

**CHURCH OF NIGERIA
(ANGLICAN COMMUNION)
DIOCESE OF ABA NGWA NORTH**

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

Presented to the

**THE 1ST SESSION OF THE 5TH SYNOD OF
THE DIOCESE OF ABA NGWA NORTH**

BY HIS LORDSHIP

**RT. REV. NATHAN C.O. KANU PhD, JP. Bishop, Diocese of Aba
Ngwa North**

THEME:

**BE OF THE CHURCH NOT IN THE
CHURCH**

(John 17:14 & 16; Rom.12:2)

HOLDING AT

ALL SAINTS' CATHEDRAL

ABAYI UMUOCHAM

FROM THURSDAY 10TH - SUNDAY 13TH OCTOBER, 2019

SYNOD PRAYER

Oh God our Father, we heartily thank, and adore You for granting us another opportunity to gather as a Diocese to worship You, fellowship together and seek the good of your Church and our society.

We sincerely confess that we have not been the Church You called us to be. The Gospel of salvation in Christ, we have grossly adulterated; the way of righteousness and peace, we have abandoned. We have followed the ways and devices of our hearts. The worldly garments we

are meant to cast off, we have preferred and adored; we have left your Church Spiritually impoverished but worldly enriched that it has become so difficult to differentiate between The Church and The World. Have mercy on us, for Christ's sake, we pray.

Visit us as we gather and use this synod to create in us the right Spirit in our heart, mind, and body. Cause every member of our Diocese in particular and the Church in general to seek a deeper and personal knowledge of Christ that conforming to His image, we may become the agents of positive and godly transformation of our world.

Bless the leadership of our Diocese and National Church. May all who put their trust in you be clothed with righteousness and empowered to your glory, honor and the redemption of the world. These we ask through Him who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, Jesus the Christ our Lord. Amen.

Beloved people of God,

It is with a heart of joy and sense of responsibility that we welcome you to this first session of the fifth synod of our dear Diocese. We sincerely ask that you join us to thank, adore, and worship our God and Father, the Desire of all ages and our Rock for the grace to gather once again in this holy convocation. To Him be all glory, honor and adoration now till the end of the age. Amen.

We welcome our Chancellor, Registrar, Deputy Registrar, Legal adviser, and other legal and diocesan officers here present, my noble nominees, members of the house of clergy and their wives, Council of Knights and the ladies, our distinguished guests, delegates and all other diocesan staff members and their families. We know that some of us are here for the first time as synod delegates, this being the first session of a new synod. We believe your presence and participation will honor God, strengthen your faith and bring Blessing to our Diocese.

On your behalf we humbly welcome the Archbishop of the Ecclesiastical Province of Aba, and the Bishop of Umuahia, His Grace, The Most Rev'd Ikechi Nwachukwu Nwosu PhD. Your Grace, we are pleased to have you with us. We appreciate the presence of our grand mentor, the immediate retired Archbishop of Aba Province and bishop of Aba, His Grace, The Most Rev'd Dr. Ugochukwu Uwaoma Ezuoke, and Mama Hon. Mrs. Chinonyerem Ezuoke. Your Grace and Mama you are heartily welcome.

We welcome as well and officially introduce the Archbishop elect of our Province, His Grace, The Most Rev'd Isaac Chijioke Nwaobia, PhD, the Bishop of the Diocese of Isiala Ngwa South. My lord bishops here present, we are honored to have you. We extend our warm welcome to all our political and traditional leaders. To all security and uniformed organizations here present, our choirs, the press, and the rest of us, we say welcome and be blessed.

Beloved, please join me in welcoming the President of our women ministry, Mama Aba Ngwa North, my favor, Princess (Mrs.) Odionyenfe Nworoni Chinenye Kanu.

At this point, we wish to appreciate all who contributed in no small measures to the success of this year's synod. The synod secretariat, all the assistants and supporting staff. We continue to applaud the untiring efforts of the Chairman of the Central Planning Committee, Sir Okechukwu Nwachukwu (Ph.D) and the entire members of that committee. With a sincere heart, we do appreciate the efforts of the Diocesan Board and members of Cathedral Archdeaconry especially the Archdeacon and his wife, the Ven. Benneth Echezona & Evangelist

Mrs. Chinenye Nwokedi, the Cathedral Parochial Committee, clergy and their wives, all workers, and members of the different groups that make up this Archdeaconry. Our special thanks go to the Local Organizing Committee also led by Sir Okechukwu Nwachukwu. We pray that our good Lord will remember your sincere services and reward you all abundantly. To my immediate staff - the Admin. Assistant to the Bishop, the Canon to the Ordinary, my Chaplain, Secretary and Clerk, Bobby, The Chap, Minda, Darling, and the rest of my family, I appreciate your prayers and support. May you all never lose your rewards.

OUR SYNOD VENUE

ALL SAINTS' CATHEDRAL, ABAYI UMUOCHAM

This Church named after All the Saints, originated out of the evangelical initiative of three oil traders from Opopo - Joseph Cookey, Gabriel Cookey and Zedekiah Cookey. These men sailed up the Aba - Azumini River in 1896 for their trading and also for planting of Christian Religion. In 1897, they negotiated with Abayi and Umuocham people for land and established their oil business at two beaches, which they built at Abayi Waterside and Umuocham Waterside. They traded with oil producers from Ngwa hinter land and surrounding places while their landlords, the Abayi and Umuocham people acted as middle-men.

From the life they lived, the word they preached, the religious cum trade relationship that transpired, the Cookeys converted the Abayi and Umuocham people to Christianity. From 1901 especially in 1902, they planned an intensive crusade and invited their landlords. This led to the planting of two congregations one at Abayi Waterside and the other at Umuocham dedicated by Bishop Johnson, the Assistant Bishop in the Diocese of Western Equatorial Africa (1900-1917). The earlier converts from Abayi and Umuocham attended services at St. Ambrose, Abayi Waterside until 1905 when they set up their own church-shade at Abayi and Umuocham respectively. Joseph Cookey was the volunteer teacher for Abayi while Gabriel Cookey was the Volunteer teacher for Umuocham.

The period of voluntary teachers in Abayi and Umuocham ended in 1915 when as a result of the destruction of jujus in various parts of Igbo land, the membership in those two stations increased tremendously. Five paid teachers served in rapid succession at Umuocham. They were Teachers Fynebone, Matthew, Emmanuel, Braided and Uko. But as the first teacher for Abayi, Teacher Hezekiah Jaja started with Fynebone and stayed at Abayi while his five contemporaries "left in rapid succession either by transfer, or retirement or by death" The personality of Hezekiah Jaja and that of teacher Uko led to the coming together of the two congregations.

The amalgamation of the two congregations in Abayi and Umuocham began with combined services on alternate Sundays. The two villages finally agreed to have one church at a central place, and that was where All Saints' Church stands today. The present magnificent church is the third structure in the premises. The first one started in 1921, was completed in 1925 when the Revd. Alfred A. D. Spiff was the superintendent and was dedicated by Bishop A.W. Howells, Assistant Bishop on the Niger (1920-1933). During the time of dedication it was observed that Christianity had spread extensively into the Ngwa land and surrounding towns, and had built churches that had taken the names of the most popular Saints. In order to satisfy the aspirations of the people of Abayi and Umuocham, Bishop A.W Howells named the church after All The Saints.

From the beginning, there had been efforts to build a befitting place of worship. The first church building was a mud house with zinc, which eventually was pulled down because it could not accommodate members. The second church building set up during the time of Canon A.O. Emelogu, was pulled down in the 1990's to accommodate church hall because it could no longer accommodate the growing population of All Saints' Church. The present modern church was started in 1976 during the time of Ven. A.O. Akandu, and Bishop H.A.I. Afonya laid its foundation on April 4th, 1983. It was dedicated by Rt. Rev. Prof A. O. Iwuagwu on May 2nd, 1992. The building was completed during the time of Ven. B. E. Nwogbe.

In recent years, a number of capable staff had led this church, trying to make it really an urban church. They include Ven. A. C. Nwaigwe, Ven C. Emelogu, Ven. E.S. Kanu (all late), Ven. Nath Aliche, Ven. A. Osondu (late), Ven. G. M. Nwagwu and Ven ThankGod Eche. The church and her school have produced eminent persons, some of who have joined the Church triumphant. They include Eze Amos Nwamaghinna, Sir James Irobi, Sir G.O. Samson, Dennis Egbuchiwe, Chief Ajiwe Onyenso, and Sir A. S. Mayiogu, Prof Chidi Ikonne, Emmanuel O. Nkoro and Sir I. Nwabekee. Some others include Sir Eze Dandy Ogalabu, Chief S. W Obadiah, Sir Dr. M Atasié, Hon. Justice C.O.C Izima - the first Chancellor of our Diocese, Sir Augustine Okeke, Engr. Aju Onwuka, Madam Janet E?eogwe, Sir Peter Okafor and Ven. ThankGod N. I. Eche. All Saints' Church Abayi Umuocham has played leading roles both as a District Headquarters and as the Archdeaconry Headquarters for all the churches in Ngwaland.

This Church cannot forget the efforts of Ven. Emmanuel C. Amadi who was posted here in 2004 to actualize the dream of creating this area as a Diocese, with All Saints' Church, Abayi Umuocham as the headquarters. This was achieved, and on Wednesday, 19th of April, 2007 the Diocese was inaugurated and the first Bishop, Rt. Rev. John C. Ezirim (Late) enthroned. Ven. Innocent A. Nwogwugwu served as the second Cathedral Archdeacon and was succeeded by Ven. Matthew Nwoke. September to December 2010, Ven. Ikechukwu Eze was the Archdeacon in-charge. By 2010 December location, the Rev. Canon Ben Nwokedi now Archdeacon was appointed the Cathedral Administrator. He serves presently with Rev. Canon George Anokwute, Rev. Canon Charles Ubani, Rev. Odiwonma Ihediwa, Rev. Paulinus Nwaogu, Rev. Stephen Joseph, Mr. Emmanuel Nwankerendu, Mr. Samuel Unaogu, Mr. Chigozie Ekpekor, Mr. Ifeanyi Okwu and Mrs. Juliet Pepple. Till this day he has been piloting the affairs of this great Cathedral. Only a look around and a visit to the services and programs of the Cathedral would tell the giant strides this humble and unassuming servant of God, and his team, under the supervision of the Diocesan, have made. Every member of the Cathedral is proud to belong to this family of God. To God be the glory.

OUR RESOURCE PERSONS

Our Synod Preacher and Bible Study Facilitator

VEN. ERNEST OKECHUKWU ONUOHA, PhD Esq

Ven. Ernest Onuoha is the current Vicar of All Saints' (Ang) Church, Wuse Zone 5, Abuja and the Archdeacon of Wuse Archdeaconry.

He was formerly the Rector of Ibru International Ecumenical Centre, Agbarha-Otor, Delta State as well as the Registrar of Trinity Theological College, Umuahia, Abia State.

Ven. Onuoha is variously trained and attended the following institutions of learning after his Secondary Education at Archdeacon Dennis Junior Seminary, Mbieri, in Imo State:

- Trinity Theological College, Umuahia - Dip.Th
- Imo State University, Owerri - BA.ED, M.ED, LL.B
- University of Uyo, Uyo - Ph.D
- Nigerian Law School Enugu Campus - BL
- International Institute of Journalism Owerri Satellite Campus - Dip.Journ
- Crowther Graduate Theological Seminary, Abeokuta, Ogun State - MTH
- Ajayi Crowther University, Oyo - MA
- DCON Consulting Institute Abuja, among others - Professional Negotiation & Arbitration

He was made a Deacon on July 10, 1988 at All Saints' Cathedral Church, Egbu and was priested by December 17, 1989 at Christ (Ang) Church, Owerri by the same Bishop, Rt. Rev. B. C. Nwankiti. He was preferred a Canon of the Cathedral Church (CATOL) Owerri on October 30, 2008 By Rt. Rev. Cyril Okorochoa, PhD. While he was preferred an Archdeacon by Rt. Rev. Emmanuel Maduwike at St. Matthew's Cathedral, Atta on October 3, 2010.

Assignments in Church of Nigeria (CON):

- A member of Reference Committee in the Standing Committee
- Tutor at Senior Clergy Training at Ibru Centre on Alternative Dispute Resolution

Ven. Onuoha has authored various books and articles. A onetime Sunday Guardian columnist for eight years (2010 - 2018), a tactful preacher and teacher of the word of God. He is a child of God and good family man. He is happily married to Mrs. Chioma Ernest Onuoha (M.Sc), they are blessed with four lovely children: Somtochi, Chiadikobi, Ugwumsinachi and Chidera.

Other Preachers & Resource Persons

REV'D ANELE C. ODU

A native of Eziamu Osuama in Isiala Mbano Local Government of Imo State. Born on the 24th of June 1955 obtained FSLC, WASC, HND in Secretariat Administration from Imo State Polytechnic Nekede, holds a Diploma in Theology from Trinity Theological College Umuahia, and currently a B.Th student of the same college. Call to the Holy orders in December 2007. Married to Evang. Dr. (Mrs.) Ogochukwu Odu and blessed with five children.

Made deacon 2007 and priested 2009. He serves as the vicar of TACP Abayi Parish of our Diocese. He preached in our opening service on Thursday.

REV'D CANON CHARLES IKECHUKWU CHINEGBOMKPA UBANI

Born on 20th February 1978, a native of Umunachi Ntigha, in Ntigha Okpuala-Isi Ntigha Autonomous Community, Isiala Ngwa North, Abia State.

He attended Community Primary School, Ntigha Okpuala and St. Luke's Primary School Osusu all in Isiala Ngwa North. Obtained WASC from Grammar School Nbawsi and currently running his B.Th programme with Trinity Theological College, Umuahia.

Made deacon 2009, priested 2010 and Preferred Canon 2014.

Presently serving as the Canon to the Ordinary.

He is married to Evang. (Mrs.) Chinonyerem C. Ubani and the marriage is blessed with Somtochukwu, Chinazaekpere and Nneoma. He preached in our Holy Communion Service on Friday.

REV'D CANON EMMANUEL IBEABUGHICHI EHILEGBU

Birth: January 11th, 1982.

Native of Umuobasi in the family of Late High Chief D.M. Ehilegbu JP. He attended Umuobasi Amavo Community Primary School, St. Anne's Secondary School Umuobasi Amavo. Had his theological training with Trinity Theological College, Umuahia. He was made a deacon 2012 and priested 2013, and preferred a Canon 2018. Presently Supervisor of Umuocham Archdeaconry and Vicar Umuocham Parish. Married to Evang. (Mrs.) Chioma Ehiegbu with two children. He preached this morning in our Holy Communion Service.

REV'D CANON UDOCHUKWU EPHRAIM AHAGHOTU, (PhD, GDJ)

He is a native of Onicha Ezinihitte Mbaise, Imo State. He had his Diploma in Theology from Trinity Theological College Umuahia, Bachelor of Theology from Baptist Theological Seminary Ogbomoso, Bachelor of Arts in Religious Studies from University of Ibadan, Master's degree in Biblical/Cultural Studies from University of Port Harcourt, Licentiate in Christian Therapy from Dayspring Ministries Institute of Advanced Theology Johannesburg, Professional Diploma in Education from Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education Owerri, and Doctor of Philosophy in New Testament Studies from Imo State University Owerri. He was ordained into the Holy Orders of Deacon on 7th July 2002 and Priest on 14th December 2003. He has served God in various Parishes and capacities in this Diocese. He is currently the Vicar of Christ's Church World Bank Housing Estate and Supervisor World Bank Mission Area, Aba. He is married to Evangelist Mrs. Joy Chinyere Ahaghotu. He will preach in our Holy Communion Service tomorrow morning.

VEN. PRECIOUS C. OKEREKE, M.TH:

He is from Umunkwo in Isiala Mbanu LGA of Imo State. Made deacon 1998, ordained priest 1999, and collated & instituted as Archdeacon 2008. He is the Archdeacon of Umuobasi-Amavo Archdeaconry and Vicar Umuobasi-Amavo Parish. He is also the Diocesan Information and Communications Officer. He proposed our Synod Motion yesterday.

RT. HON. MARTINS OKECHUKWU AZUBUIKE

Rt. Hon. Martins Okechukwu Azubuike, the member representing Isiala Ngwa North State Constituency in Abia State House of Assembly, former Speaker of the 6th Assembly and former Deputy National Chairman, Conference of Speakers of State Legislators in Nigeria is a man of many parts. He is a consummate politician, legal practitioner, a businessman, a bridge builder, dogged fighter, crowd puller, grassroots mobilizer, proven vibrant lawmaker, a man of moral clarity, a role model, visionary leader, a man of integrity and outstanding intellectual acumen. These qualities bestowed upon him by God puts him poles apart from his contemporaries. And like the popular axiom in WILLIAMS SHAKESPEARE's world acclaimed literature "TWELFTH NIGHT", "some are born great, some achieve greatness and some have greatness thrust upon them". It can be said without equivocation that Rt. Hon. Martins Azubuike was neither born great, nor did he have same by thrust upon him. He achieved greatness through dint of hard work, impeccable character content, dexterity with fixation on success and a large heart in being exceptionally accommodating with uncommon humility and respect for all.

Born on the 16th day of July, 1969, in Onitsha, Anambra State, maybe without so much fun fair, to the family of Late Sunday Onyedinma Azubuike and Late Mrs. Harriet Sunday Azubuike of Umuezenta village, Umuomainta Autonomous Community, Nbawsi, Isiala Ngwa North LGA, Abia State. He is the third son in a family of six males and a female. Today he has become a political colossus and a rallying point to all men of goodwill.

EDUCATION: He started his early academic pursuit at Community Primary School, Nbawsi, Isiala Ngwa North LGA, Abia State. After his primary education, he proceeded to Midtown Commercial School, Nbawsi, where he spent just one academic year, before leaving for Community Secondary School, Nenu in the present day Obingwa LGA, Abia State.

In 1989, he gained admission into Abia State University, Uturu, where he bagged an LLB Degree in Law (BL) and was subsequently called to bar in 1995. He added the prestigious certificate of the Chartered Mediators and Conciliators (ICMC) in 2003.

WORK EXPERIENCE: He started his legal practice after his compulsory National Youth Service (NYSC) with COMFORT CHAMBERS, Abuja in 1996. He later joined HARMONY CHAMBERS, Abuja from 1996 as a junior counsel. In 1997, they jointly opened CRYSTAL CHAMBERS, from a Partner to Managing Partner of the Chamber from 1997 to 2005, and would soon become the Principal Partner of PRUDENT CHAMBERS, from 2005-2007.

He joined active politics in 2001 and later contested election for Abia State House of Assembly seat to represent Isiala Ngwa North State Constituency in 2003, which attempt failed. In 2007 he again ran for Abia State House of Assembly seat to represent Isiala Ngwa North State Constituency but the election became an object of litigation, until late 2008, when his mandate was recovered through the court.

Again, in 2011, he sought for another mandate which the good people of Isiala Ngwa North gladly revalidated. Subsequently, in 2015, the stakeholders and the good people of his constituency insisted that he must once again represent them due to his years of quality representation, thus he was duly elected once again into the Abia State House of Assembly. To crown it all, exactly on June 11th, 2015, the Honorable Members of the Abia 6th Assembly elected him as their speaker and he served meritoriously till 29th December, 2016 when there

was a change in the leadership and ever since, he has been an active member of the 6th Assembly, making laws and meaningful contributions for the improvement of the state.

When he emerged as the 6th Abia Speaker, Rt. Hon Azubuike's humility, cognate legislative experience, likeable personality, charm, charisma, political sagacity, calm, and candour came to play in the legislative House as one of the best brains ever produced by successive Abia State House of Assembly leadership as he carried all the Honorable members along in the legislative business in the hallowed chamber. It was a known fact that the State Assembly as constituted then was bipartisan, as the leading opposition party (APGA), had significant presence. However, the peace, harmony and cooperation that existed both inside and outside the hallowed chamber were clear testimonies of his accommodating leadership style as he always see himself as a servant, not the leader.

PHILANTROPY: You can call him Mr. Empowerment, as Rt. Hon Azubuike believe so much in empowering the vulnerable and indigent people to be self-reliant, a task and giant strides he has been promoting through his various self-sponsored programmes. In the past, through MARTINS AZUBUIKE EDUCATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME, he was giving out bursary to 100 undergraduates from Isiala Ngwa North origin in tertiary institutions in the country. At the primary level, he sponsors the Primary School Quiz Competition in the whole LGA. At the secondary level, he instituted Secondary School yearly Quiz and Debating Competitions. He also has a yearly football league, as a platform where talents are discovered through grassroots soccer competition. It is his absolute belief that good health is a necessity for one to function well physically, socially and spiritually. Rt. Hon Martins Azubuike's medical intervention enables him partner with doctors and hospitals in his immediate constituency to provide healthcare for the teeming constituents. He later expanded his free healthcare delivery frontier by engaging the services of DIVINE GRACE MEDICAL MISSIONARIES, HOUSTON TEXAS, UNITED STATES, and the group has been carrying out free medical programmes in all the wards in the LGA, fully sponsored by him.

Rt. Hon. Martins Azubuike has also been rewarding party faithful over the years, from the stakeholders, ward and LG officers to the least party loyalist with cars, Keke Napep, motorcycles, generators, and sewing machines, etc.

This aspect of his pay-back to the constituency has been replaced by a more robust MARTINS AZUBUIKE LEADERSHIP FOUNDATION (MALF). Recently, the honorable member embarked on massive roads construction and rehabilitation cutting across the 10 political wards in Isiala Ngwa North LGA which attracted very positive reactions from the constituents as they lauded him for such explosive communities intervention. Through the foundation, he had and still sponsoring singing competition in partnership with the Ministry of Praise, of the Anglican Communion in the following dioceses of the Anglican Church viz; Isiala Ngwa Diocese, Aba Ngwa North Diocese, Isiala Ngwa South Diocese, and Ikwuano Diocese.

MARTINS AZUBUIKE AGRICULTURAL EMPOWERMENT

PROGRAMME, targeted at rural farmers, started with an initial N10 million disbursed among the first 100 beneficiaries. The programme is becoming more enlarged as it is geared towards accommodating more farmers on yearly basis.

Apart from his official staff working directly with him while he was the Speaker of Abia State House of Assembly, the member representing Isiala Ngwa North State Constituency, had 132

people, mostly youths, women and the vulnerable in his monthly payroll. This feat is unequalled in the history of politics in Nigeria by a singular politician. That is why Rt. Hon. Azubuike is loved by many and has till this moment, diehard grassroots followership across Abia State as he impacted humanity even beyond his immediate constituency.

CAREER ACCOMPLISHMENT: As a secondary school student, he was a DEPUTY SENIOR PREFECT, while as an undergraduate of Law in Abia State University; he was found worthy and consequently elected as a Deputy Speaker, Law Students Association House of Assembly (ABSU). He was one time Legal Adviser to prestigious Abuja based organization, Ngwa Forum, as well as Legal Adviser, Ngwa Cultural and Development Association, and one time Chairman of Umuomainta Progressive Association, Abuja.

As a lawmaker in Abia House of Assembly, he became famous as the House Committee Chairman on Appropriation, a task he carried out with passion for many years, apart from being a member of other House committees. He equally midwived the vexed autonomous communities' amendment law, an assignment that took him to the nooks and cranny of Abia. Ever since his departure as the speaker, the State House of Assembly exists only on paper as his departure took away the soul of the once vibrant house the period he held sway as the speaker.

Rt. Hon. Martins Azubuike was All Progressive Congress (APC) Governorship Aspirant in 2018 and later became the Abia All Progressive Congress (APC) Deputy Governorship Candidate for 2019 general elections.

HONOURS/AWARDS: The list of Honour/Awards bestowed on Rt. Hon. Azubuike are too numerous to mention; notable amongst them are: Ambassador of Christ by Diocese of Isiala Ngwa North (Anglican Communion) Emmanuel Church, Aba; Vocational Service Award by Rotary Club of Aba, Golf City, District 9140; Award of Excellence in Leadership by Umunna Nsulu Patriots; Community Service Award by Rotary International Club, Abia zone for distinguishing himself in community services, and contributions to the development of the society and promotion of goodwill; Merit Award by Associations of Ngwa Land, Abuja; Merit Award by Okpulo Ngwa Autonomous Community, Isiala Ngwa North LGA for Excellence in Leadership and Representation; Distinguished Award by Nigerian Bar Association (NBA), Aba Branch; Recognition Award for Legislative Excellence by Abia State Polytechnic, Aba; Leadership Excellence Award by Abia Youth Assembly and many others.

SOCIAL LIFE: He is an easy going gentleman who loves to unwind, mostly with his family and friends, especially the academia. He is the BOT Chairman of MARTINS AZUBUIKE LEADERSHIP FOUNDATION (MALF), a non-Governmental Organization saddled with Leadership Training Programme, Entrepreneurship development, Scholarship/bursary awards and ensuring balanced development and the Patron of ALL UKWA NGWA YOUTH ASSOCIATION.

CHRISTIAN LIFE: Rt. Hon. Martins Azubuike is a Bible believing Christian of the Anglican Communion. He was for a long time, a coordinator in the care group system of Family Worship Centre, Abuja, where he fellowships whenever he is in the Federal Capital city. He is a firm believer in the power of the Almighty God.

MARITAL AND FAMILY LIFE: Rt. Hon. Martins Azubuike is happily married to Mrs. Kate Martins Azubuike and they are blessed with five children. His hobbies includes: Reading, Building relationships, Sprints and Football. He seconded our Synod Motion yesterday.

CHIEF MIKE IKENNA, AHAMBA, KSC, SAN (Ugo Lorji)

Chief Michael, Ikenna Ahamba was born in June 18th 1947 into the family of H.R.H Eze S.M. Ahamba (late) and Ugoeze M.O. Ahamba in Lorji Aboh-Mbaise LGA, Imo State, Nigeria.

He obtained his F.S.L.C. in the year 1959 at St. Stephen's Primary School Umuahia, WASC 1964 at Ngwa High School Abayi, and G.C.E 'O' Level 1965. He proceeded to University of Nigeria Nsukka Enugu Campus to do Law and successfully came out with LL.B Hons in the year 1973 and was called to Bar on June 28th 1974.

In the year 1988 he was found worthy by the Church of God and was made Knight of Saint of Christopher (KSC).

Positions Held includes: Minority Chief Whip, Imo State House of Assembly, (1979-1983), President, Rotary Club of Owerri, (1987/88), Chairman - Nigerian Bar Association Owerri Branch, (1988 - 1990 and 1996 - 1998), Member, General Council of the Bar (1989 -1992), Council Member, Nigeria Export Processing Zone Authority (NEPZA) (2001 - 2004), Past Member of the N.B.A. National Executive Committee, Past Registrar, Diocese of Owerri (1985 -1998), Member International Bar, and became Senior Advocate of Nigeria (S.A.N) - 1992. In the same 1992 he received an award U.N.N. Alumni Association Owerri Branch, Aboh Mbaise Local Government Area Honors Award, Justice of Wisdom Award by Obafemi Awolowo University Law Society (1990) and UNN Alumnus of High Achievement (ALOHA) Award, 2007. He has been conferred with many traditional honours.

He is happily married to Mrs. Kate Adanma Ahamba and the marriage is blessed with a son, Kelechi. Sir Mike moderated our Synod Motion yesterday. We sincerely appreciate his contributions and support to our ministry. May his days be long and bright.

BARR. COLLINS CHUBA ESSELL

Barr. Collins Chuba Essell was born 3rd September 1977 in Awka, Awka South L.G.A. Anambra State Nigeria.

He had First School Leaving Certificate, West African Examination Certificate, Bachelor of Laws (UNICAL) and Chartered Institute of Stockbrokers.

He is Operations Officer, Darkal Services Ltd (Member of the Nigerian Stock), Assistant Head of operations, Viva Securities Ltd (Member of the Nigerian Stock), Head Operations Aba, Heritage Capital Markets Ltd (Member of the Nigerian Stock Exchange), Associate Counsel, Charles Eduzor & Associates (Legal Practitioners), and Principal Counsel, Essell & Co. (Legal Practitioners).

He is President, Lawyers without Borders, Secretary, Agulu Awka Development Union, Aba Branch. PRO, Anambra Lawyers Forum, Aba. Member, Sub Local Organisation Committee - SPIDEL Conference of NBA 2019.

Membership: Nigerian Institute of Management, Nigeria Institute of Stockbrokers, Nigerian Bar Association, and Lions Club, Aba.

He is married to Mrs. Doris Chidiebere Essell with three children. He will move the motion for the acceptance of our address.

REVD CHUKWUEMEKA, CHUKWUEMEKA FORTUNATE KENNETH

The first son of L/R Emmanuel Chukwuemeka Nwokorie & Madam Roseline Aku Nwokorie of Ihebinachi, Umuezeala Nzerem, EhimeMbano L.G.A. of Imo State.

A Priest of God in Anglican Communion with mission mandate currently serving at All Souls' Church Asa-Amoka.

Joyfully married to Evang. (Mrs) Ogechi F. R. Chukwuemeka, God has blessed them with three promising children.

Pioneer Financial Secretary - Diocese of Ikwo.

Pioneer Clerical Synod Secretary - Diocese of Ikwo.

Pioneer NYSC Chaplain; till Date - Diocese of Aba Ngwa North.

Co-Author Bible Study Manual since inception. - Diocese of Aba Ngwa North.

He will second the motion after the address.

VEN. BENNETH NWOKEDI, M.DIV

A native of Ozubulu in Amakwa Community. Made deacon 2007, ordained priest 2008, installed canon 2010, and collated & instituted as Archdeacon 2015. He is currently the Cathedral Administrator. He will conduct the Thanksgiving Service tomorrow.

HON. RTN PRESTIGE OSSY

Hon Prestige Ossy is the chairman of Association of Nigerian Licensed Custom Agents ANLCA, Onne Seaport Chapter. He was formerly Treasurer of the association in 2002 and it's Secretary 2003-2008.

He holds a B.Sc degree in Government and Public Administration from Abia State University Uturu Okigwe, and a M.BA in Shipping and Logistics from the Lloyds Maritime Academy London, United Kingdom, amongst other academic qualifications.

He is the Chairman/Managing Director of Prestige Associates Ltd, Osspress Freighters West Africa Ltd and a host of other companies making their mark in various sectors of the Nigerian Economy. He is a major employer of labour.

Hon. Prestige Ossy is the 1st Deputy President of Aba Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Mines and Agriculture (ACCIMA) having previously served the Chamber as Vice President, amongst other offices. He is also a council member of the Nigerian Association of Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Mines and Agriculture (NACCIMA).

He is a sports enthusiast and belongs to the prestigious Aba Sports Club, Golf section and was honored by the club in 2011 as a Hall of Fame Silver Card Holder.

Hon. Rtn Prestige Ossy belongs to Rotary Club International and has risen to become a Major Donor of the second level. He has attended all the International Conventions of the RotRy International since 2005 and is a member of the Elite International Fellowship of Rotarian Convention goers. He was President of Rotary Club of Eziukwu Aba 2007-2008 and was Assistant Governor of Rotary District 9140, 2009/2010.

He has been honored by many organizations including churches for his diverse and all-encompassing Humanitarian and Philanthropic works through the PRESTIGE OSSY FOUNDATION, a Nonprofit making organization whose works include Free Medical Outreach, Scholarship Awards, and Widows Welfare, etc.

Hon. Rtn. Prestige Ossy (Major Donor) is married to Rotn. Ann, Pastor Mrs. Precious and they are blessed with five wonderful Children.

He will read the Old Testament Lesson for our Synod Thanksgiving Service tomorrow.

Dr. Reginald Chika Stanley: Will read the New Testament lesson at the Thanksgiving service tomorrow.

We are grateful to them all and pray God's Blessing upon their lives.

NEWS FROM THE DIOCESE ARMS:

Women Ministry

Our women ministry has remained very formidable in the pursuit of our vision and mission for the Diocese. After our last synod, the ministry held her annual Widows' Conference on 24th November 2018 at the Cathedral with the theme "Lean on God Your Defender". The conference featured among other things: Bible Study, Prayer Session, Health Talk and Health Check. In all, the widows left with joy and gladness as they were given food and gift items worth of two million six hundred thousand naira (N2.6M). We are highly grateful to God for using our Church to provide for these helpless mothers in a time like this, and thank also those of our members who allowed God to use them to put a smile on the faces of these widows. They will not lose their reward.

On Saturday 15th December 2018, the ministry ended their yearly activities and programmes with Christmas Carol and End of Year Party. This took place at Christ Church World Bank Housing Estate. We preached the sermon while the Diocesan Clergy Wives Choir rendered their sweet Christmas carols and anthems. Some of the distinguished members of our Diocese took turn in reading the lessons. We thank the Vicar Of Christ Church World Bank Rev. Canon (Dr.) Udochukwu and his wife Evang. (Mrs.) Joy Ahaghotu as well as their members for the able way they hosted us. May the Lord bless them all. Amen.

The women ministry activities for 2019 began with All Church Workers' Wives' Retreat. It took place at Ngwa High School, Abayi. This year's was residential lasting from Tuesday 8th to Thursday 10th January 2019. The theme was "Church Worker's Wife as a Steward" (Matt. 25:14-30, 1 Cor. 4:1-5). It was a time of spiritual rejuvenation and fellowship for the women and got them ready for the year ahead.

On Sunday 20th January 2019 in all parish headquarters, the women had their Rededication Service. It was an opportunity to present the women before the Lord for strength to serve Him this year. The Girls Guild also participated in the rededication as well.

Other major activities of the ministry within this period are: Prayer Conference, World Day of Prayer, Evangelism, Magazine Publication, and Indigent Members Empowerment.

From Monday 25th to Sunday 31st March 2019, our women joined their counterparts all over the world to observe the Mothers' Week of celebrations which ended with the Mothering Sunday service. The theme was "Godly Mothers, Godly Generations" (2 Tim. 1:5). As usual our clergy wives were given opportunity to preach at the service as well as lead the service with the rest of the women in their respective stations. The women through the celebration raised funds for their projects in their churches and as well gave their financial support and contribution to the project of Women's Work. Their Hostel Project has continued to receive attention, despite lack of fund. They have invested about thirteen million, six hundred and fifty thousand naira (N13,650,000) only within the year under review. We pray God for more of His strength and support toward the completion of this project.

The latest outing of the ministry is the just concluded Women's Guild Conference at St. Silas Church Ayaba Umueze (Ngwa Archdeaconry) from 11th to 13th of July, with the theme "When the Woman Fails" Gen. 2:18, 3:1-6. The conference attracted many dignitaries from within and outside our Diocese. The Women Ministry Projects were launched and the conference was rounded off with a thanksgiving service on Sunday. We preached at both the opening and thanksgiving services. The conference reminded the women of their God given responsibility of submissively supporting and helping the men succeed in their responsibility as God's representative on earth. And not to constitute themselves another responsibility for the man outside the one given Him by God. The role God gave to the women is so important that when they fail in performing such role, not only will the men fail, the entire creation will fail as well. Women were so charged to let the word of God direct them as they seek to fulfill the very reason for their existence.

We Applaud the leadership of the President of the Women Ministry (Mama Aba Ngwa North) and her team as we congratulate them on all their successes so far. We pray for more grace and insight for the journey ahead.

Ladies in Council:

These high Spirited ladies joined their husbands during their annual general retreat from Friday 22nd to Saturday 23rd February 2019 at the Cathedral with the theme "Broken for the Lord's Use" (John 12:24, Psalm 34:18). The activities of these noble ladies towards the mission and vision of the diocese is commendable. We appreciate their leadership for aligning themselves with what the Lord has called us to do as a diocese as they actively participate in the programs and activities of the women ministry.

Diocesan Council of Knights:

This body of Christ can only express gratitude to God for His faithfulness. They began their yearly activities with their Annual Retreat/Thanksgiving Service held on Thursday 21st and Friday

22nd, February 2019. The venue was the Cathedral with the theme "Broken for the Lord's Use" (John 12:24). The Retreat featured among other things, Holy Communion, Bible Study, Exposition of the theme, Health talk, Talk on code of conduct for the Knights, Plenary session with Bishop, Commitment Prayer, Thanksgiving and Rededication. In that Retreat we made it clear:

1. That subsequently, there will be one retreat for the Knights and Ladies. But that the women ministry will oversee the program as it affects the ladies.
2. That the issues of indebtedness and nonchalance have seriously affected the progress of the Council, and would not be tolerated any more. Before the year ends we would publish the list of the actual members of the council.
3. That the Investiture of Knighthood on a person is based on individual commitment to the ministry of the Diocese and not on clan, tribe, or any other group representation.
4. That Knights should desist from dissemination of stories and information they are not sure of its source, and to live life worthy of emulation.

On Aba Provincial and the Joint councils fronts, our Council of Knights is not found wanting. We hosted the Aba Provincial Council at our Cathedral on 6th July, 2019. They were also in attendance to welcome the President General of the Joint Council of Knights on his first official visit to Aba Provincial Council at St. Stephen's Cathedral Umuahia on Saturday 13th July, 2019. The Council has shown full participation in all our Diocesan programs including organizing an Evangelism outreach within the period. As a result of their new resolve towards improvement and godly enterprise, they were able to procure a third Set of outfit "Regalia C". Am sure we all can appreciate their beauty and elegance to the glory of God.

We commend and applaud the untiring effort of the executive, ably led by the president Sir G.N. Nkoro PhD, and their chaplain for allowing God use them in making sure that this body of Christ is living up to her expectations to the glory of God. We must remind them that the reward for a job well done, is more work to be done. May the Almighty God continue to strengthen and reward you.

Diocesan Ministry of Praise

The Diocesan Ministry of Praise has shown a high level of improvement, growth and understanding of the leading of God in our diocese to the glory of God. We appreciate the effort of this ministry towards improving the quality of our worship experience in our churches, and their effort to increase membership of the Diocesan Choir as we requested during the last synod. This is still on going and they should be consistent.

We applaud the commitment and dedication to duty of the leadership.

After our last synod, they organized Christmas Carol with Nine Lessons on 22nd December, 2018 here in our Cathedral. The service attracted many dignitaries across the state, which include His Excellency the Governor of Abia State, Dr. Okezie Victor Ikpeazu, and members of his cabinet. Others were His Grace Most Rev'd Dr. & Hon. Mrs. Ugochukwu Uwaoma Ezuoke, the retired Archbishop of Aba Province and Bishop of Aba Diocese. Seven Archdeaconry Choirs rendered anthems apart from Rhema Praise Choir of St. Paul's Church Umuocham, Blessed Michael Tansi Choir Aba (Roman Catholic), Diocesan Widows' Choir and ACM Mass Choir were all on hand to add color to the glorious outing.

As a way of evangelism, they visited the following personalities for Christmas Carol: His Grace Most Dr. Ugochukwu Uwaoma Ezuoke, Most Rev'd Isaac C. Nwaobia Ph.D, Senator Nkechi

Nwaorgu PhD, Hon. Obinna Oriaku and others. Our Bishopscourt gladly played host to them as well.

Towards the end of last year, the Province of Aba organized a Music Festival/competition. And our Diocese did very well in the competition. It is worthy of note that at the end of the competition three choirs of our Diocese emerged victorious with first positions and first class certificates. The Choirs are:

1. Our Cathedral Choir - Cathedral Grade (CG).
2. St. Clement's Church Choir Mbutu Umuojima Ogbu - High Grade (HG).
3. St. Michael's Church Choir Umuojima Okereke - Special Grade (SG)

Our Choir week for 2019 was celebrated from Monday 12th to Sunday 18th August, with the theme "Declare His Praise" (1 Peter 13-6). All the churches in the diocese participated actively to the glory of God. And our message was read to encourage the choristers. We continue to ask that all our lay church leaders must work together with our clergy to support, encourage and build up our respective station choirs. We expect any less from any church station.

On 24th August, 2019 at St. Paul's Church Umuocham we held a seminar for our choristers with the aim of uplifting standard of our Church choirs across the Diocese. We thank their leadership, and pray God to reward them mightily.

Moreover, this year is our Diocesan Music Festival/Competition. With our approval, the competition has started at the zonal levels since 31st August 2019. The zones are:

- (1) Zone A
- (2) Zone B
- (3) Zone C
- (4) Zone D, and
- (5) Zone E.

The Diocesan Grand Finale will hold on the 23rd of November. We are all invited.

Diocesan Youth Ministry

With hearty gratitude to God, We express our joy with the level of improvement, development, and growth in our Youth Ministry since the last synod. We applaud the leadership of the Youth Ministry, the coordinator and chaplains for your eye witnessed efforts and commitment. Our youths began the year with a one day leadership retreat on 26th January 2019. The participants at the retreat were drawn from both the Parish, Archdeaconry/Mission Area, and the Diocesan youth Executive members. The theme was "Service Selfless Leadership, An Attribute of Christendom."

Their quarterly general meeting which is being rotated within the thirteen Archdeaconries/Mission Areas is held peacefully. The joint fellowship project introduced by the leadership of the youths have been going on well as it has helped in awakening the youths in most churches visited. The bi-monthly tarry night prayer session has been going on well.

The Annual Diocesan Bible Study Conference was hosted at Christ Church World Bank from 2nd - 4th August, 2019, the theme was

Our Youth Ministry week and celebration was uniquely observed from 2nd - 8th September this year. The celebration was a beehive of activities in all the churches.

The 2019 Pre-Synod Youth Summit was held on 4th - 5th October. Our youths from across the Diocese attended the summit. Reports of the ministry from the Parishes were presented, and discussed. At the end of the summit the youths presented a communique to the synod which forms part of our deliberations.

On the Provincial and National fronts, our youth ministry has been outstanding.

Our Diocese played host to the National Executive Meeting from 17th - 19th May, 2019.

We commend the ministry and her leadership, and pray for greater commitment, dedication, and maturity in their endeavors.

Evangelical Fellowship in the Anglican Communion (EFAC)

Our EFAC Sub Zone has been very active and resourceful within this period as they have engaged themselves in a number of life transforming programs.

They had an Outreach and Revival Camping programme held at Umuejije in Mbutu Umuojima Ogbu Parish, participated in the Aba Zonal EFAC early in the year retreat, tagged "Mount Sinai", held at Lady Grace Iwuagwu Juniorate Ogbor Hill Aba from the 3rd - 5th of January 2019. They also participated actively at the 2019 Diocesan city wide crusade. On 25th May, 2019 we organized a one day retreat for the leadership at St. Paul's Umuocham.

This Year's EFAC week was fully observed in our diocese. Our Sub zone participated actively during the National Convention that we co-hosted with Aba, Ukwa, Isiala Ngwa South, and Isiala Ngwa sub zones from the 12th to the 18th of August 2019.

We thank God for the understanding that is growing up among the members of this diocese that EFAC is not a club, or an association of few group of persons who alone should be concerned with Evangelism matters, but an identity of every Anglican Christian. We all may not physically participate in the activities of Evangelism, but we all are called to support, contribute to, and live a life that will present Christ to all within our reach. And this is exactly what EFAC is all about. We pray that the wonderful themes and outcome of these programs - Monthly Tarry Nights, Joint Fellowship, and other revival programmes of this arm will continue to project the body of Christ - the Church as the change agent she is called to be. We commend the leadership of the EFAC for their willingness to learn, and for following in what we believe God has called us to do.

Anglican Children Ministry (ACM)

We remain excited for the future of our Church as we observe the vitality and vibrancy in our Children Ministry. Their leaders at all levels continue to demonstrate a high level of commitment and dedication to this ministry of the future of our Church. They started their

yearly activities with a Prayer Retreat at St. Barnabas' Ayaba Umueze from 22nd - 23rd February 2019 with the theme "The Power of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 10:38). The Retreat featured among other things, Bible Study, Talk on the theme, Rededication and Thanksgiving on Sunday 24th. About 46 teachers were in attendance. On the 6th April 2019 they embarked on Evangelism at St. Michael's Church Umuojima Okereke for an outreach. They also observed this year's ACM Week successfully from Monday 20th to Sunday 26th May 2019 across the Diocese. A Leadership workshop was held at St. Ambrose Abayi Waterside from 21st to 22nd June 2019 while the ACM Bible Quiz was held on 20th July 2019 at St.

Philip's Church Ngwa High School, Abayi with the theme "The Power of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 10:38). 11 Archdeaonries participated in the bible quiz and 3 of them emerged winners. They are World Bank Mission Area - 1st Position, Umuode Archdeaonry - 2nd position and Ngwa Central Archdeaonry - 3rd Position. While the following children were the best performed - (Felix Chigozirim Chidi - Ngwa Central Archdeaonry Faith Amaefula - World Bank, and Chinonso Esther Okezie - Osioma Ngwa. And they were selected to represent us at the Provincial level. We are appealing to individuals here to help us and donate Trophies to encourage our children.

Other activities for the year include: Diocesan ACM Holiday Camp from 29th - 31st August, 2009 at Ngwa High School, Abayi, Diocesan ACM Prayer Retreat at St. John's Church Umuoyoro Ngwa on 21st September 2019, Provincial ACM Bible Conference at St. George's Cathedral Mbawsi Isiala Ngwa Diocese from 8th to 11th August, 2019 and ACM Train the Trainers National Conference from 26th to 29th August 2019 at Kubwa Diocese.

Upcoming coming events are: Diocesan Joint Fellowship on 19th October 2019 at Anglican Church of Advent Umuehilegbu, ACM General Variety and End of year party on 7th December 2019 at TACP Abayi Parish, ACM Teacher's Love Feast/Exchange of Gift on 9th November 2019, and Provincial ACM General Meeting on 23rd November 2019 in our Diocese. We continue to sincerely ask that parents help us inculcate good values and virtues in our Children by ensuring that our vernacular is used and Christian principles enforced at home.

Christian Men's Fellowship (CMF)

The activities and followership of the Men of this diocese within the period under review is quite impressive. The men have shown appreciable understanding, involvement and support to the Diocesan life and ministry.

Their quarterly meetings this year have been observed and with good attendance.

The 2019 Fathers' week and activities were uniquely observed in all churches with the theme "The Woman You Gave Me" (Gen. 3:12). The accompanying annual football competition among the men ended with the All Saints' Cathedral emerging as the champions with Umuocham and Ngwa Archdeaonries emerging 2nd and 3rd respectively. The men were in full attendance and participation at the Diocesan city wide crusade and other events of the diocese. We applaud the untiring efforts of the Diocesan, Archdeaonry and Parish leaders. May your services find favor before God.

The 10th edition of the CMF Conference was held from 8th - 11th August, 2019 at St. Clement's Church Mbutu Umuojima Ogbu in Mbutu Umuojima Archdeaonry with the theme "That Women You Gave Me" (Gen. 3:12). The conference featured among other things - House to House Evangelism by the Men, Holy Communion, Bible Study, Health Talk, Group Report, Plenary

Section, Commitment Prayers, and ended with a thanksgiving Service on Sunday 11th August. The central message of the conference was a call on the fathers and all men never to neglect, toy with or played down on the mandate of God upon their lives which is to effectively represent God on earth and lead all creatures to do His will. The truth of accountability to God was echoed and re-echoed during the conference. Men were reminded that they must love, care for and listen to their wives but never against the express directives of God for God will not accept any excuses or shift of blame for any failures resulting from such irresponsibility. The conference Thanksgiving service, which coincided with the 70th birthday celebration of Dame Gladys Nne Nwafor, was graced by the presence of our State Governor, Victor Okezie Ikpeazu, PhD, and his wife, his deputy and his wife, among other dignitaries from across the nation.

We thank the hosting Archdeaconry ably led by Ven. Emmanuel C. Amadi and his wife, the Local Organizing Committee and the Diocesan Planning Committee of such a glorious outing. To God be the glory.

Sunday School Board/Program

Our Sunday School Programme is growing in tempo with visible spiritual and physical impart, to the glory of God. We thank our former co-ordinator Rev. Canon Ikechukwu Nwabueze Onumaegbulam for the untiring zeal and effort he demonstrated during his service and stay with us. We have requested that he be invited to this Synod with the wife for some physical appreciation by the Diocese as approved by the Diocesan Board. We welcome the new co-ordinator, Rev. Anele Odu and pray that God may empower and inspire him for this all import responsibility.

The 2019/2020 Sunday School Manual, with this Synod theme is ready for collection by tomorrow. We appreciate and applaud the Sunday School Board Chairman - our brother Samuel Nnodim (SAMDIM), the Bible Study Coordinator Rev'd Anele Odu and his team of Bible Study contributors for their tireless effort in packaging this invaluable work. May the Lord continue to bless and reward them. We charge all Clergy, lay workers and synod delegates to ensure that nothing disrupts the mid-mattins Sunday School in all our churches. Efforts should be made to ensure that all Sunday School facilitators participate in the training programs and seminars organized by the Diocese and follow the directives of the Diocese in discharging their duties. We pray that the Lord of the Church may guide and bless them.

Diocesan NYSC Chaplaincy

To further our resolve to assist our Anglican youth who serve within our Diocese, we have started monthly joint fellowship for all the NYSC members across our Diocese. This holds every 2nd Sunday of the month at Ngwa High School, Abayi Aba by 3pm. We are calling on our Churches to help circulate the information. We are working hard to get male accommodation ready for the corp members as we call on our good spirited members to assist us as a way of helping the young people of our church enjoy a stress free settlement as they serve. We wish to put an end to our young ones feeling disgruntled and disappointed with our church while in service for lack of adequate care. We thank the principal of Ngwa School for his willingness to support this programme and other sons and daughters of our Diocese who have in one way or the other supported us to achieve this God giving goal. We appreciate the Chaplain - Rev'd C. F. K. Chukwuemeka for stepping up to this responsibility. May you all never lose your reward in Jesus name.

Staff Training, Development and Welfare

Our commitment to ensure a continued growth and update of the academic and professional knowledge of our workers in order to meet the need and standard of the time is yielding progressive result. Eleven of our priests are back to school in compliance with the vision. Two out of the eleven are doing their post graduate course at Crowther Theology Institute, Abeokuta. While eight are at Trinity Theological College Umuahia for their B.Th degree programmes, and one at Paul University Awka for his Masters degree. Another nine members of the clergy have been mandated to proceed for post graduate degree programs by 2020.

Our School of Ministry would soon graduate her first batch of students with Diploma in Ministry (Dip. Min). Our internal monthly workshops for both the clergy and lay staff members are not left out as one of the channels through which workers are better equipped. We appreciate our parishioners for their support both spiritually, morally and financially as we pray that you shall neither relent nor lose your rewards.

Diocesan Lay Readers' Association

Reports from our churches show that the Lay Readers are active in their different churches, as they conduct services, read lessons, preach when permitted by the workers and above all, facilitate during our mid-matins Sunday School every Sunday. We are really grateful to them and pray God to continue to use them to His own honour and glory.

They started the year's activities with their annual retreat which was held from Thursday 14th to Sunday 17th March, 2019 at St. Gabriel's Church Umuode with the theme "Making a Positive Move" (Rev. 3:14-15, Matt. 5:13-16). From their report, this year's retreat has been adjudged their best so far. About 123 Lay Readers were in attendance. The first day they embarked on one on one evangelism which took them round the village of Umuode. Because of the positive result from this exercise we instituted a quarterly evangelism campaign by the lay readers in a chosen area of the Diocese. In compliance to this directive, on 21st September, 2019 the group in collaboration with the EFAC group, went out for one on one evangelism with the theme "Flee For Your Life" (1 Tim. 6:11), at St. John's Church Umuocheala. Reports say the exercise was successful. We applaud the efforts of their chaplain and leaders.

Sports, Physical & Health Development

The importance of healthy living and enjoyment will never be over emphasized in this diocese. The Monthly Physical and Health Exercise for members remains sacrosanct in our engagement. It is important to remind workers that the non-chalant attitude observed in participating in this exercise would no longer be tolerated. A good eating and balance diet are also encouraged, and this should be done without compromise. Regular medical checks must be taken seriously. Our trust and confidence are in God's Divine Providence and Protection. But we must play our own part. Remember our Diocesan preference is for every member to enjoy a healthy life, not to be given a befitting burial.

Prayer Ministry

The ministry started the year with a retreat at St. Gabriel's Church Umuode with the theme "Watchmen Upon Jerusalem Wall" (Isaiah 62:6-7) from Wednesday 23rd to Saturday 26th January 2019, during which, among other things, prayers were made for the city wide crusade. We thank Umuode Archdeaconry for the able way they hosted the retreat. On the National level, our diocese has been following the programmes of the national church. We participated at the Training of Diocesan Prayer Coordinators/Leaders Retreat from 3rd to 6th December 2018 at Cathedral of the Diocese of Enugu North, Ngwo, Enugu with the theme "Godly

Enthronement” (Daniel 4:17). We thank God for journey mercies. Our delegates participated in the 21st National Prayer Convocation of the Church of Nigeria held from Monday 1st to Friday 5th April 2019 at St. Barnabas Cathedral, Ilorin, Diocese of Kwara. The theme was “Godly Enthronements” (Daniel 4:17).

We held our Diocesan Prayer conference from Wednesday 12th to Friday 14th June, 2019 at the Cathedral with the theme “A Praying Church In A Pagan World” (Acts. 12:4-5). Over 500 delegates participated in the conference. We led the conference which featured theme exposition, Bible Study, and Group Discussions. We were led to know that when we gather to pray, God would only grant whatever that gives Him glory. Among the major lessons of the conference include:

- That without a good knowledge of the word of God you cannot have a praying church
- That prayer is all about what God wants and not what you want.
- That for our prayers to be heard, they must not follow the patterns of the pagan.

At the end, a commitment prayer was offered for individuals and for the Diocese. Also our Diocesan Prayer Week was observed from Monday 28th January to 5th February 2019 with the theme “Departing From Iniquity” (2 Timothy 2:19). As usual, we observed our regular rotational night vigils, Mid-Week Prayer and Fasting. Above all, our Diocesan Cycle of Prayer 2019/2020 devotional has encouraged our Churches to pray for one another every Sunday. We give God all the glory for the greater things He has done for our Diocese as we look forward to a better tomorrow.

EVENTS:

Diocesan Harvest 2018

This was held on Saturday 8th December 2108 at the Cathedral. The Preacher was Ven. Emmanuel Enyinnaya Egbulefu Ph.D. and the theme was “Harvest of Goodness in Adversity” (2cor.4:16; James 1:12). The attendance was wonderful. We thank the planning committee led by Mr. Cyprian Iheanyichukwu Ubani for a job well done. The participation of the Archdeaonries as well as individuals was well noted and applauded. We pray God to reward all who participated accordingly. That of the year is been slated for the 14th of December.

Diocesan Thanksgiving 2019

As has been our culture, we gathered as a diocese on Saturday 9th February 2019 here at the Cathedral to appreciate, and thank God for His mercies as well as rededicate ourselves to His service. The preacher Mr. Japhtha Ekpechuo, a Lay Reader of our Diocese preached a very inspiring sermon that lifted our hearts to a sincere thankful mood. The Reader was Hon. Justice Innocent Nwabughogu, our Chancellor, while the lessons were taken by Barr Friday Ikechi Nwaogwugwu KSC, our Registrar and his deputy, Barr. Felix Jonathan. We gave God all the glory for the great things He has help us to achieve as a Diocese within the period under review. It is important to remind us that money is not everything, that we are alive is enough reason to thank God. So we remain joyful and thankful to God for what He continues to do for us as we enjoin everyone to make it a duty to always participate in this and other such Diocesan gatherings.

The President's Birthday Celebration.

On Saturday 25th May 2019, the Diocese gathered to celebrate in a special way the 50th birthday of our Women Ministry President (Mama Aba Ngwa North). The service attracted many Diocesan officials, Government officials and people from across the nation. The Bishops, Archbishops within and outside our Province and their wives were in attendance as well. The preacher was Rt. Rev'd Manasses Okere, the bishop of Isuikwuato/Umunneochi Diocese. After the service there was a grand reception. We thank our Diocesan Officials who were in attendance, the Diocesan Board, and the planning committee ably led by Ven. Benneth E. Nwokedi, and the entire faithful of our Diocese for standing by us in thanking God for the life of His handmaid, our wife and mother. May the Almighty God reward you all.

RETREATS

CPC/PCC/Vestry Committee Retreat 2019

We have not relented in our effort and zeal to train both our clergy and our lay church leaders on the requirements and demands of Godly leadership in a corrupt driven society in order to carry everybody along. On Saturday 23rd February at the Cathedral, were gathered over 400 men, women and youths from across the churches in the Diocese for the Annual Retreat for all Parochial/Vestry Committee members. There was also a second phase a couple of weeks later to accommodate those who were absent during the first phase. The Retreat featured among other things, Leadership Talks, Prayers, Group Discussion and Plenary Sessions. The retreat was concluded with rededication service for all participants. Our workers are being reminded that as a policy, any elected parochial/vestry committee member of any church who did not attend any of the sessions of the retreat ceases to be a member of that church's committee until he or she is cleared by our office. We thank our Deputy President Mr. C. Eze Nwokoma who was the expositor of the theme "Understand Your Position, And Make The Move", and all those who committed their time, and talent to the success of the retreat. Be you all blessed.

Diocesan City Wide Crusade 2019

We continue to give thanks to God for the outstanding success recorded during this year's crusade which has become our yearly ritual. That of this year was great as the testimony is everywhere within and outside our Diocese. The theme was "Why Sit You Here? Make A Move" 2 King 7:3-4. And it took place from Wednesday 3rd to Saturday 6th April 2019 at Ngwa High School Abayi, Aba.

We are also grateful to God for the vessel He used in blessing us, his lordship the Rt. Rev'd Timothy Yahaya, the Bishop of Kaduna Diocese. The attendance recorded was unprecedented, to God be all the glory for the greater things He continues to do.

H.O.D 2019 Retreat

In line with our resolve to provide qualitative, committed and dedicated leadership through both the clerical and lay leaders of our diocese, the 2019 Heads of Departments' retreat was held from Wednesday 20th to Friday 22nd March at St. Philip's Ngwa High School Abayi with the theme "Walk The Talk." The retreat was attended by the leadership of all the departments. We are grateful to Sir Okechukwu Nwachukwu, PhD, the expositor of the theme. All the participants enjoyed and benefitted from the ability and inspiration with which he handled the theme. Other activities of the retreat include: Group Discussion, Bible Study session handled by the Bible Study Coordinator Rev. Anele Odu, discussions on the

administrative strategy to keep the arms and departments in compliance with our vision and goal. The retreat ended with the slogan - Walk the Talk. This command is still applicable to the church of our time, enough of complacency in our duties to change the world. We thank the Admin. Assistant to the Bishop, the Bishop's Secretary, and other staff of Bishop's office for ably organizing the program.

Diocesan Clergy & Wives' Retreat 2019

From Monday 29th April - Friday 3rd May, Mama Aba Ngwa North and I took all the clergy and their wives to Goshen Retreat Centre Owerri for a set apart. It was an inspiring and refilling outing. The theme was "Faithful Ministry Unto The End Like Jesus" John 4:31-38.

The retreat was facilitated by the RIMAD team from Calabar led by Prof. Daisy Nwachukwu. It featured, Bible Study, theme Expositions, talks, health check, physical exercise and prayer sessions. We appreciate the Diocesan Board, our churches for approving our going and for the sponsorship. We pray God to take care of your own needs according to His riches in glory.

PROJECTS

Agricultural Investment

The proceeds of the Endowment Fund already invested are gradually showing signs of better days ahead. Our poultry department is doing well as the products of the farm are already in the market. We thank those our members who have been patronizing our products, and use this medium to inform those who are yet know that we have the best of chickens and eggs in town for your enjoyment and good health. The plantain department shortly would begin to give their produce. More expectations are ahead as plans have been concluded to invest into other areas already negotiated. We thank the team led by Chief Lawrence Ikpeamaeze for their commitment to the project.

Bookshop/ICT

Our collaboration with (ACTS) African Christian Test Books, the largest publisher and supplier of Christian literature in Africa, has started making waves. This multi-million naira project, the only one in eastern Nigeria is location at our Cathedral. We stock the best in Christian education, theology, mission, philosophy and other Christian doctrinal books including books and manuals for family, Children and the youth. A visit to the shop will convince you.

The ICT center is doing well, your patronage to this center is encouraged. We have quality staff and steady power supply. We thank the Central Office Administrator, Mr. Ernest Nwankpa, and the immediate staff of these projects for their dedication and effort at ensuring the actualization of the vision for the establishment.

New Cathedral Project

Two days ago, the 10th of October 2019, to mark the beginning of this synod, the ground breaking ceremony, marking the commencement of our new Cathedral Project was done across the street from the present Cathedral. We are very excited by this landmark as we look forward to the actual beginning of the project and its eventual completion to the glory of God. We call on members and our friends to prayerfully consider partnering with us as we embark on this project to the glory of God and blessing of us all.

Foundation/Dedications/Inauguration

12/12/2018 - Dedication of New Admin Block and commissioning of Old Reroofed Class Rooms and Offices at Ngwa High School.

23/05/2019 - Dedication of John's Umuchichi Parsonage.

25/07/2019 - Foundation Laying Stone at Emmanuel's Church Amakpu for Parsonage.

CONFIRMATION AND ADMISSIONS

St. Gabriel's Church Umuode - Confirmation-73, CMF -8 ,M.U -1,
W.G-1

Mission and Evangelism Fund:

The following are the beneficiaries of the Mission and Evangelism Fund:

1. St. John's Church Umuchichi - N100,000.00
2. A student from St. Silas Church Ayaba Umueze - N42,400.00
3. Bishop Afonya Memorial Anglican Church - N100,000.00
4. St. George's Church Aro-Amano - N100,000.00

OUR JOY

1. Rev'd & Mrs. Alex Arimadu BG
2. Rev'd & Mrs. Anderson Baaba BG
3. Rev'd & Mrs. Augustine Isiguzo Twins
4. Rev'd & Mrs. Silas Thompson BG
5. Rev'd & Mrs. Emeka Nwala BB
6. Rev'd & Mrs. Felix Obika BB
7. Mr. & Mrs. Christian Nwoko BB
8. Mr. & Mrs. Solomon Ihedinabu BG
9. Mr. & Mrs. Chigozie Ekpeko BG
10. Mr.& Mrs. Chidinma Kanu BG
11. Mr. & Barr. (Mrs.) Enyinnaya Ohame BG

OUR SORROW

1. Rev'd Canon Samuel Udechukwu
2. Rev'd Timothy Nwaname Rtd
3. Mrs. Lois Ogbonna - wife of Ven. Sebastian Ogbonna Rtd.

NEWS FROM ABA PROVINCE

The Province of Aba has been moving on well, thanks to the leadership of His Grace, The Most Rev'd. Ikechi Nwachukwu Nwosu PhD and his wife. All our statutory meetings were held and we participated actively and duly in all national programs and activities. We met for Provincial Episcopal Council Meeting on Saturday 2nd February 2019 at St. Stephen's Church Amaokwe Amiyi, Isuikwuato/Umuneochi Diocese. The theme was "Who was John Mark of the New Testament? I am..." (Acts 15:27-40). We thank our host bishop, the wife and the entire diocese for their hospitality. An Emergency Council Meeting was held on Saturday 22nd June 2019 at St. Stephen's Cathedral Umuahia, with the theme "A Little While You Will Not See Me" (John 16:16), vital issues as it concerns the province were deliberated upon. We are grateful to our Archbishop and Mama Province, His Grace, Most Rev. Ikechi Nwachukwu and Mrs. Patience Nne Nwosu for their leadership.

As a major highlight, our Archbishop and wife will be retiring by November this year. To this effect, and with the approval of the Diocesan board, a fare well service has been scheduled to hold at our Cathedral on the 26th of October. All arms are expected to fully participate in the program.

NYSC

As a way of encouraging Anglican Youth Corps Members, on Saturday 16th March, 2019 at Archdeacon Rufus Utaegbulam Memorial Hall of St. Silas Church Old Umuahia, in Umuahia Diocese our Province organized her first Anglican Corps' Fellowship of Nigeria Summit. Our Diocese participated actively. We gave the talk at the summit and made some donations as well. We thank our Provincial Archbishop, the Most Rev'd. I. N. Nwosu for initiating the gathering and asking us to be part of it.

Provincial Harvest:

This was held on 1st December 2018 at St. Stephen's Cathedral Umuahia and the theme was "Sowing and Reaping Righteousness as Opposed to Sowing and Reaping Whirlwind" (Hosea 8:7a). Our Diocese was ably represented at the celebration. We thank our harvesters and pray God to reward them. This year's comes up on the second of November at St. George's Cathedral Mbawsi, Isiala Ngwa Diocese.

NEWS FROM FORMER PROVINCE II

The Joint Provincial Council has met three times since our last synod. The first was on Wednesday 24th October 2018. Another Council meeting was on 21st February 2019. Both were at the Cathedral Church of Good Shepherd Enugu Diocese. While the third was held on Tuesday 7th May 2019 at the Goshen Anglican Retreat Centre Owerri. We were in attendance with our delegates. We congratulate the former chairman of the Joint Council, his Grace, Most Rev. Dr. Emmanuel Chukwuma as we welcome the current, The Most Rev'd. C. A. Maduoma, Bishop of Ideato and Archbishop of Owerri Province, wishing him a fruitful tenure.

NEWS FROM CHURCH OF NIGERIA

DIVCCON 2018

The 8th edition of the Divine Commonwealth Conference was held from Monday 12th - Friday 16th November 2018 at the Christian Ecumenical Centre in Abuja with the theme "I will restore" Joel 2. It was presided over by the Primate of all Nigeria Anglican Communion, The Most Rev'd Nicholas D. Okoh. Our Diocese was well represented by 283 delegates, including

over 80 youths, the highest number of delegates ever to attend the conference from any Diocese, including Abuja. Our coordination for the conference was second to none. We appreciate the effort of our Diocesan Coordinator, Mr. Okey Uzoije. We have appointed our brother Hon. Emeka Ukomadu to assist him in that office to cope with the growing responsibility involved.

This year's edition comes up from the 11th to 15th of November at same venue. Our Diocese is set to be represented by no less than 300 participants. We believe that the exposure and spiritual awakening that the conference affords is important for the growth of our Christian experience and our Diocese. So begin now to pray and plan to be part of this year's conference. Registration is ongoing now. But late registration attracts higher fees. We are appealing to our synod delegates those who will sow to the kingdom of God by sponsoring or helping the Diocese sponsor our youths to the program. It costs about N50,000 to sponsor a delegate. You will be richly rewarded when you do this.

St. Matthias' Day Fund

Our Diocese has faithfully participated in the St. Mathias' collection since its inception. This year we collected a total of N1,948, 585.00 already paid into the account of the National Church. We appreciate the faithfulness of our workers in this regard and continue to emphasize the need to continue to do so.

2019 Bishops' Annual Retreat

The annual bishops' retreat was held from Monday 7th to Friday 11th January 2019 at Ibru Ecumenical Centre Agbarha-Otor, Delta State. The theme was "The Integrity of the Church of Nigeria: Today and Tomorrow". The retreat featured paper presentations, Bible Studies, Health Talks, and Commitment Prayers. We are grateful to our father in God, the leader of our Church, His Grace, Most Rev. Dr. Nicholas D. Okoh for the choice of this theme as well as the spirit filled resource persons God used during the retreat. We were blessed.

Standing Committee Meetings

Within the period under review the leadership of the church of Nigeria has been meeting to highlight some issues concerning the life of our church. The first Standing Committee meeting was held from Monday 4th to Friday 8th of February 2019 at St. Andrew's cathedral Warri, Delta State. The theme was "The Lord is my Shepherd" (Psalm 23:1). Another one was held from Monday 23rd to Friday 27th September 2019 at Cathedral Church of St. Peter Asaba, Delta State. To the honour and glory of God, Mama Aba Ngwa North and I attended with our delegates. We are grateful to our outgoing Primate and Mama of Nigeria, His Grace Most Rev Dr. Nicholas D. Okoh for their good leadership.

Legal Officers' Conference 2019

The 2019 Church of Nigeria Legal Officers Conference was held from Monday 29th July to Thursday 1st 2019 at Basilica of Grace, Diocese of Abuja with theme "Contending for the Faith which was once for all Delivered to the Saints" (Jude 3). Our Diocese was represented at the conference by Our Chancellor, the Registrar and two others of our legal officers.

During the conference, issues challenging our national church were raised and deliberated upon. We thank God for journey mercies granted our delegates.

Advent Sunday Fund/ New Secretariat Project

The leadership of our National Church and the General Synod saw the urgent need to have a befitting National Secretariat for Church of Nigeria over three years ago. In order to achieve this project, the Advent Sunday of every year was earmarked as a “National Sunday” to raise fund for the project. Our Diocese participated fully in the program. To the glory of God, this vision has given Church of Nigeria a befitting secretariat/headquarters. On 24th of April, 2019 this project was dedicated. It is called "St. Matthias House".

NEW BISHOPS

By the grace, some new bishops of our church were elected and consecrated within the period under review.

1. Rt. Rev. Chukwuma Opara - Owerri
2. Rt. Rev. Jezreel Vandeh - Zaki-Biam
3. Rt. Rev. Godfrey Ekpenisi -Ikah
4. Rt. Rev. Joshua S. Oyinlola - Irele Ese Odo
5. Rt. Rev. Oluwaseun A. Aderogba - Jebba
6. Rt. Rev. Ebenezer A. Okuyelu - Osun North East
7. Rt. Rev. Festus S. Sobanke - Omo-Aran
8. Rt. Rev. Christian O. Onyia - Nike
9. Rt. Rev. Olukayode A. Adebogun - Suffragan Bishop of ADOTT, Region 1
10. Rt. Rev. Adedokun A. Adewunmi - Suffragan Bishop of ADOTT, Region 2
11. Rt. Rev. Augustine A. Unuigbe - Suffragan Bishop of ADOTT, Region 3
12. Rt. Rev. Martyn C. Anagbogu - Suffragan Bishop of ADOTT, Region 4
13. Rt. Rev. Ndubuisi Obi - Nnewi
14. Rt. Rev. Seyi Pirisilo - Coast
15. Rt. Rev. Olugbenga Babatunji - Osun
16. Rt. Rev. Foluso Taiwo - Oke Osun
17. Rt. Rev. Benjamin Okeke - Orlu
18. Rt. Rev. Geoffrey Ibeabuchi - Umuahia

TRANSLATIONS

1. Rt. Rev. Sunday Adewole - Kwara
2. Rt. Rev. Jacob Bada - Akoko

RETIRED BISHOPS

1. Rt. Rev. Peter Onekpe - Ika
2. Most Rev. Olusegun Adeyemi - Kwara
3. Rt. Rev. Prof. Evans J. Ibeagha - Nike
4. Rt. Rev. Philip Adeyemo - Omu Aran

NEW ARCHBISHOPS

1. Most Rev. Israel Amoo - Kwara Province
2. Most Rev. Emmanuel C. Chukwuma - Enugu Province (ReElected)
3. Most Rev. Daniel Yisa - Lokoja Province
4. Most Rev. Alexander Ibezim - Province of the Niger.

On the 24th of September 2019 at St. Peter's Cathedral Asaba, Delta

State, the Bishop of the Diocese of Isiala Ngwa South, who served as the supervising Bishop of The Diocese of Aba Ngwa North, was elected the 3rd Archbishop of Aba Province. So once again we welcome The Most Rev'd Isaac C. Nwaobia PhD. On same day, our brother and father in God, the bishop of the Diocese of Gombe, and Archbishop of Jos province, The Most Rev'd Henry Ndukuba was elected as the next Primate of our Church.

We wish these fathers in God fruitful episcopacy, arch-episcopacy, and Primacy as well as healthy retirement life.

OUR STATE AND NATION.

We congratulate all Nigerians for surviving another year as a nation. As a people we cannot thank God enough for His Grace that has continued to deliver us from gross foolishness, irresponsibility, and self-inflicted hardship. Truly, we have nothing to say to the leadership of Nigeria. For a lot has been said by many already.

Until recently we've been thinking and saying that Nigeria's problem is bad leadership or governance. But a look at history coupled with recent happenings around the world have proven that the problem with Nigeria is not bad leadership or governance, but the foolishness and irresponsibility of those of us who are led. We put the number of the people involved in Nigeria's governance at 1m. That's the number of people who are directly involved in the looting and misappropriation of our national resources. This is a generous estimate as it means that each state including the FCT has 15,000 such people. Then you add all members of the National Assembly, all the federal principal officers and their parastatal aids. With an estimated population of 150m, this number represents less than 1% of Nigeria's population. So for the remaining over 99% to sit down and watch as less than 1% successfully loot our collective resources with impunity, and then watch us perish through insecurity, government induced poverty, knowledge deprivation, and voluntary slavery, is a display of gross foolishness and irresponsibility. We remind the Nigeria populace that no people in history have ever been rescued until they take their destiny into their hands. The youth must know that unless they act, their hope of future leadership will be a mirage. We therefore call on the rest of the over 99% of Nigerians to explore all lawful and godly options to rescue ourselves and the next

generation from physical, economic, psychological and national extinction. The time to act is now.

THE SYNOD THEME

Introduction

As a people called out by God to show forth the praises of him who hath called us out of darkness into his marvellous light, the Diocese of Aba Ngwa North has continued, since inception, to strive to expose her faithful to the realities of their calling as well as equip them for the mission of their calling. It is in furtherance of this that this first session of the fifth synod of our Diocese is divinely directed to consider the theme -

"BE OF THE CHURCH NOT IN THE CHURCH" (John 17:14&16; Romans 12:2).

This theme is born out the fact that whatever is worth doing is worth doing well. And that we believe that the boldest and wisest of men is he who is ready to die for his conviction and willing to have others do so.

Exposition

The key term of our theme is "The Church". And so we will provide a definition of The Church for a better understanding of both the theme and its thesis. So The Church as we define it as a group of People who Willingly gather together in Fellowship based on their Faith in the Word of God as revealed by Jesus Christ. This definition is crucial not just to this theme and address but to the clear and better understanding by all Christians, of the Church and her mission. To further buttress this fact, we need to look at the major components of this definition.

1. The Church is A Group of People: This simply means that The Church is not an inanimate object. Not a building. Not even a structure. The Church is a people. And the Lord of the Church Himself says "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." (Matthew 18:20 KJV). And apostle Peter illustrating further on who The Church is says "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light:"(1 Peter 2:9 KJV). So The Church is a People. Now we know that people don't just gather for no reason, rather they gather for some purpose based on a common understanding. So The Church is more than just a People, The Church is an Ideology, a way of life, with both Purpose and Mission.
2. The People Gather Willingly. This means that anyone who comes to be part of The Church should do so willingly not by force or trick. This is very important for it distinctively sets The Church apart from all other religions and faiths where people are forced or even threaten with death if they refuse to join. Again the Lord of The Church invites "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."(Matthew 11:28-30 KJV). "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." (Revelation 3:20 KJV). Membership of The Church should always be by invitation and the willingness of the invited to respond to such invitation. And such response must come after the invited must have counted the cost and weight of both the 'yoke and burden'.

3. The Gathering is in Fellowship: As an English word, Fellowship means a friendly association of people with a common interest. For The Church, Fellowship involves getting together for spiritual purposes: for sharing needs, for prayer, for discussing and sharing the Word of God to encourage, comfort, and edify one another. This was characteristic of the early Church. “And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.” (Acts 2:42 KJV). “And all that believed were together, and had all things common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart,” (Acts 2:44-46 KJV). Fellowshiping is very crucial to the life and mission of The Church and every member must take part. No wonder the writer to the Hebrews warns “and let us consider [thoughtfully] how we may encourage one another to love and to do good deeds, not forsaking our meeting together [as believers for worship and instruction], as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more [faithfully] as you see the day [of Christ's return] approaching.”(Hebrews 10:24-25 AMP).
4. The Fellowship is based on Faith in the Word of God: This is the most important pillar that holds our definition of The Church and defines her purpose and mission. The mere gathering of a group of people does not make The Church. That a people gather with ideology, purpose and mission does not make that group. The Church neither does a group of people that gathers in fellowship becomes The Church just because they fellowship together. The Ideology that propels the gathering in fellowship of a group of people must be based on their Faith in the Word of God for that group to qualify as The Church. As the Scripture ascertains “All Scripture is God-breathed [given by divine inspiration] and is profitable for instruction, for conviction [of sin], for correction [of error and restoration to obedience], for training in righteousness [learning to live in conformity to God's will, both publicly and privately - behaving honorably with personal integrity and moral courage]; so that the man of God may be complete and proficient, outfitted and thoroughly equipped for every good work.” (2 Timothy 3:16-17AMP).
5. Faith in the Word as Revealed by Jesus Christ: This is the second crucial pillar of our discussion especially in view of the current “modernization and revisionist agenda” of our time. Many groups today claim to gather based on faith in the word of God, but their word of God is based on modern, cultural and or digital age interpretations. The word of God based on Political correctness so that all would be included and none is offended. None of these is a character of The Church. The Faith of The Church must be based on the Undiluted, and Uncompromised Word of God as taught by Christ and Revealed by Him through the Holy Spirit. The Scripture warns “I testify and warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book [its predictions, consolations, and admonitions]: if anyone adds [anything] to them, God will add to him the plagues (afflictions, calamities) which are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from or distorts the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away [from that one] his share from the tree of life and from the holy city (new Jerusalem), which are written in this book” (Revelation 22:18-19 AMP).

So far in our discussion we've been able to establish two important facts in reference to our theme. The first is that for any group to qualify as The Church, such group must be one whose individual members are not coaxed or tricked into membership but willingly accepted membership based on their faith in the word of God having been taught the consequences of such faith. And that the tenets and doctrines of such group are based on the Undiluted, and Uncompromised Word of God.

Secondly by calling Christians to be Of The Church, Our theme is asking that all who claim to be Christians must diligently seek for, understand, and willing live by the ideology of The Church which is based on Faith in the Undiluted, and Uncompromised Word of God.

Why Not In The Church?

I remember when we unveiled this synod theme to the Diocesan Board, a member of the Board suggested that the theme be modified to read "Be of The Church Not Just in the Church". The suggestion was to add the word 'just' to the second part of the theme. Our response was that we need to wait and see where the Lord will lead us through the theme. The response was to avoid letting the cat out of the bag. But we understand that the suggestion comes out of the understanding that we are physically in the Church but need to be Of The Church as well.

However a major part of the thesis of this theme is to remind, inform or bring to light in the mind of Christians, the fact that we are not in any physical Church. In fact, there is nothing like a physical Church. The Church is an ideology, a way of life and not a physical structure for one to be in.

Before you begin to disagree with this position, let us see what The Lord of the Church says while praying to The Father for His followers. "I am no longer in the world; yet they are still in the world, and I am coming to You. Holy Father, keep them in Your name, the name which You have given Me, so that they may be one just as We are. While I was with them, I was keeping them in Your name which You have given Me; and I guarded them and protected them, and not one of them was lost except the son of destruction, so that the Scripture would be fulfilled. But now I am coming to You; and I say these things [while I am still] in the world so that they may experience My joy made full and complete and perfect within them [filling their hearts with My delight]. I have given to them Your word [the message You gave Me]; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world and do not belong to the world, just as I am not of the world and do not belong to it. I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but that You keep them and protect them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world."(JOHN17:11-16 AMP).

In this prayer of our Lord, He emphasizes two major components of human life- physical structure and ideology. Every human endeavor revolves around these components. You need a physical structure to site your business and an ideology for its operation. Families as physical structures have ideologies that form their expectations and values, and the list goes on. Institutions may share same structures but it is their ideologies that differentiate one from another. And every life venture runs on one physical structure and one ideology at a time.

So Jesus acknowledges that The Christians are already existing on a physical structure - the world, and so need an ideology for the successful discharge of their duty. He emphasizes the fact that Christians should not be taken out of the world since they need this physical structure as a platform on which to fulfill their mission, but need an ideology different from that of the

world to succeed in same mission. In the prayer however, Jesus does not define what the ideology was and its source. He clearly stated where the Christians are-in the world and what they are not of- the world. But he does not say what they are or should be of. But this clue He provided before He left for Heaven. In acts 1:8 we read “But you will receive power and ability when the Holy Spirit comes upon you; and you will be My witnesses [to tell people about Me] both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and Samaria, and even to the ends of the earth.” Acts (1:8 AMP). Here Jesus promises His followers of both the source and content of the ideology they need to fulfill their mission within the physical structure of their existence. As we all know, on that fateful Pentecost day, with presence of the Holy Spirit, The Church was born. What the followers received on Pentecost day was not a physical structure but an ideology, a way of life. So when Jesus says in the prayer cited above “they are in the world... they are not of the world”, what He emphasizes is that Christians are in the world, but of a different ideology, and that ideology is The Church.

Apostle Paul echoes the same message of the prayer of our Lord when he says “And do not be conformed to this world [any longer with its superficial values and customs], but be transformed and progressively changed [as you mature spiritually] by the renewing of your mind [focusing on godly values and ethical attitudes], so that you may prove [for yourselves] what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect [in His plan and purpose for you].”(Romans12:2 AMP). In other words, St. Paul says, yes you are in the world but do not live by the ideologies of the world. Rather let your mind be renewed by the new ideology and way of life that focuses on godly values and ethical attitudes. The ideology born on the day of Pentecost. The ideology empowered by the Holy Spirit. The ideology of The Church. Like Christ, Paul says, be in the world but of The Church. The first Christians did not create any other physical structure before embarking on the propagation of their new way of life.

We recall that it was on their way to the temple that Peter and John healed the cripple man. By this time they are still members of the Jewish religious community, but with a new and different ideology, the ideology of the Church. Also the missionary enterprise of Paul and Barnabas began and grew within the Jewish and Greek communities in their different synagogues (Damascus-Acts 9:19-20; Iconium-Acts 14:1; Thessalonica-Acts 17:1-3; Athens-Acts 17:16-17; Corinth-Acts 18:1-4; Ephesus- Acts 19:1-8; etc.). The apostles began to propagate the ideology of The Church within their world and so remained in the world but of The Church. So as we said earlier, we maintain. The Church is an ideology, a way of life and not a physical structure for one to be in.

What does it mean to be Of The Church?

From our discussion so far, we believe we've established the fact that The Church is an ideology, a way of life, born of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit with the mission of leading the world to the knowledge of the salvation found only in Christ Jesus. And so Christians are those people who have willingly accepted to abide by this ideology and impact the world by it. So to be Of The Church is to daily and consistently live by this ideology among all people and in all circumstances. Simply put, to be of The Church means that The Church -Christians, must stop seeking to be relevant to the world. Yes you heard us right. We didn't mean 'start' rather we mean 'stop' seeking to be relevant to the world. We know this may sound strange at this point because most people believe The Church should be relevant to the world in order to make any impact on it. But before you agree or disagree with us let's dig deeper into the matter. The Merriam-Webster Dictionary describes “relevant” as “having significant and

demonstrable bearing on the matter at hand,” “affording evidence tending to prove or disprove the matter at issue or under discussion,” or “having social relevance.” The most important issue related to relevance then, is deciding the “matter at hand” or the “matter at issue”. To what (or whom) are we trying to relate? What are we trying to prove? To be relevant means that the church will fashion her ideology to accommodate all. To adapt to the standards of the world; to be inclusive and to make room for everyone, their ideologies and conditions.

The major problem of the Church today is the issue of being relevant to cultures of the world. The Africans want the Church to accommodate all their cultural heritage, even those that are in variance with her ideology. The western world is consistently forcing their modern and revisionist culture down the throat of the Church, all in the name of asking the Church to be relevant to the present age. That our Church services and programs have today become more of entertainment, with club style type of music, than worship of God, is as a result of the quest to be relevant.

Many who believe the church should be relevant to the world try to prove their position by referring to I Corinthians 9:19-23, where Paul says “For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win the more; and to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those who are under the law, as under the law, that I might win those who are under the law; to those who are without law, as without law (not being without law toward God, but under law toward Christ), that I might win those who are without law; to the weak I became as weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. Now this I do for the gospel's sake, that I may be partaker of it with you.”

To use this to demand the Church to be relevant to the world is to display a misunderstanding and misinterpretation of the text. It is clear that what the apostle is emphasizing here is the power of the gospel to speak to, meet and transform people in the context of their life and situations. That the Christian ideology is for everyone in every context and for every generation without compromising its content and value. The message of the Church is for both the weak and the strong, the poor and the rich, those under certain cultural or religious laws and those who are not, and that Christians must present The Church and her ideology to everyone, giving all equal opportunity to be saved. Paul understands that though the gospel is for, and so needs to be preached to, everyone, not all will accept it. And so he says "...that I might by all means save some". So trying to make the Church relevant so as to appeal to all will be an effort in futility that can only lead to compromise and watering down of her message.

To further buttress this point, same apostle Paul writes in the very same letter to the Corinthians, "For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God" (1 Cor. 1:22-24). Here Paul goes on to clarify that the ideology of The Church, when truly presented must not appeal to all. Whenever the message of the Church ceases to make some people stumble while sounding unintelligent to others, it ceases to be the authentic gospel of Christ. When all in a congregation applaud the preacher after the preaching and no one feels challenged to make a u-turn from their ways; when non-Christians feel comfortable living out their practices

among Christians, these are signs that the Church is relevant to the world and so has compromised her standard, message and ideology.

Now, what then does it mean to be Of The Church? If not relevant, what? To be Of The Church is for Christians-The Church to be Contextual. For The Church to fulfill her mission in the world, every Christian, every Church organization must be contextually real. Jesus Was Contextually Real

Jesus didn't care about being relevant to his culture. Not to the Jewish culture he lived in, to the Roman culture that was subjugating them, or to the Greek culture that framed their thinking. Jesus was real. And he adapted to the reality of whatever context he found himself in. One city at a time, one crowd at a time, one person at a time. And he did it without ever betraying his core reality.

This is exactly what St. Paul tries to teach in the texts cited above. When I present the message of the cross of Christ to the Jews, Paul says, I do not do so from a Jewish perspective so that it will appeal to them, rather I present the raw message undiluted so that the Jews will keep struggling with the realities of the message against their way of life until they are convicted and come to faith in Christ. I do not fashion the message of the cross to suit the learning and philosophies of the Greek, no matter how foolish it might sound to them, rather I dish it out raw, Uncompromised till they come in contact with the convicting power of the gospel and yield by faith. I do not allow the poor or affluent dispositions of people form a barrier between them and the gospel. In order words St. Paul says, I present, as well as live out the gospel to people by making it real to their context and conditions.

In today's ' world, the ideology of the Church must be presented to all with its contextual reality. In a world that is changing by the minute, Christians can't afford to be relevant. How can The Church be relevant and defend the efficacy of the cross of Christ for human salvation to a world that asks for empirical evidence if not by being contextually real? It was for this that apostle Paul writes "Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you thinks that he is wise in this age, let him become a fool [discarding his worldly pretensions and acknowledging his lack of wisdom], so that he may become [truly] wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness (absurdity, stupidity) before God; for it is written [in Scripture], "[He is] THE ONE WHO CATCHES THE WISE and CLEVER IN THEIR CRAFTINESS;" and again, "THE LORD KNOWS THE THOUGHTS of the [humanly] wise, THAT THEY ARE USELESS."(1 CORINTHIANS? 3:18-20 AMP).

We must be contextually real. In a world where immoral behaviors are given modern and deceitful names, the Church must expose the world to the contextual realities of their actions. How can we be relevant to a culture where sexual perversion has become an industry and prostitution is now adult entertainment. Being Of The Church means that we must maintain that any sexual act or relationship, outside marriage between a man and a woman, is sin and, without repentance, attracts the wrath of God. And every Christian should endeavor to live by that standard. To a society that has used phrases and words like-upfront payment, mobilization, and return for investment, to cover up bribery, extortion and other forms of financial mismanagement, being Of The Church requires that Christians by words and actions must maintain that any money given or received for any reason other than as payment for work done, services rendered or a free will help, is theft and must not go unpunished. Any Christian or group of Christians who run institutions where exam malpractice is encouraged

and or parents who take their children or wards to 'miracle' centers" must know that they are not Of The Church. When we lie or spread false information about others, we are not Of The Church. When we hate, when we don't forgive, when we rejoice in the pain of others, we are not Of The Church. When we cannot confront the ills of the society and don't provide the godly alternatives, we are not of the Church, no matter how socially acceptable our excuses and explanations might be. People of God, all of us who associate with The Church, must be contextually real.

We must be Of The Church.

We complain year in and year out; administration in administration out, of the poor governance we receive which is evident in every aspect of our life as a people and nation. Let's have a reality check. How many non-Christians participate in the governance of this area we call home? As far as we know, none. In fact some of them are leaders of their Christian groups. Do the Church organizations they belong to not teach the Christian virtues of honesty, prudence, care for the poor, accountability, decency, contentment, value for human life, and more? So what's the problem? The answer is not far-fetched. All these men and women who unfortunately found themselves in the governance, or holding public offices in our land in error, see The Church as an organization to belong to and care less of whatever her ideology is all about. They are not of The Church. Therefore all church organizations must step up to hold our people accountable to stop the embarrassment they bring to the cross of Christ. Believers in Jesus Christ are simply in the world, but Of The Church. So as believers, we should be set apart from the world and more so when we occupy positions of public trust. This is the meaning of being holy and living a holy, righteous life—to be set apart. The state of things in our state and nation, particularly in the areas represented and governed by men and women who carry the Bible is an embarrassment to the Cross of Christ and shame to The Church and all who represent her ideology. Christians in private and public business sectors are not to engage in the sinful activities the world promotes, nor are we to retain the insipid, corrupt mind that the world creates. Rather, we are to conform ourselves, and our minds, to that of Jesus Christ (Romans 12:1-2). This is a daily activity and commitment. We must also understand that being Of The Church is necessary if we are to be a light to those who are in spiritual darkness. We are to live in such a way that those outside the faith see our good deeds and our manner and know that there is something “different” about us. Christians who make every effort to live, think and act like those who do not know Christ do Him a great disservice and are not Of The Church. Even the heathen knows that “by their fruits you shall know them,” and as Christians, we should exhibit the fruit of the Spirit within us. The world is keenly aware of its emptiness, of its unfulfilled dreams, of its failure to cope with life. The world system is inadequate to meet the deeper needs of the human heart. This is ideal soil for implanting the Gospel. God has seen fit to entrust the work of His kingdom to us. The world is spinning out of control and needs a church that will bring it back to repentance. This generation desires the depth of God's truth and not just the crumbs found under the table. If the world system must be changed, it must be through our witness.

Until individual Christians decide to willingly be Of The Church, the world may never perceive the saltiness of the Church, neither will her light overcome the darkness of the world.

Our Charge

To Church organizations and leaders.

Jesus, the Lord of the Church says “And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” (Matthew 16:18 KJV). We want to remind all Church organizations that the Church is built by Jesus only on the confession that He, and He alone is the Christ and the Savior of the world. Not on any wisdom or desire of man. Therefore we charge all “Churches” and their leaders to take heed of what foundation they build on and with what trick they entice people to join them. Any Christian congregation that is gathered for any other reason than fellowship based on faith in the undiluted and Uncompromised word of God is anti-Christ, not The Church, and so incurs the wrath of God. We owe both Christ and the people the duty of exposing all who come to us to the truth that The Church is a way of life with mission and purpose of presenting Christ to the world and not a club to be joined. The Scripture warns “I testify and warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book [its predictions, consolations, and admonitions]: if anyone adds [anything] to them, God will add to him the plagues (afflictions, calamities) which are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from or distorts the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away [from that one] his share from the tree of life and from the holy city (new Jerusalem), which are written in this book” (Revelation 22:18-19 AMP).

To all Christians

To all Christians, particularly the faithful of our Diocese, we remind you that anything worth doing is worth doing well. It is only a fool that spends his life and resources in a venture that he knows wouldn't profit him. Therefore as you willingly have chosen to follow Christ, we charge you to be aware that The Church is not a club, but a way of life that you must follow diligently and daily for the salvation of your soul. That following Christ means that you must witness to Him daily by your words and actions no matter the conditions and circumstances you might find yourself. You must be Of The Church. You must contend for the faith. To do so you must put on the whole armor of God (Eph. 6:3-10), and the garment of priesthood (Ex. 28:1-36). In this present age there are many things to contend with-the it doesn't matter attitude, same sex marriage, homosexuality, tattooing, nakedness, immodest dressing, heresies, pornography, sodomy, sexual immorality in high and low places, bribery and all other forms of corruption, etc. All these exist both in Church organizations and in secular society and they all war against our faith. You must hold one another accountable as we fellowship together to strengthen our faith in Christ. So don't just go through the emotions of Church services and programs, but seek for a deeper knowledge of the ideology and way of life of The Church that you may come out smelling, tasting, looking and shinning like Christ. Remember, you must be Of The Church to be in the Kingdom of God.

“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; (Titus 2:11-12 KJV).

Therefore Be Of The Church whether you find yourself in a physical structure that represents The Church or one that represents the world.

Please rise as we sing together.

1. Stand up! stand up for Jesus!
Ye soldiers of the cross;
Lift high His royal banner,
It must not suffer loss:
From vict'ry unto vict'ry
His army shall He lead,
Till every foe is vanquished
And Christ is Lord indeed.
2. Stand up! stand up for Jesus!
The trumpet call obey;
Forth to the mighty conflict
In this His glorious day.
Ye that are men, now serve Him
Against unnumbered foes;
Let courage rise with danger.
And strength to strength oppose.
3. Stand up! stand up for Jesus!
Stand in His strength alone;
The arm of flesh will fail you;
Ye dare not trust your own.
Put on the Gospel armor,
And, watching unto prayer,
Where duty calls, or danger,
Be never wanting there.
4. Stand up! stand up for Jesus!
The strife will not be long:
This day the noise of battle,
The next the victor's song;
To him that overcometh
A crown of life shall be;
He, with the King of glory,
Shall reign eternally. Amen.

Thanks and may you all be blessed.
Your Brother, Friend, and Bishop,

† NATH, ABA NGWA NORTH.