained admission into the Department of Geography and Planning, Faculty of Environmental Studies, University of Jos. He graduated

in 1991 and went on to serve in the NYSC programme the same year.

The definite call into the ordained ministry was received during his NYSC year and he fully obeyed after he had enrolled for his master's degree in the same university. He started his theological training at the Christian Institute, Jos where he obtained a certificate in theology in 1991, and finally completed his Master of Divinity (MDIV) at the Theological College of Northern Nigeria, Bukuru, Jos (TCNN) in the year 2010. The Rt. Rev. (Dr.) S. K. Akobe also holds a Postgraduate diploma in Education from the Ado Bayero University, Kano, and a Doctor of Philosophy in Theology (PhD) from the Crowther Graduate Seminary, Igbehin, Abeokuta, Ogun State.

The Rt. Rev. (Dr.) S. K. Akobe was deaconed on the 3rd July of 1994 by the Most Rev. (Dr.) B. A. Kwashi at the Cathedral Church of St. Luke, Jos and Priested on the 18th of December of the same year and at the same venue by the same person.

He then moved to Kano Diocese having served five years in Jos Diocese and about one month in Lafia Diocese. He was preferred statutory Canon by the Rt. Rev. Z. L. Nyam, Bishop of Kano in May 2001 and

preferred Archdeacon by the same Bishop in 2006. He was elected Bishop of Kabba on the 31st of July 2010 and duly consecrated on the 12th of September 2010 at the Cathedral Church of St. Peter, Asaba.

Rt. Rev. (Dr.) S. K. Akobe is married to his amiable wife, Deborah Abiodun and the union is blessed with Tobi, Tomide and Toyosi. Bishop Akobe has written a couple of books; “How do I get to heaven”, “Spiritual Reflections and Meditations” and “Spiritual discipline (Lecto Divina).” He is a singer and lover of music.

PROFILE OF THE REV. CANON (DR.) SOLOMON ADEDAPO ADESOJI

(Preacher at the Opening service of Synod)

Solomon Adedapo ADESOJI was born on the 30th of November 1958. He hails from Ile-Ife, Osun State.

He had started his primary education at All Saint's Primary School, Ayegbaju, Ile-Ife, after which he went to Comprehensive High School, Ayetoro, Egbado, Ogun State. He proceeded to Oyo State College of Education, Ilesa, from 1978 to 1981, where he earned a Nigerian Certificate in Education (NCE). He attended the University of Ibadan for a B.Sc. in Agricultural Extension Services and proceeded to the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria, where he bagged a M.Sc. Agricultural Extension and Rural Sociology in 2003; and a Ph.D. Agricultural Extension and Rural Sociology in the year 2010. Amid his educational pursuit, he enrolled for a Part-Time Dip. Th. Program at the Vining College of Theology, Akure, and graduated in 2006.

Rev. Canon Adesoji was ordained a Deacon in December 2000 and priested in June 2001. He got preferred a Canon in the year 2017. Churches he has served include All Saints' Anglican Church, Iloromu; St. Peter's Anglican Church, Irewo; Canon Adejumo Memorial Anglican Church, Ondo Road, Canon Ogunbanjo Memorial

Anglican Church, Mokuro. He is the present Vicar of St. Mark's Anglican Church, Ajegunle, Ile-Ife.

Rev. Canon Adesoji is an Associate Professor and the current Head of Department, Agricultural Extension and Rural Development Department, OAU, Ile-Ife.

PROFILE OF VENERABLE (PROF.) ROTIMI EMMANUEL ADAGUNODO

(Bible Study leader at synod)

Rotimi Emmanuel ADAGUNODO was born on the 11th of January 1958. He hails from Ilesa, Osun State.

He had his secondary education at Atakumosa High School, Osu, Osun State, graduating in 1974. He proceeded to The Polytechnic, Ibadan, Nigeria, where he bagged an HSC/GCE A Level Cambridge in 1977. He had his university education at the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria, where he bagged a B.Sc. (Hons.) Computer Science in 1981; an M.Sc. Computer Science in 1985; and a Ph.D. Computer Science in the year 1993. Amid his educational pursuit, he enrolled for a Part-Time Dip. Th. Program at the Immanuel College of Theology, Ibadan, and graduated in 1989.

Ven. Adagunodo was ordained a Deacon in December 1990 and priested in December 1991. He was preferred Canon in the year 2000 and preferred Venerable in 2009. He served as a Vicar from Dec – June 1990 at the St. Philip's Anglican Church, Iwara, Ilesa, Pioneer Vicar at Christ the Saviour's Anglican Church, Cappa, Ilesa from July 1990 – Dec 1991; Assisting Priest at St. John's Cathedral Church, Iloro, Ilesa from 1992 – 2002. Ven. Adagunodo served as an Assistant Chaplain of the All Soul's Chapel, Obafemi Awolowo University, between

2004 and 2008, an Assisting Priest at the Cathedral Church of St. Philip, Ayetoro, Ile-Ife between 2009 and 2011, Acting Sub-Dean of St. Philip's Cathedral Church, Ayetoro, between Aug and Dec 2011, Assisting Priest at St. Paul's Ang. Church, Ayegbaju, Ile-Ife between 2012 and 2013, Assisting Priest at St. Matthew's Ang. Church, Eleyele, Ile-Ife between 2014 and 2017 and presently the Pioneer Vicar of the Anglican Church of the Living Faith, Eleweran, Ile-Ife from 2018

On the Academic front, Ven. Adagunodo served as the Ag. Head of Department, Computer Science and Engineering Department, OAU, Ile-Ife between the year 1999 and 2001. He later became the substantive Head of the Department from 2009 to 2012. He is a Fellow of the Nigeria Computer Society FNCS and a Chartered Member of Computer Registration Council of Nigeria (MCPN).

Ven. Adagunodo is happily married, and the marriage is blessed with four children.

APPENDIX B

COMMUNIQUÉ
AND
PASTORAL LETTERS
FROM
CHURCH OF NIGERIA
(ANGLICAN COMMUNION)



CHURCH OF NIGERIA

(Anglican Communion)

THE MOST REV'D HENRY C. NDUKUBA, MA, BD, MA
(Ed.)

Archbishop, Metropolitan and Primate of All Nigeria.

**THE COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AT THE END OF THE
13TH GENERAL SYNOD OF THE CHURCH OF
NIGERIA (ANGLICAN COMMUNION) HELD AT ITS
SECRETARIAT, ST MATTHIAS HOUSE, GUDU
DISTRICT, ABUJA FROM MONDAY, 21ST TO
FRIDAY, 25TH SEPTEMBER, 2020**

PREAMBLE

The 13th General Synod of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion), which was held from Monday, 21st September to Friday, 25th September, 2020 was presided over by the **Most Rev'd Henry C. Ndukuba**, Archbishop, Metropolitan and Primate of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion), accompanied by his wife and President of the Mothers' Union, **Mrs. Angela Eberechukwu Ndukuba**, attended by 161 Bishops, 171 Clergy, 191 Lay delegates and 191 delegates of the Mothers' Union, The General Synod received Goodwill Messages from former Primes of the Church, namely The Most Rev'd Dr Peter Jasper Akinola and The Most Rev'd Dr Nicholas D. Okoh. It also received many distinguished guests, including the Secretary to the Government of the Federation represented by Mr. Olakunle Fasina; the Governor of Taraba State, Arc. Darius Ishaku, represented by the Bishop of Jalingo, The Rt. Rev'd Nedison Foreman; former Head of State,

General Dr Yakubu Gowon and General T. Y. Danjuma, both represented by Professor Jerry Gana; Her Excellency, Mrs Adejoke Orelope Adefulire, and other eminent dignitaries.

THEME OF SYNOD: The Priority of God (Matt. 6:33)

The Theme of the Synod was The Priority of God, a further elucidation of the focus of the Primacy of the Most Rev'd Henry C. Ndukuba which had been declared as The Decade of the Reign of God. In his maiden address to the General Synod of the Church, the Primate calls on Christians to give priority to seeking God, knowing Him more and proclaiming Jesus Christ faithfully until He returns in glory and power to judge the world. This entails seeking the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, abandoning all forms of distraction and living godly life that is characterized by discipline and the fruit of the Spirit amidst the corrupt, depraved and perverse society.

Synod further calls on believers to be mindful of all forms of Satanic ambush and distractions including material possessions, harmful traditional cultures and worldly philosophies and rules. It calls on all to make God's priority their own priority despite the cost of its pursuit, and to be committed to the re-evangelization of the world and the discipleship of believers.

It finally reaffirms its vision as a church that is resolute and committed to being a Bible based Church that shall not tolerate homosexuality and all sexual aberrations, and also will not accommodate or support ungodly practices.

THE CHURCH AND COVID-19

The Synod is grateful to God for the opportunity to meet following the gradual easing of the lockdown, occasioned by the Global Pandemic that has killed close to a Million people worldwide. It sympathizes with people who have lost their loved ones within Nigeria and all over the world, while intensifying prayers for those who are infected worldwide for recovery and the return of normalcy. It, however, cautions all to take the Pandemic seriously by maintaining the recommended precautions to stem further spread of the disease.

It appreciates the efforts of both the Government and the Church in minimizing the negative impacts of the lockdown by offering palliatives and care to the people at the height of the Pandemic, Synod is disappointed at the manner Covid-19 was also exploited and appeals to Nigerians to desist from taking undue advantage of people at every opportunity because of monetary gains.

THE CAMA LAW

Synod appreciates the importance of the Company and Allied Matters Act 2020 to regulate the appropriate sectors of the society and to maintain probity in all incorporated and non-incorporated bodies in Nigeria. It, however, views with curiosity and grave concern the excessive power allocated to the commission as subject to mischief and abuse. A situation whereby the commission can unilaterally suspend church leadership or group of Trustees and appoint independent managers is itself an abuse and weakness of due process. It calls, therefore, for an immediate review of the law to take care of the concerns being expressed by the relevant groups.

However, Synod challenges church groups to avoid corrupt practices and be open and show due accountability in its operations. This is the way to show the light to the world.

REMOVAL OF OIL SUBSIDY, INFLATION AND POVERTY

The removal of oil subsidy, increase in electricity tariff, and tenement rates at the same time in the current socio-economic climate can only be an indication of Government's insensitivity to the plight of the citizenry. This has further increased inflation rate and the suffering of the common man and is making life more unbearable for the teeming population of the unemployed in Nigeria. To increase stamp duty and tenement rate for pensioners whose monthly pensions are not regular and the largely unemployed masses is ill-conceived and a recipe to sending some people early to their graves.

Synod calls on the Government to, as a matter of urgency, revisit these actions and take urgent steps at reversing their decision. It calls for concerted efforts at industrialization of the country as a major solution to the high rate of unemployment and sufferings. Government should be mindful that anger and frustration are building up in the land.

RAPE AND DRUG ABUSE

The alarming rate of the twin crimes of rape and drug and substance abuse is a deep cause of worry for all. The rate of drug consumption is worrisome as it goes on to lead to further perpetuation of crime including rape. The Synod observes that the increase is not unconnected with desperation among perpetrators or the crimes. Government should do something about this urgently while the agency vested with the

responsibility to deal with rape cases should employ the best practice of reducing this horrific crime.

The Synod calls on the teeming population of Nigerian youths not to be hopeless by resorting to using drug as a way to deal with the frustration of the prevailing unemployment and economic situation. Such acts could only destroy their lives and take their future away completely. The youths should exercise hope and trust in God, who will surely not abandon them.

INSECURITY

The Synod laments the increasing level of insecurity and associated crimes in Nigeria. It calls for an urgent effort to synergize by the various levels of government and layers of security Agencies to fight against insecurity that is almost overtaking every part of the country. It calls for respect for the laws enacted by states to ensure the security of lives and property of their citizens and that this should not be undermined by any political consideration. Security is too important to be subsumed under political game. It calls for a radical overhauling of the security architecture, to allow community policing and other security initiatives to compliment the government effort. The state of insecurity is becoming so hopeless that one is curious as to whether Government has a reason for allowing the current insecurity to persist.

CORRUPTION AND ITS DANGEROUS DIMENSION

It is a matter of grave concern to see the new dimensions that corruption is taking today, even by those who are expected to fight it. Synod calls on Nigerians at every level, especially those in positions of responsibility, to show sincerity and

commitment by avoiding corruption and abuse of power in whatever dimension it seems to show up. It calls on those who are given the responsibility of fighting corruption to do so without favouritism or any ulterior motive and abuse of their position. Synod calls for families and communities to prevail on their representatives in government to shun corrupt practices.

NIGERIA AND OIL COMMONWEALTH

Nigeria is naturally endowed by God, and this cannot be overstated. Synod is disturbed that in spite of this, the Nigerian masses have constantly suffered all forms of economic hardship in the midst of these provisions. It is disturbed by the incessant strike actions by some national bodies, including ASUU, owing to lack of appropriate financial provision. It regrets this situation whilst many individuals are enjoying and benefitting immensely from our common (oil) wealth. It calls on government to revisit the issuance of oil block to individuals at the expense of collective ownership. It canvasses the allocation of specific oil blocks for the purposes of solving the perennial problems and instability being experienced in various sectors of our country, especially in education among others.

CHURCH OF NIGERIA AND OVERSEAS MISSION

Finally, The Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) reaffirms its commitment to its Overseas Mission and partners. It shall continue to review its policy to ensure that it is in line with its vision.

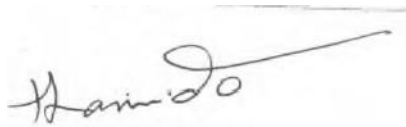
CONCLUSION

Finally, we urge everyone to make God's priority your priority by determining to seek first the Kingdom of God and

His righteousness, and all these things will be added unto you as well. (Matthew 6:33)



Ven. Dr. G. Paul Dajur,
General Secretary, Church of Nigeria.



The Most Rev'd Dr. A. B. Lamido,
Dean, Church of Nigeria.

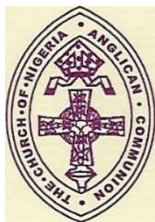


The Most Rev'd Henry C. Ndukuba,
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CHURCH OF NIGERIA

(Anglican Communion)

THE MOST REV'D HENRY C. NDUKUBA, MA, BD,
MA (Ed.)

Archbishop, Metropolitan and Primate of All Nigeria.

PASTORAL LETTER FROM THE THIRTEENTH GENERAL SYNOD OF THE CHURCH OF NIGERIA (ANGLICAN COMMUNION) HELD FROM MONDAY, 21ST TO FRIDAY, 25TH SEPTEMBER, 2020, AT ST. MATTHIAS' HOUSE, CHURCH OF NIGERIA NATIONAL SECRETARIAT, GUDU, ABUJA

Beloved in Christ,

Greetings in the name of the eternal Trinity; Father. Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The 13th General Synod of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) was held from Monday, 21st to Friday, 25th September, 2020 at St. Matthias' House, Church of Nigeria National Secretariat, Gudu, FCT, Abuja. The theme was **The priority or God** (Matthew 6:33).

We are indeed very grateful to our Almighty God for the grace and privilege of gathering as a people despite the realities of the time in which we live. The COVID 19 Pandemic and the subsequent lockdown have tried our faith, both as a Church and as individuals. We thank God for His protection that has

preserved us, giving us a rare opportunity to refocus our lives and make the most of the time.

Jesus points out the priority of God, which is the kingdom and its righteousness. This should be sought with all our heart and soul and should take our time and resources. It is, therefore, imperative and a timely reminder Bishops, Clergy and Laity of our church, to review our lives and actions in this direction, so that nothing else in the world will struggle with the place of kingdom essentials in our lives. We need to look up to Jesus Christ, who came to mediate salvation to humanity. He is the righteousness of God, and when we accept Him as Lord of our lives, He becomes the standard of our living, Jesus Christ embodies the kingdom of God such that wherever His rule is received and acknowledged. there is the kingdom. We must, therefore, labour not to be distracted from this priority.

After our presentation on the 25th March, 2020 as the 5th Archbishop, Metropolitan and Primate, We, under God declared our tenure **The Decade of the Reign of God**. This is because, the Gospel we proclaim, the ministry we exercise and our prayer are all focused on the kingdom of God, thereby making it imperative for His will and purpose to be done in His world and His church. This decade will therefore be dedicated to growing the church in faith, membership and engaging in pragmatic evangelism. Mission, Evangelism and Discipleship therefore will remain core to the ministry of our church. We implore everyone to be involved as our church is broad enough to accommodate everyone who is called and ready to serve the purpose of God. It is also our candid desire, towards a sustainable holistic growth or our church, to raise a kingdom thrust of **Five Billion (N5b) Naira Mission Fund**. Our church

needs to grow and ensure a stronger National Church. This will help to carry through the mission and ministry of the church, sustain her institutions, so that our church will continue to grow in every aspect of her life. We implore every member of our church to pray along with us and participate actively to realize this vision to the glory of God. Meanwhile, we have placed moratorium on the creation of Dioceses, whether full-fledged or missionary, in order to consolidate the existing Dioceses. This will be reviewed by the next General Synod.

Beloved, we have sincerely observed the challenges faced by some Dioceses. It is obvious that the growth of our church can only come when we decide to make sacrifices. The unity of our church is paramount for our existence, We, therefore, need to identify the danger signs that can lead to breakdown of peace among us, and work together to resolve our differences. The provisions of the Constitution and Canons must not be thwarted for our interest or convenience. This Church belongs to God, and it is not right for any group of people to take laws into their hands. We must allow the priority of God to take precedence. Join us therefore to pray for the peace, unity and growth of our church.

We are grateful to God for the gift of the youth and children ministry of our church. We have also observed various challenges faced by these ministries and are committed to addressing this challenges. There is need for the children and youth ministry of our church to be turned into a mission with intentional discipleship as a core task. We call on all members of our church to wake up to the realities of this challenge with a sincere desire to empower our young people spiritually. We further appeal to the well placed members of our Church to

empower the youths economically and help them out of poverty, and unemployment, as an idle mind is a devil's workshop. This will help them channel their energy to profitable ventures that will secure their future. We also call on all people to be mindful of the dangers of these evil times in which we live. There is an increase in the incidence of rape, murder and sexually-based violence. This has been linked to the increasing trends of drug abuse, cultism and other vices. There is need for all our members to be at alert, and help our youths not to take to evil life style because of hunger, hardship and unemployment.

We thank God for his protection and deliverance as we pass through the most trying times in recent human history. God is indeed our refuge and strength, an ever present help in time of trouble. He is indeed our hope for the unknown tomorrow. Our prayers are with our brothers and sisters who have passed through various experiences, and those who are still struggling with the severe effects of the Coronavirus Pandemic. We also remember those who are victims of kidnapping, armed robbery, rape and other losses of various kinds. We pray God, in his mercy and grace, to bring healing unto their troubled hearts.

We appreciate our Churches and Dioceses for your responses during the COVID 19 lockdown. You all prayed and supported the needy among us. Your generous contributions helped to cushion the effects on our brethren and other members of the society in these trying times. Let us continue to observe the NCDC COVID 19 protocols of regular washing of hands, wearing of face mask/shield, using of hand sanitizers, and

maintaining of physical distance as our way to reduce the spread of this evil, while trusting God for perfect solution.

We shall continue to hear one another's burden, as we sincerely respond to our tradition of making contributions towards Relief Funds, St. Matthias' Day Collections, Ajayi Crowther Projects and GAFCON Support. This will help us towards our sustainable growth as a Church. We commend those who have responded well for their sincere efforts, while observing the downslide in the contributions of some Dioceses. We appeal to all for better performance in the future. This will help us to achieve the vision we have set for ourselves unto God's glory in this decade of the reign of God.

We are grateful to God for the success and testimonies recorded so far in the Divine Commonwealth Conference (DIVCCON). This year's edition will hold from 16th to 20th November, 2020, with the theme: **We are more than conquerors** (Romans 8:37). We are trusting and believing God for grace towards its planning and implementation as we contend with the challenges of COVID 19. We expect a greater attendance and participation.

We thank God and rejoice with you all for the blessings bestowed upon all of us, especially, the success of this General Synod of our Church, held at our new National Secretariat (St. Matthias' House) and the very first in our Primacy. We pray God to reward all faithful labours towards the expansion of His kingdom. We congratulate all the newly Presented Archbishop and Consecrated Bishops of our Church as they serve God faithfully in their various Province and Dioceses respectively. We also commiserate with those who lost their loved ones,

especially, the families of Rt. Rev. Ayo Awosoga (Bishop of Ijebu Diocese), Rt. Rev. Prof. Anthony Nkwoka (Retired Bishop of Niger West Diocese), Rt. Rev. Samuel O. AJani (Retired Bishop of Egba West Diocese), Dame Jane Efobi (wife of Retired Archbishop of Province of the Niger), Hon. Justice Kariby Whyte (former Chancellor of the Church of Nigeria). May the Lord grant them the comfort of His Holy Spirit.

We remain grateful to the good people of the Diocese of Abuja, for the successful hosting of the 13th General Synod of Our Church, despite the realities of the time. We thank the Clergy and their wives, the LOC and the entire Laity for their labours of love, and sincere efforts towards the overall success of the General Synod. May the Lord reward your sacrifices.

Beloved in Christ, we appreciate you for your prayers and support in this our first Synod as the Archbishop, Metropolitan and Primate. We sincerely thank God for His enabling grace towards the journey in this **Decade of the Reign of God**. Indeed, God is calling his Church back in order that we will give ourselves to His Priority. As His people, we must know that anyone who does not have any compelling sense of Mission given by God will live an unfulfilled life.

In conclusion, we need to remind you that, worldly possessions and positions are best used to support the work of God's Kingdom, and help people realize their purpose in life. Material blessings are added blessings to human life, meant to be servant and not master of our lives.

Therefore, brethren, we charge you to “take no thought, saying “what shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or what shall we wear, for the gentiles seek after these things, and your heavenly father knows that you need them all, but seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.”

May the Grace of God be with you all.

Yours in the service of Christ,



The Most Rev'd Henry Chukwudum Ndukuba, MA, BD, MA (Ed)
Archbishop, Metropolitan and Primate of All Nigeria

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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 STANDING COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE CHURCH OF NIGERIA (ANGLICAN COMMUNION) HELD AT ALL SAINTS' CATHEDRAL CHURCH, ONITSHA, DIOCESE ON THE NIGER, ANAMBRA STATE, FROM MONDAY, 8TH TO FRIDAY, 12TH FEBRUARY, 2021

PREAMBLE: The Standing Committee meeting of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) which was held from Monday, 8th to Friday, 12th February, 2021, was presided over by the Most Rev'd Henry C. Ndukuba, Archbishop, Metropolitan and Primate, Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion), accompanied by his wife and National President of the Mothers' Union, Mrs. Angela Eberechukwu Ndukuba, attended by 153 Bishops, 155 Clergy, 72 Lay delegates and 241 delegates of the Mothers' Union. The Standing Committee received Guests at its Opening Ceremony, including the Governor of Anambra State, His Excellency, Chief Dr. Willie Obiano, represented by His Excellency Dr Nkem Okeke, the Deputy Governor; His Excellency Peter Obi, former Governor of Anambra State, Her Excellency Dame Virgy Etiaba, first female Governor in Nigeria and other prominent dignitaries.

**THEME: COSTLY COMMITMENT: THE IMPERATIVE IN
FOLLOWING JESUS CHRIST (LUKE 9: 23 - 27):** The

There is a reminder to the faithful that the calling of the church and its members requires absolute and sacrificial commitment devoid of any distraction in following Christ. This calls for total submission to the Word of God and leading of the Holy Spirit, requiring God's people to deepen their personal and corporate commitment to the Lord Jesus in such a way that their lives are totally rooted and built up in Christ. Believers are reminded to be mindful of their calling not to compromise their faith and not to allow the pleasures of the present time to distract them from following in the will of God. This is important in the age in which Christianity now appears to be a bread and butter issue, especially given the prevailing Prosperity Gospel of our day. The Christian calling requires commitment in carrying the Cross whatever that may bring. The present day situation in Nigeria is frail and Christians are called to be dedicated and committed to their calling without fail.

COVID-19 AND PUBLIC HEALTH: The Church commiserates with those who have lost their loved ones to the deadly global pandemic and commends the courageous health workers attending to infected members of the public at great risk to their own health. The Standing Committee appeals to the Government to exercise strict control over the importation of vaccines to avoid adulteration and racketeering of the product. The Church encourages the citizens to comply with Government recommended actions at stemming the tide of the ravaging pandemic. It urges the Government to give serious attention to the health sector following the Pandemic that has exposed the weakness of the sector, in order to prepare for any unforeseen similar future occurrence.

ENDSARS PROTESTS: The Standing Committee laments the unfortunate hijack of the protests by hoodlums which resulted in the destruction of properties, untold hardship on the masses, and sadly, loss of lives. It commends the efforts of some State Governments in establishing the Panel of Inquiry into the ENDSARS Protests, with Lagos showing a good example. It urges the Government to ensure that the Panel completes its Inquiry and the delivery of its report before the Lekki Gate is returned to its managers. It further calls that the handling of the ENDSARS protest should not become an opportunity for witch-hunting and blame game. Those who have been sanctioned for participating in the legitimate protest should be relieved of such actions such as the seizure of their international passports, while all Court orders must be respected and obeyed including the unfreezing of accounts of those linked with the protest as is befitting of modern democracy. It calls on Nigerians in general and members of the security agencies in particular to be responsible in the use of their positions in handling the Nigerian people.

NIGERIA AND INCESSANT INDUSTRIAL ACTIONS: The Standing Committee laments the incessant industrial actions that leave our tertiary institutions closed for a long period of time and thus disrupt their academic calendar. It calls for sincerity between Government and Union leaders, for agreements to be honoured and implemented, and for workers' welfare to receive adequate attention, so that the education of our youths, and indeed their future, is not jeopardized.

INSECURITY: The Church is concerned about the spate of attacks and insecurity that now characterize the Nigerian State. That the Fulani herdsmen operate with such arrogance and

disregard for their host communities and the safety of people in particular is a red flag, indicative of the precarious state of the nation. It commends the Federal Government for finally yielding to the yearnings of the masses in appointing new Service Chiefs. It calls on the new Service Chiefs to focus on eradicating the insurgency and bring lasting peace to the land. The church appeals to all and sundry to work together to support the efforts of the Service Chiefs in dealing with all forms of insecurity in our land and ensure the safety of the precious lives of the citizens.

SECOND NIGER BRIDGE: The Church commends the Federal Government on the construction of the Second Niger Bridge, whilst appealing for speed to see that the work is complete in record time.

APAPA WHARF: The Church notes with utmost concern the gridlock at the Apapa Port with its untold hardship on the people. It calls on the government to speedily reopen other ports and make functional to reduce the pressure on Apapa Port.

NATIONAL IDENTITY NUMBER: The Standing Committee notes with utmost concern the difficult circumstances under which Nigerians are being asked to register for their National Identity Number in a way that the protocols of the Pandemic are being compromised. It appeals to the Government to always ensure that such programmes are planned with consideration for the people so that their human dignity and health are not compromised. Such things should always be done with little difficulty for the Nigerian people while there

should be many centres so that people are not subject to strenuous movements and travelling before they can register.

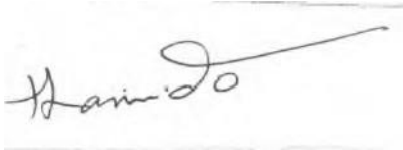
ECONOMY: The Church is worried about the bad state of the Nigerian economy with its attending harsh effects on the citizens. It recognizes the Government's efforts at helping those at the lower level of the economic ladder through its survival funds scheme. It appeals to the Government to do more to improve the national economy by diversifying and creating more employment opportunities for the teeming population of its youths, for a long lasting impact. Governments at all levels should provide robust and hitch free enabling environments for small and medium enterprises to thrive.

ELECTION: The Standing Committee calls on Christians and citizens of Anambra State to take active part in the electioneering of the forthcoming gubernatorial election. It encourages believers to play an active but responsible role in the election. It calls on Nigerians to register in any party of their choice and be involved in party activities from the grassroots to national levels.

CONCLUSION: The Standing Committee calls on all Christians to show dedication and personal commitment that is both sacrificial and genuine, looking beyond self-gain that now characterizes the common approach to faith. This manifests in both Nigerian politics and Church as people have become more concerned with selfish motives and corrupt practices.



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 Henry C. Ndukuba,
Archbishop, Metropolitan and Primate of All Nigeria

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CHURCH OF NIGERIA

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**THE MOST REV'D HENRY C. NDUKUBA, MA, BD, MA
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PASTORAL LETTER FROM THE STANDING COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE CHURCH OF NIGERIA (ANGLICAN COMMUNION) HELD FROM MONDAY, 8TH TO FRIDAY, 12TH FEBRUARY, 2021, AT THE ALL SAINTS CATHEDRAL CHURCH, ONITSHA, IN THE DIOCESE ON THE NIGER, ANAMBRA STATE

Dear People of God,

We bring you greetings in the name of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit; Amen.

The Standing Committee meeting of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) held from Monday, 8th to Friday, 12th February, 2021 at the All . Saints Cathedral Church, Onitsha, Diocese on the Niger, Anambra State. The theme was, “COSTLY COMMITMENT: THE IMPERATIVE IN FOLLOWING CHRIST” (LUKE 9:23).

The idea that God uses ordinary, broken human beings as vessels of his grace, and delights in us is not only awe-inspiring, it is something we must be thankful to Him for. However, Christ demands genuine commitment from these vessels and those who are his followers. This is not possible

without the willingness to pay some price. The theme and the text of the Standing Committee addressed this issue.

The Text drawn from Luke 9, a very rich chapter in the New Testament. There we see Jesus Christ sending the twelve Disciples on Mission. He CALLED them and GAVE them power and authority over demons and to cure/heal diseases. Then He SENT them to preach the Kingdom of God and to heal the sick. He also instructed them on what was expected of them. Jesus Christ said to them “take nothing for the journey”. Stay in the home that receives you. Expect rejection from the people but know that there are consequences for rejecting the Gospel and those who serve God. Jesus Christ demanded, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me” — Luke 9:23. There are three major demands that arise from this. Firstly, the desire to follow shall be a response of a whole life from the heart; secondly is the demand “Take up his cross daily” and third demand for Total costly commitment is His call, “Follow me.” To this end we cannot relent in our efforts to take the Gospel to the ends of the earth in His name. May the Lord himself help us to be faithful at this.

The Church of Nigeria Missionary Society (CNMS) is being repositioned to assist the Church in achieving this. It will be built into both a Mission Agency and Institution. Her core mandate will be “to evangelize, disciple and plant churches among the identified unreached peoples. Recruit, train, and send Missionaries in the country and areas of need across the continent and the world”. The thrust of this Mission will largely centre around African countries but also to other parts of the world. Our desire is that the Church of Nigeria shall

intentionally stir up the Universal Church unto World Mission and take the lead in preparing the Church for the return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The youth are not left out. A taskforce on the Children and Youth Mission of the Church of Nigeria was inaugurated during the Divine Commonwealth Conference in November 2020. The aim is to galvanise a Children and Youth Mission that will mobilize our young people to be committed to the Word, Prayer, Worship, Witness and Outreach. We desire that God will raise from amongst them, a Joshua Generation that God will use to reach the rest of that generation for the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The Maiden Youth Mission Conference will hold from 5th to 10th April 2021 at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The Theme is LIVING WITH A PURPOSE (ROM. 8:27-30). Prominent servants of God will be ministering to the Youth. We request for your prayers and support to make this conference a success. There will be Pre-Conference Regional Mobilization Meetings. It is estimated that four Thousand Youths will attend and we are budgeting N 10,000.00 per person in running the Conference. We enjoin all to pray along, while Dioceses and individuals are encouraged to sponsor delegates.

St. Matthias Collection continues to be a great source of funding for helping to grow some of our Dioceses and the different bodies that are beneficiaries in driving the work of mission in their different contexts. We appreciate the Dioceses for their contribution and urge every member of the Church to participate in the same. We plead with Dioceses to faithfully remit their collections. The next collection would be on 21st February 2021. The Bishops during the Retreat at Agbarha

Otor resolved that in the meantime, the St. Matthias Fund will be used to meet the needs of the weaker Dioceses, Organizations and Institutions of the Church of Nigeria. Education and Human Development also remain integral parts of the Mission of the Church. Dioceses and Provinces are encouraged to continue and expand their work and investment in education at all levels from Nursery to Tertiary education. The Ph.D Scholarship programme, which is funded by the St Matthias Collection, will continue as a way of training the Clergy and empowering future leaders of the Church and Society.

A new constitution was approved at the last General Synod in September, 2020. It is now in use and we encourage Diocese and Provinces to enlighten the parishioners on the 2020 Constitution of the Church of Nigeria in conjunction with their legal officers for easy understanding of its contents and workings.

On the national scene, we want to continue to call on the Church not to shrink from the demand of Jesus Christ in the face of the unabated attack and destruction of human life and property that we are currently experiencing in our nation. The abduction, wanton killings, and other evil acts are glaring. There seems to be no respect for human dignity anymore as human lives are terminated indiscriminately almost daily in Nigeria by fellow human beings. We must seek the face of God concerning this despicable act of man's inhumanity to man in our nation and we must continue to trust God to raise a leadership after His own heart for our nation.

We counsel that we must all perform our civic duties by ensuring that as the General Elections come up in 2023, we see it as divine opportune time for the citizens to exercise their right to choose their leaders. Politics is God given process in the ordering of His world and society. Politics is not dirty as has been perceived by some people in the past, even though some people have hijacked the political processes for their personal agenda. We encourage all citizens to be involved in the political process of our States and Nation. Christians should register in any Party of their choice and be involved in the activities of the Party from the Ward level to the National.

There is beauty in unity. Jesus passionately prayed that His followers would be one (John 17:21). Therefore, there is a need to move as a National Church in our use of the tools that have been provided for leading worship amongst us. Dioceses are encouraged to use of the Church of Nigeria Book of Common Prayers; the Hymnal; the Bible Study Outline and other publications of this Church. We encourage our Regional Translators to commence full translations of these publications into Nigerian languages for the use of our people. Therefore, we must endeavour to see that our growth and expansion is not as a result of conflict. During the General Synod in September, 2020, the existing Moratorium on the creation of Dioceses, whether Full-fledged or Missionary Diocese, was extended by three years. This will be reviewed at the next General Synod. A Committee has been put in place to set the modalities and requirements for the creation of Dioceses. This Committee will submit their report in the next September Standing Committee meeting so that the guidelines will be clearly spelt out.

On the global stage, the Coronavirus continues to ravage the world, especially with the reported cases of its mutation, and different parts of the world announcing a second wave as cases surge. The Church of God must rise up to these challenges spiritually in fasting and prayer, not leaving out socio educational actions. More so, the poor health care delivery in our country offers us a great opportunity for Compassionate Ministry. The Church needs to play more key roles in the Health Care delivery of this Nation. To this end, we urge our Dioceses and Provinces to establish Colleges of Nursing and Midwifery and Health Technology. The training of health professionals must be a Mission to rescue our Health Care and nurture the Youth in professions that will put them in service to humanity in or outside of Nigeria.

We commiserate with all who lost their dear ones. In the period under review we lost some fathers in God namely, the late Rt. Rev. Jacob Ajetumobi (retired Bishop of Ibadan South Diocese), Rt. Rev. Foluso Taiwo (Diocese of Oke Osun), Rt. Rev. Godson Echefu (retired bishop of Ideato) and Lady Grace Iwuagwu (Wife of retired Bishop of Aba). We commiserate with the family of the late Dr. G.T.N. Ajakpo (the Galadima of Lokoja) the former Chairman of the CON Relief Committee and member of the ACNN Governing Board, and some other Church officials in our Dioceses. May God comfort their families. May the souls of the faithful departed rest in perfect peace.

We thank the Rt. Rev. Dr. Owen and Dr. Mrs. Elsie Nwokolo and the Diocese on the Niger for hosting the Standing Committee. God will reward our members and bless the Diocese. We also appreciate the Most Rev Dr. Alex and Mrs

Martha Ibezim for their support during the Standing Committee. On behalf of the Church of Nigeria, we express our profound gratitude to the Most Rev. Dr. Nicholas and Mama Nkasiobi Okoh for the bold and godly leadership they sacrificially gave to the Church of God. Their legacies will be sustained and in their retirement they will enjoy robust health. We thank all our retired fathers in faith who were present and assure them of our prayers and support. We also appreciate all our Committees and Taskforces for your labour of love for the Church of God.

As we conclude, we need to remind ourselves again that genuine COMMITMENT to the Lord and the pursuit of kingdom growth must of necessity cost the true disciple something. As true disciples, we must recognise that though we live in the world, we have been called not to conform to the standard of the world (Rom 12:2) but as people with the citizenship of Heaven (Philippians 3 :20) we are called to set our minds on things above, and be transformed by the renewal of our minds (Col. 3:1-2; Rom. 12.1). God's goal is for us as disciples to be made into the image of Christ our Master, this is only possible if we are willing to deny ourselves and take up our cross daily to follow Him.

May the grace of God be with you all; Amen.

Your Most Reverend Father in God,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'H. Chukwudum Ndukuba', with a light blue rectangular background behind it.

The Most Rev'd Henry Chukwudum Ndukuba, MA, BD, MA (Ed)
Archbishop, Metropolitan and Primate of All Nigeria



THE RT. REV. OLUBUNMI & MRS. NKECHI AKINLADE
Diocesan Bishop of Ife & Mama Ife