

# PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS 2018

## SYNOD PRAYER

Almighty God, the fountain of all wisdom and grace, Who mercifully sent Your Holy Spirit to strengthen and encourage your people and promised to be with Your Church all through the ages., We thank You for Your grace to gather in this year's Synod. We praise You for life provision and protection over the past year. Fulfill now O Lord Your divine promises, as we gather here in Your name.

Heavenly Father, forgive our imperfections in all things, guide and rule our minds; direct all our deliberations. And may we only seek Your honour and glory, the good of Your Church and welfare of others.

Gracious Lord, may it please You to inspire our hearts to discover Your Will. May our faith in You never waver and our resolve to follow You never grow weak. May our individual and Communal life be eloquent testimonies of Your Almightyness and love. Grant this for His sake, who reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, Jesus the Christ our Lord. Amen.

## EKPERE SINOD

Chineke Onye kachasi ihe nile elu, Onye amamihe na amara nile si n'aka Ya; Onye ji obi ebere zitere anyi Mọ Nsọ ka O nye ayi ike maa gbakwa anyi ume, Kwakwa nkwa I nonyere nzukọ Gị na ogbọ nile. Ayi na ekele Gị n'ihia amara nke ayi ji gbakọọ na Sinod afo a. Ayi na eto Gị n'ihia ndu, nroputa, na nkpuhita I nyere ayi ke mgbe afo gara-aga. Dika ayi gbakotara n'ebe a n'ihia aha Gị, mezuoro ayi nkwa I kwere ayi.

Nna nke eluigwe, gbahara ayi ndu nke ezughi oke n'ime ihe nile. Chekwaa ma duzie kwa mụọ ayi, haziere ayi ihe ndi ayi gaje itughari uche na ha. Mee kwa ka ayi nwe ochichọ ito Gị na ikwanyere Gị ugwu, na odi nma nke nzukọ Gị na ileta ndi ozọ.

Nna nke amara, ka o di Gị ezi mma ime ka ayi mara ihe bu Uche Gị. Ka okwukwe ayi n'ebe I no ghara ima jijiji; ka mkpebi ayi iso Gị gharakwa ida mba, ka ndu ayi n'otu n'otu na nmekorita ayi na Gị buru ogbugba ama nke idi ukuu na ihunanya Gị. Mere ayi nka n'ihia aha Ya, Onye soro Gị na Mụọ Nsọ na-achi eze bu Jisus Kraist Onye-nwe-ayi. Amin.

## Beloved people of God,

It is with a heart of joy and sense of responsibility that we welcome you to this last session of the fourth 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.

We welcome our Deputy Chancellor, 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.

On your behalf we humbly welcome the Archbishop of the Ecclesiastical Province of Aba, and the Bishop of Umuahia Diocese, 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, thanks for coming. 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 uniform outfits 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 Chijioke Uhie and the entire members of that committee. With a sincere heart, we do appreciate the efforts of the board and members of Umuobasi Amavor Archdeaconry especially the Archdeacon and his wife, the Ven. Precious & Evangelist Mrs. Chinenye Okereke, the clergy and their wives, and all workers and members of the different churches that make up this Archdeaconry. Our special thanks go to the local organizing committee led by Chief Iheanyi Enwereji. We pray that our good Lord will remember your sincere services and reward you all abundantly. I am sincerely indebted to my immediate office staff - secretary, clerk, Admin. Assistant, Canon and chaplain for standing the heat of this synod preparation. Thank you guys for your dedication to duty and sacrifice. To the rest of my family, I appreciate your prayers and support. May you all never lose your rewards.

## **OUR SYNOD VENUE**

### **ST. STEPHEN'S CHURCH**

The GOODNEWS of Christianity reached the people of Umuobasi - Amavo in 1915. It came as a result of the business interaction that existed between Opobo-Bonny oil traders and Umuobasi-Amavo traders at Amaokpo-Aga oil market near the bank of Imo River. These Christian traders from Opobo and Bonny, who also were missionaries, while doing business with them, converted them to Christianity. So, they returned home to Umuobasi-Amavo as Christians, and spread the Gospel to every nook and cranny of their villages. Consequently, a good number of people were converted. Hence the need to established a Church.

Actually, the present Church started as two separate Churches, located at two different villages. The first was St. Stephen's NDP Church, Umuobasi, established in 1915, and located near Chief Alfred Owuala's Compound, very close to the present

Church site. The other was St. George's NDP Church, Amavo established in 1916, and located at Umuokorochoa village, near Mr. Daniel Iheakaram's Compound. The Church building of the later fell down in August, 1916 and was relocated to Okpuala Umuajuju near the present Church site. Each of these Churches had her own primary school. So, both the schools and the Churches grew separately together for almost ten years before the amalgamation.

However, the amalgamation of these Churches was remotely propelled by the nearness of the Churches, the good rapport that existed between the two congregations, and the regular combined services and visit services organized by these two sister churches. The magnificent Church Building which the synod delegates from Umuobasi-Amavo saw at Christ Church Akwete gave them the last motivation to come together in order to raise similar project. The amalgamation began, first of all, with the coming together of the two schools in 1925, while the two churches came together in 1928, as St. Stephen's Church, Umuobasi-Amavo, located at the present site.

The wise decision of the amalgamation ushered in a big wave of peace, unity, and progress especially within the educational and religious lives of these communities. Soon after, Umuobasi-Amavo NDP School grew into a renowned Central School that served eight communities - Umuobasi, Amavo, Ama-asa, Umunneise, Aro Ngwa, Aro-Amano, Akpaa/Osokwa and Amaokpu-Aga. The Church also grew rapidly that as early as 1956, Rt. Rev. E.T. Dimieria has pronounced her a District Headquarters. Infact, she became one of the foremost Districts in the then Aba Archdeaconry of the Diocese of Niger Delta. The following Churches were under Umuobasi-Amavo District - St. Geogre's Church, Aro-Amano, St. Martin's Church, Akpaa 1, St. Monica's Church, Umuimo, St. Stephen's Church, Aro-Ngwa 1, St. Clement's Church, Osokwa, St. James' Church, Amato, Christ Church, Amapu Ibibi Okpuala, St. Peter's Church, Umunka 1, St. Paul's Church, Amavo-Ukwu and St. John's Church, Umuihie (now in the Diocese of Isiala Ngwa South). As an ancient Church centre and district, it was in St. Stephen's Church, Umuobasi-Amavo that the first meeting for the creation of Old Diocese of Aba (what we have now as Aba Province) was held in 1962. Since then, this church continued to play leadership role in the then Diocese of Aba that, in 1995, the Rt. Rev. Prof. A.O. Iwuagwu created Umuobasi-Amavo Archdeaconry with St. Stephen's Church, Umuobasi-Amavo as the Headquarters.

The pioneer converts of this Church includes John Onyenso, Frankline Ortutu, Isaiah Dioka, John Anyahuru, Festus E. Owuala, Moses Uhegwu, Augustine Evuru, Daniel Iheakaram, John Iheakaram, Mark Uhegwu, David Ohiagbiji, Alfred Owuala, Robert Nwokoma, Dennis Adindu, Martin Ortutu, Ejiekpe Anyanwoko, Nwaogu Nmema, Jacob Oleweibe, James Nwokoma, Nwala Chigbu, Stephen Chigbu, Nwaobia Johnson, Uriah Nwosu, Obediah Nwogu, Obediah Chiavoghilefu, Aaron Ajuzie, Clement Kanu, Aaron Anokwuo, Adline Onyenso, Hannah Ojiugo, Job Ojiugo, John Otuzuo, David Onwunata and many others. In the recent present, many faithful persons who served this church have joined the church triumphant. They include Chief Augustine Akoma, Chief D. Ehilegbu, Sir Engr. Emma Anyahuru, Chief Allen Nwokoma, Mr. Geoffrey Amaechi, High Chief R.A Egbulefu, Chief P.O. Nwangwa, L/R E.I. Nwachukwu, L/R

Frank Nwogu, Chief Appolos Nwosu, Mr. D.N. Okwandu, Chief S.I. Amuchionu, Mrs. Agnes Ikonne, Mrs. Jannet Nwosu, and many others.

Notably, a good number of quality pastors and Church workers have served here, which are too numerous to mention. However, we must put on record that Rev. G.N. Maduakolam was the first resident priest (1954 - 1955), Rev. E.U. Esinwoke was the first superintendent (1956 - 1957), Rev. Canon Jumbo O. Nwogwugwu was the first Canon (1986 -1987), and Ven. Jumbo Onyeubani Nwogwugwu later became the first Archdeacon (1995 - 1996). The current Archdeacon is Ven. Precious U.C. Okereke (2016 -Date). He serves with Rev. Kelechi Elele, Mr. Jasper Abalake and Mrs. Christian Elvis at the Parish level.

He also serves with Rev. A.U. Alozie, Postulant Morgan Okezie, Mr. Chinwendu John, Mr. Christian Nwogu and Mr. Emma Francis at the Archdeaconry level.

Within these years of consistent growth, the Church has produced eminent leaders, Administrators, Academics, Politicians, and industrialists. They include

1. HRM King E.I. Chiavoghilefu (Avo 1 of Amavo Nkwogu)
2. HRH Eze Prof. S.I. Owuala (Eke Obasi 1 of Umuobasi)
3. Hon. Iheyinna Mgbeahuru (Executive Chairman, Osisioma Ngwa LGA)
4. Mr. C. Eze Nwokoma (Rtd. Local Government Administrator)
5. Mr. G.A. Amuchonu (Rtd. Local Government Treasurer)
6. Chief (Mrs.) Ukachi Amala (S.A. to the State Governor)
7. Mr. Gabriel Ochiegbu (Medical Practitioner)
8. Engr. (Chief) Ejikeme Nwaogu (Renowned Industrialist)
9. Sir. S.N. Ortutu (The only Knight)
10. Mr. Nnaemeka Chiavoghilefu (Renowned Banker)
11. Mr. Chiamuanya Amaeze (Renowned Banker)
12. Felix Nwadike (Ph.D.) (University of Agriculture, Umudike). And many others

The Church has produced a good number of Church workers who serve in various dioceses of the Anglican Communion. They include

1. Late Ven. S.O. Nwosu
2. Ven. Boniface Nwafor
3. Rev. Emmanuel I. Ehilegbu
4. Late Rev. Canon A.U. Ohamuo
5. Late Rev. Canon Anokwu
6. Rev. Canon Temple Onwumelu

7. Rev. Bright Nwokoma
8. Rev. Augustine Ukaefu
9. Rev. Obioma Egbulefu
10. Rev. Prosper Chukwuemeka
11. Rev. Osinachi Iheakaram
12. Rev. Ngozi Eugene Nwokoma
13. Postulant Augustine Nwokoma
14. Postulant Chijioke Ehilegbu
15. Mr. Justice Obia
16. Mr. Chinatu Dioka

Apparently, the Church has invested reasonably in expansion projects. The present Church Sanctuary has been expanded twice. The first was towards the West Door while the second was towards the two Porch Doors. In the recent past, a beautiful Church hall has been built. In the recent present, the Rt. Rev. Nathan C.O. Kanu (Ph.D), the Bishop of the Diocese of Aba Ngwa North has offered quality pastoral oversight to this Church. And, this has metamorphosed into a new St. Stephen's Church, Umuobasi-Amavo. The Church has extensively modernized her sanctuary - it has been re-roofed, re-ceiled, re-wired, changed with modern fans, changed with alumaco Windows, and Iron doors. The Altar has been extensively modernized, marble Pulpit and Lectern have been put in place. The tower has been fortified and modernized with parapet and Alumaco Windows. More so, the Archdeaconry House has been restructured and re-roofed into a modern edifice. The dilapidated Archdeaconry Secretariat where the Archdeaconry clerk lives has been fortified and re-roofed with long-span.

## **RESOURCE PERSONS**

### **Our Synod Preacher**

#### **RT. REV. ALOYSIUS EZE AGBO (JP) BISHOP OF NSUKKA DIOCESE**

Aloysius Eze Agbo was born on 15th September, 1967 into the family of Mr. Odo Nwa Agbo Nwodo (Igwe na ezoro Oha) and Mrs Agnes Agbo Nwodo (Nee Nnamuchi Okwor). He hails from Umunzu clan in Akpani village, Neke in Isi-Uzo L.G. A. of Enugu State.

#### **HIS EDUCATION:**

Aloysius had his primary education at the Community Primary School Neke in Isi-Uzo L.G.A. from 1975-1981. He did his Secondary Education at Community Secondary School, Imilike Agu in Udenu Local Government Area of Enugu State from 1981- 1986. He got his National Diploma in Computer Science from the Institute of Management and Technology (IMT) Enugu in 1996. He was admitted into Trinity Theological College Umuahia in 1996, where he obtained Diploma in Theology (Dip. Theo) and Bachelor of Arts (B.A. Hons) in Religion in 2000. Aloysius Eze Agbo went for a

Missionary Training in December 2007 at the Nigerian Intercultural College of Mission Ibadan (an affiliate of Bethany International University, Singapore) where he obtained his Post Graduate Diploma in Intercultural Studies (PGDIS). In 2008 he had his Master Degree (M.A) in Religion from University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

#### **ORDINATION:**

Aloysius Eze Agbo was made a deacon on Sunday 9th July, 2000, and ordained a priest on 13th July 2001. On 5th March, 2006, he was installed a Canon; collated and instituted as Archdeacon of Enugu-Ezike Missionary Archdeaconry on Sunday 6th April 2008.

#### **HIS ELECTION AS A BISHOP:**

Aloysius Eze Agbo was elected the bishop of Nsukka Diocese on March 26, 2008, to succeed the pioneer Bishop, the Rt. Rev. Dr. Jonah C. ILonuba (JP) at the Standing Committee of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) held at the Diocesan Church Centre (DCC) Nnewi. On 14th May 2008, he was consecrated at the Cathedral Church of St. James the great, Oke Bola, Ibadan and enthroned on Sunday July 6, 2008 at the Cathedral Church of St. Paul, Nsukka.

#### **APPOINTMENTS:**

On Friday 26th May 2006, Aloysius was appointed as Justice of Peace (JP) by the Chief Judge of Enugu State. He co-ordinated the Mission Partners in the Diocese which also reached to Idah Diocese too. Until his election as a bishop, he was the Co-ordinator of the Nsukka Diocesan Clergy Monthly Prayer Retreat and Prayer Chaplain. Rt. Rev. Aloysius Eze Agbo (JP) is happily married to Mrs. Ifeoma Agbo (JP) with two children, Gift and Marvelous.

#### **OTHER PREACHERS & RESOURCE PERSONS**

##### **REV. UDOCHUKWU AHAGHOTU, Ph.D, GDJ:**

A native of Umuaghara in Ezinihite Mbaise. Made deacon 2002, and ordained priest 2003. Currently Supervisor World Bank Mission Area, and Vicar Christ Church Parish. He preached at the opening service on Thursday.

##### **VEN. EMMANUEL E. EGBULEFU, Ph.D:**

A native of Umuaba in Okpu-Umuobo Autonomous Community. Made Deacon 1993, ordained Priest 1994, and collated & instituted as Archdeacon 2002. Currently Archdeacon, Ngwa South Archdeaconry, and Vicar, Asa-Amato Parish. He preached at the Holy Communion Service yesterday.

##### **VEN. BENNETH NWOKEDI, M.DIV:**

A native of Ozubulu in Amakwa Community, Anambra State. Made Deacon 2007, ordained Priest 2008, installed Canon 2010, and collated & instituted as Archdeacon, 2015. He is currently the Cathedral Administrator. He preached at the Holy Communion Service this morning.

##### **VEN. OBIOMA CHUKWUMA, B.Ed:**

He is from Umunkwo in Isiala Mbano LGA of Imo State. Made deacon 1995, ordained Priest 1996, installed Canon 2002, and collated & instituted as Archdeacon 2008. He

is currently the Vicar Aro-Ngwa 1 Parish. He will preach at the Sunday morning Holy Communion Service

**VEN. PRECIOUS 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 will conduct our Synod Thanksgiving Service tomorrow.

**MR. FRIDAY IHEZUE NWIGWE** - The Principal of our Ngwa High School. He is from Amavo Ukwu in Osisioma Ngwa LGA of Abia State, he worships at St. Barnabas Church Ayaba Umueze. He proposed the Synod Motion yesterday.

**BARR. BUCHI EMEMANKA:** He is from Umule in Osisioma Ngwa LGA of Abia State and worships at St. Paul's Church Umuocham. He seconded the Synod Motion.

**BARR. CHUKWUDI CHUBUZOR** is from Ntigha in Isiala Ngwa North LGA of Abia State. He worships at the Cathedral and he moderated the Synod Motion.

**CHIEF G.O.C. KANU** is from Aro-Amano and worships at St. George's Church Aro-Amano. He will move the motion for the acceptance of this Address.

**REV. ANDERSON BAABA IHECHI, B.A:** He is from Osusu-Aku in Ugwunagbo LGA of Abia State. Made Deacon 2014, ordained Priest 2015. He is currently the Vicar, Umuoyoro Ngwa Parish. He will second the motion for acceptance of this Address.

**NEWS FROM THE DIOCESE**

**ARMS:**

**Women Ministry**

Our Women Ministry has been very active and supportive in expanding the frontier of the gospel in this diocese and beyond. During our last synod they donated N 2,200,000.00 in support of our Diocesan Project. We are grateful to the President, Mama Aba Ngwa North, and hope for more in this Synod. Of a particular note is their spiritual programs which are second to none. Their annual Widows' Conference was held on Friday 24th November 2017 at the Cathedral where they put smile in the faces of some helpless women both from our diocese and beyond. The Theme was "From Where Cometh My Help" (Ps. 121:1). The guest speaker was Mrs. Ngozi Iheonunekwu from Aba Diocese. The widows were encouraged to continue to depend on God for help no matter the challenges facing them. Other features of the event include: Bible Study, Health Talk and Body Check, Testimonies and Prayer sessions. In attendance were over 350 widows and gift items worth of N1,670,300.00 were distributed to them. We are grateful to those who donated for the success of the project, may the good Lord continue to reward you more abundantly in Jesus name, Amen. The women also held their Carol and Nine lessons with end of the year's party at this our synod venue on Friday 8th December 2017. The women during the occasion rendered some beautiful Christmas Carols to the glory of God. And the sermon was preached by us. We cannot thank the host Parish enough for the organization of the programme and wonderful hospitality especially the Archdeacon

and wife Ven. & Mrs. Precious Okereke. This year the women began their activities with A 2-day training for all the workers wives at the Cathedral from Friday 12th to Saturday 13th January 2018. The Theme was “Beholding The Glory of His Face”. We thank our resource persons especially Mama Okigwe South, Mrs. Blessing Onuoha who gave talk on 'leadership with total dependency on God and Stewardship of mysteries'. This was concluded with some commitment prayers.

Also, the annual Women Prayer Conference was held from Thursday 25th to Saturday 27th January 2018 at St. Clement's Anglican Church Mbutu Umuojima and the Theme was “There Is Power In The Name of Jesus” (Acts 4:12). The Conference started with Holy Communion Service Celebrated by us. Other features include: Bible Study, Teachings, Health Talk and Prayer session, over 1,000 women were in attendance and we are grateful to our resource persons, host Community, the Archdeacon and his wife Ven. & Mrs. Emmanuel Amadi for their wonderful hospitality.

The women traditional World Day of Prayer for the year was observed in all churches. Theme “All God's Creation Is Very Good”. The Mothering Sunday celebration week of activities was held from Monday 5th to Sunday 11th March, 2018, the theme was “The Motherlessness of Our Time” (Isaiah 45:15). It was indeed a wonderful moment as the women were committedly involved in the activities before the thanksgiving on Sunday. There were Bible Study, Health Talks, Marriage Seminars and Visitation to motherless baby's home and indoor members. As usual they visited the wives of our retired bishops. As part of the activities of the week, they organized sporting competitions in Archdeaconries and Mission Areas, of which Ngwa Central Archdeaconry came first, Akpaa/Osokwa second while Cathedral took the third position. Their prizes were given to them during the Women Conference. The mothers in the joy of their celebration visited our two schools Ngwa High School Abayi and St. Anne's Secondary School Umuobasi-Amavo with cooked food and drinks. We commend them for such display of love and care. Also the Annunciation of Our Lord Jesus Christ to the Blessed Virgin Mary (ABVM) was observed, as well as the traditional Easter Morning Candle Procession in all our churches.

Our 5th Mother's Union Women Conference was held from Thursday 12th to Sunday 15th July 2018 at St. Paul's Church Umuocham, Umuocham Archdeaconry with the theme “With Jesus In The Boat” (Matt. 8:23-27). Mama Aba Ngwa North presented her address on Saturday 14th which attracted many important personalities within and outside the state. We are grateful to the host Archdeaconry for a job well done, mostly the Vicar and Supervisor, Rev'd. & Mrs. Emmanuel Ehilegbu. The Conference featured among other things: Bible Study, Group Discussions, Talks, Award giving and Revival hours. Other activities of the women within the period under-review include, Retreat for all Church Workers Wives from 0-5years in the ministry, Retreat for the Ladies Council held from Friday 1st to Saturday 2nd June 2018, with the theme “Beholding The Glory of His Face”. They also carried out an Evangelism outreach to Aba Prisons, where they fed over 256 prisoners and prayed for them. An outreach programme was equally carried out in Mgboko Mission Area on Saturday 28th April 2018 at Holy Trinity, the Theme was “Be Thou Strong For Your Work Will Be Rewarded” (2 Chron.15:7). Many people were fed and many also received gifts

from the team. In the training and study for admission candidates, 13 mothers have been admitted into Mother's Union, 27 Women into the Women's Guild, and 30 Girls into Girls Guild. We congratulate them for taking their studies seriously. In their ongoing hostel project since our last synod, they have spent not less than (N18,000,000.00) eighteen million naira. We trust God for the soon completion of the project. It is worthy of note that through the Thanks Offering Box (TOB) collection, the women were able to roof one of our churches, St. Mark's Umuibe with about (N530,000), five hundred & thirty thousand naira. It is also interesting to note that they have continued to empower and encourage some indigent women in our Diocese. Within the period under review 13 women have received the non-refundable loan totalling to (N 470,000), four hundred and seventy thousand naira only. This does not include the one given by our illustrious son Barr. Onyebuchi Ememanka during our 2017 Diocesan Women Conference at Umuode for 13 women, a total sum of (N390,000.00) three hundred and ninety thousand naira only. They also bought a band set for St. Anne's Secondary School Umuobasi-Amavo at the cost of (N150,000) one hundred and fifty thousand naira only. A student with eye problem received the favour of our women ministry for medical treatment worth one hundred and forty-six thousand naira only (N146,000).

### Diocesan Council of Knights

The task of repositioning this body for a more effective service is a collective one and we thank God for the grace so far. Since our last synod, the council has been growing from strength to strength. They began their activities for the year with their usual Annual Retreat which was held at St. Clement's Church Mbutu Umuojima from Friday 23rd to Sunday 25th February, 2018 with the Theme "Hypocrisy In Service To God, Consequences And Way Out" (Matt. 7:21-23). During the retreat over 78 members of the council were in attendance. The retreat featured among other things, Bible Study, Paper Presentation, Health Talk, and from the book "Building on the Sure Foundation". In our vision to carry every member along and to encourage those who have slided from the activities of the council due to their financial indebtedness, we directed that some percentage of reduction be given to every member's indebtedness ranging from (N10,000.00) ten thousand naira and above.

It is worthy of note that on Saturday 24th February, 2018 at the Cathedral, during their first quarter general meeting, we dissolved the former executive and a new election was conducted by us. And the following people were elected into the following offices:

1. President - Sir Geoffrey N. Nkoro
2. 1st Vice President - Dame Grace Esiaba
3. 2nd Vice President - Sir Christopher Nwosu
4. Secretary - Sir Morris N. Eleri Esq.
5. Assistant Secretary - Sir Ben Ogbonna Ph.D
6. Treasurer - Sir Ezekiel Okorie

7. Finance Secretary - Sir Macaulay Onwuegbuchulam
8. Welfare Officer - Dame Love Ogbonna
9. Public Relation Officer - Sir Uzoma Oriaku
10. Protocol Officer - Sir Stephen Ahuchaogu.

They were all inaugurated into their new offices immediately. Also, the Ladies Council was not left out in the change of leadership. On Saturday 7th April, 2018 their election was held at the Cathedral by Mama Aba Ngwa North. The following ladies emerged as follows:

1. President - Lady Chinedu C. Nwaogwgu
2. 1st Vice President - Lady Mary Mgbarine
3. 2nd Vice President - Lady Stella Nkoro
4. Secretary - Lady Edith Ajaegbu
5. Assistant Secretary - Lady Peace Nwaogwugwu
6. Treasurer - Lady Felicia Duru
7. Financial Secretary - Lady Eunice Nwaoguikpe
8. Welfare Officer - Lady Akudo Oluikpe
9. Provost 1 - Lady Ngozi Nwachukwu
10. Provost 2 - Lady Glory Odoemelam

We are glad to inform the Synod that the executives of both the Knights and Ladies councils have shown renewed zeal in their duties. Their meetings have been held regularly, we commend them.

Our Council of Knights has been active in both Aba Provincial meeting and at Joint Council levels. It is worthy to note that our own Sir Okechukwu Nwachukwu was given Award on December 7th 2017 at Paul's University friendship Award Awka. The Council is not left out in the area of evangelism and outreach, they worshipped at St. Ambrose Church, Abayi Waterside Parish, and raised over N108,300.00 to support the Church. They also attended the National Prayer Convention at St. Stephen's Cathedral Umuahia from 26th February to 2nd March, 2018. On the ongoing Bishops court project support the council has donated the sum N1,000,000.00 (1 Million Naria), during the hosting of the 4th Diocesan Prayer Conference 2018, the Diocesan Youth Ministry (NEC) Meeting at Abuja, the 2017 Diocesan Harvest Celebration, the Provincial ACM Teachers Conference hosted by our Diocese and Diocesan Christian Men's Fellowship our Council of Knights has made impressive contributions in support of these programmes. We commend the effort of the leadership of the council for their willingness and zeal to make the necessary moves towards the goal of the Diocese, and we use this medium to call on those Knights

who do not show any commitment to the council to arise and do the needful as there will be no place for lukewarmness or stagnancy.

### Diocesan Political Squad

This was inaugurated on Saturday 28th July 2018 with the following as the officials:

1. Sir Sunday N. Dinnah - Chairman
2. Sir Kenneth Uzuegbu - Secretary
3. Sir Ihezuoke Ufomba - Member
4. Sir Michael Isinguzo - Member
5. Sir Blessing Onungwa - Member
6. Sir Macaulay Onwuegbuchulam - Member
7. Dame Grace Esiaba - Member
8. Barr. Chukwudi Chibuzo - Diocesan Civil and Political Affairs Director

We setup this arm to serve as liaison between the Diocese and those of our members who are or may be interested in active politics. They have swung into action. We hope and pray that this venture will yield the needed result

### Diocesan Ministry of Praise

We are grateful to God for the level of growth that has taken place in our Ministry of Praise. The quality of worship and singing in services round the Diocese has greatly improved. After our last synod, this ministry in collaboration with our brother the Former Speaker Abia State House of Assembly, Rt. Hon. Martin Azubuike organized a Diocesan Music Festival/Competition which started on Saturday 11th November, 2017 at St. Barnabas Okpu-Umuobo. We commend the effort of our ministry of praise in organizing all categories of choirs to participate in the festival. For the men category the Cathedral came first while the women of St. Philip's Choir Ngwa High School came first in the women category, and Cathedral Women Choir came second. For the children category, All Saints' Cathedral came first; Christ Church World Bank came second, St. Philip's Children Choir came third and St. Barnabas Children Choir Okpu-Umuobo took the fourth position.

Small Grade - C: St. John's Church Choir Umuchichi took the first position. For the Intermediate Grade - B: TACP Abayi Choir came first, St. Peter's Church Choir Mgboko Okpolor second and St. John the Baptist Church Choir Umuihuoma /Umuarakpa took the third position.

The grand finale and award presentation took place at St. Clement's Church Mbutu Umuojima on Saturday 25th November 2017, for the Cathedral grade; the Cathedral Choir came first, and for the Special Grade - SG: St. Clement's Church Choir came first, St. Barnabas Church Choir Okpu-Umuobo came second, St. Augustine's Church Choir Okpu-Umuobo came third while Holy Trinity Mgboko Umuochoa took the fourth position. In the Super Advance - AS; St. Michael's Church Choir Umuojima Okereke

came first, St. Paul's Church Choir Umuocham second; Christ Church World Bank Choir came third while St. Barnabas Church Choir Ayaba Umueze took the fourth position. In Advanced Grade - A: St. James Church Choir Abayi Ogbuligba came first, St. Philip's Church Choir Abayi second, St. Matthew's Church Choir Umuagbai third, Holy Innocent's Church Choir Asa-Amator fourth, Christ Church Choir Ibibi-Okpuala fifth, St. Martin's Church Choir Akpaa 1 sixth, while St. Georges Church Choir took the seventh position. We remain grateful to our own Rt. Hon. Martins Azubuikwe for allowing God to use him in doing this wonderful work for God, our prayer remain that God in His own way will reward him mightily.

Our Diocesan Ministry of Praise also hosted twice the Provincial Music Council Meeting this year, on Saturday 9th June, 2018 and Saturday 14th July, 2018 respectively.

In the Provincial Music Festival 2018 we have selected among the choirs that did well during the last year's music festival to represent the Diocese, they are as follows:

1. All Saints' Cathedral Choir - Grade 1
2. St. Clement's Mbutu Umuojima Ogbu - High Grade 1
3. St. Michael's Umuojima Okereke Super Advanced Grade 1
4. St. James Abayi Ogbuligba - Advance Grade 1
5. TACP Abayi - Intermediate Grade 1.

The date for this festival shall be in November 2018.

This year's choir day celebration was uniquely observed with the Theme: "The Power Of Praise" (Acts 16:24-26). The activities started on Monday 13th August to Sunday 19th August, 2018. We direct every choir in the Diocese to pay their choir quota, to enable the ministry run her affairs as is demanded of them. We are looking forward to have functional choirs in all our churches from now and not only during the singing competitions. The Music director and his team should help us to achieve this. We appreciate the Chaplain, Music Director and all those who have in one way or the other helped in making sure that this programmes are realizable. To God be all the glory.

### **Diocesan Youth Ministry**

This all important arm of our Diocese is moving on strongly and positively. We cannot thank God enough for the able way He has been using our young people from different groups of our youth ministry to the promotion of God's Kingdom and building of our diocese. Since our last synod they have been holding their meetings, Joint fellowships, and tarry nights to strengthen the fellowship and encourage weak churches mostly in the rural areas of our Diocese. Over fifty of them were in attendance during last year's Divine Common Wealth Conference (DIVCCON) fully (100%) sponsored by us. From 24th to 26th November 2017 they attended the AYF National Executive Committee (NEC) Meeting and Election held at Christ Good Shepherd Retreat Centre Uzii Owerri, Diocese of Owerri. Other National Meetings our youths attended this year include: The Annual AYF National General Meeting

(AGM) 2018 held at Anglican Christian Centre, Ogoni-Olomu Ugheli, Diocese of Ugheli, AYF National Executive Committee (NEC) Meeting/Handover held at St. Peter's Anglican Church Guzapa, Asokoro Extension, Abuja from Friday 25th to Sunday 27th, 2018 in Abuja Diocese. On 30th June, 2018 the Former Province II Youth Council held their election at St. James Church Elele Rivers State, the President of our youth ministry, Mr. Chinedu Onwuka was elected Vice President. The 61st Annual National Youth Bible Study Conference was held at Paul's University Awka from Wednesday 8th to Sunday 12th August, 2018, with the theme "Power for Exploit" (Acts 1:8) from our Diocese 37 delegates attended the conference. Here in our Diocese, the 9th edition of Diocesan Youth Ministry Bible Study Conference was held from Thursday 30th August to 2nd September 2018 at St. James Church Abayi Ogbuligba Parish. We are grateful to the host Archdeaconry. The Conference with the Theme: "Power for Exploit" featured among other things, Holy Communion, Bible Study, Health Talk etc. They concluded with thanksgiving service on Sunday 2nd September 2018, we wish to inform the synod that the number of our youths that attended the conference and the zeal with which they are growing is a sign that we are moving forward. The annual Youth Week Celebration was held from Monday 3rd to Sunday 9th September 2018 in all the churches and our youths actively participated in the programmes of the occasion in all our churches. We thank those who supported in one way or the other to encourage the youths.

As we normally do, they met from Friday 5th - Saturday 6th October for their Youth Summit here at the synod venue. Their resolutions and communiqué are contained in our booklets.

### **Evangelical Fellowship in the Anglican Communion (EFAC)**

Our Diocesan EFAC is trying their best to the glory of God. Since our last synod, they have been holding retreats & outreaches. Among them was from Friday 1st - Sunday 3rd December 2017 at Umuejije in Mbutu Umuojima Archdeaconry with the theme "Beware Of Strange Voice". After the outreach a Church was planted in that area, people willingly during the program donated for the purchase of instruments, chairs and lectern for the baby church. As part of our New Year program, we held a 3 day prayer and fasting with camping tagged (Mount Sinai), this was in conjunction with the entire Aba Zone which took place at Dr Lady Grace Juniorate, with the theme "If It Be So". Also, they held their Solemn Assembly at Ngwa High School with the theme "Seeking Mercies From The Lord" (Dan. 2:18). Also during our Diocesan City Wide Crusade this year, they joined in the seminar and many other areas. This year Easter Retreat Aba Zone was hosted by our Diocesan EFAC at Ngwa High School and the theme was "The Andrew's Generation. (John 1:35-42). Our EFAC week this year was wonderfully observed. The program started on Monday 14th to Sunday 20th June, 2018. Other monthly programs include: Tarry Night every 1st Wednesday at Ngwa High School, Joint Fellowship every last Wednesday of every month which moves from one Archdeaconry to another. At the National level, 68 members from our Diocese attended this year's EFAC National Convention at the Diocese of Ika from Monday 13th - Sunday 19th August 2018. It is true we have some challenges but the grace of God is helping us to overcome them.

### Anglican Children Ministry (ACM)

By the grace of God, this is another area God is visiting us in a special way, to His own honour and glory. Their yearly activities started with prayer retreat/leadership workshop for their teachers using the book of Daniel as a case study. This was done from Friday 23rd -Saturday 24th February 2018 at St. Philip's Chapel and the speaker was Ven. Ben. Nwokedi the Cathedral Administrator on the theme "They That Know Their God", more than (70) seventy teachers were in attendance, the programme was concluded with a rededication service for all ACM Teachers and their chaplain at Christ Church World Bank Mission Area Headquarters on Sunday 25th. They attended the National Prayer Conference which three of our members represented the Diocese from Thursday 1st to Sunday 4th March 2018 at Basilica of St. Peter's Anglican Church Okiji Nnewi Diocese and the theme was "Chosen to Bear the Ark". Their Joint Fellowship was held at our Cathedral on Saturday 24th March, 2018 and over 130 teachers were in attendance. On Saturday 14th April 2018 they went for Prayer Retreat and Evangelism at Umuihuoma/Umuarakpa with the theme "But they that know their God" and over 80 teachers attended. There was also a night vigil held on Friday 27th April 2018 at St. Philip's Chapel, they prayed for the children, our Diocese and the entire Nation. Also on Saturday 23rd June, 2018 at St. Philip's Chapel, they held fasting and prayer for the children, teachers and our Diocese and the attendance was encouraging for both the teachers and children.

Our children Ministry indeed within the period under review has done so well, we can't thank God enough. The annual ACM Week of Activities was observed from Monday 21st to Sunday 27th May 2018 in all churches as usual our message was read to the children across the Diocese, in which we reminded our parents of the need to always make their children available for ACM programs and activities. The Diocesan ACM Bible Quiz was held on Saturday 21st July, 2018 at St. James Abayi Ogbuligba, the theme was "They that Know their God" (Dan. 11:32). Ten Archdeaconries participated in the quiz and three Archdeaconries emerged as the best, they are:

1. World Bank Mission Area - 1st
2. Ngwa Archdeaconry - 2nd
3. Mbutu Umuojima Archdeaconry - 3rd.

By their performance, three children from the best performed Archdeaconries were selected for the Provincial ACM Quiz and their names are:

1. Emmanuel Chimaroke Enyinnaya
2. Rita Ezinne and
3. Chidinma Blessing.

This year also we hosted the ACM Provincial Teachers' Bible Conference from Thursday 9th to Sunday 12th August 2018 at Ngwa High School Abayi. The participants of the conference were delighted by the wonderful hospitality they enjoyed all through the programme. We must not fail to thank the following: The Council of knights, Women Ministry, Workers Association, C.M.F and our Churches for their

display of love and support. In our bid to bring the gospel to every age, we held our maiden Teenagers Conference from Wednesday 22nd to Friday 24th August 2018 at All Saints' Cathedral. We were thrilled over number of teenagers that attended the conference to the glory of God, we had over 500 of them in attendance. The Theme was "The Journey ahead of You" (1 Kings 19: 5-7), and it featured: Bible Study, Academic Seminars, Social Talks and In-depth Exposition on the theme. We thank God for those whom He used to make the programme a reality especially the Cathedral Administrator and his wife. Our ACM Teachers also attended the National Train the Trainers Conference from Monday 27th to Thursday 30th August at St. Matthias Anglican High School Alagbaka Akure Ondo State. Also another Diocesan Prayer Retreat/Evangelism was held on Saturday 22nd September at St. Martin's Church Akpaa 1, in Akpaa/Osokwa Archdeaconry. We thank God for the journey mercies and pray for successful testimonies ahead.

### **Christian Men Fellowship (CMF)**

Our CMF is working very hard to take its rightful position in the ministry of this Diocese. We are grateful to God on the success story from our churches during this year's Fathers' Week and how the men participated actively in their programs in all the churches. We equally appreciate you for your kind gesture extended to us, after the celebration and pray that God would accept your act of service and cause all our men to come to the knowledge of Christ and power that raised Him from the dead. In our Fathers' Sunday message, we urged men to present their bodies as a living sacrifice, acceptable to God. For only that will guarantee us eternal life. So make your membership of your local Church count to the glory of God.

As usual, the annual football competition among the men of the thirteen Archdeaconries and Mission Areas in the Diocese was organized and World Bank Mission Area emerged the winner, Ngwa Central came second and third place went to Umuocham Archdeaconry. The Diocese gave a trophy and cash prize of N50,000 to the first, N40,000 and a trophy to second position while the third smiled home with N15,000. In order to add colour to the celebration many other activities like Bible Study, Bible quiz, drama and rendering of fathers' anthems were done in various churches.

From the 9th - 12th of August 2018, we held the 9th edition of our conference at St. Augustine's Church Okpu-Umuobo with the Theme "God Your Goal or A Means?" (Exo. 32:1-6, Phil.3:10). The attendance of men from all parishes is a sign that the Men Fellowship has come to stay. We hereby direct that every man in this Diocese should identify with the fellowship since there will be no place for lukewarmness. Our address was presented on the Saturday 16th.

### **Diocesan Board of Mission and Evangelism**

As we know, the life wire of our Diocese and Anglican Communion is Evangelism. Therefore we must strive for growth and perfection in the Lord Jesus Christ. We are really happy with our Mission and Evangelism Board. This group with the assistance of EFAC group has helped the Diocese a lot to strengthen the spiritual life of many within and outside our Diocese. We are grateful to the coordinator Dr. Emmanuel Onyeukwu.

### **Sunday School/Bible Study Board**

They organized a workshop for the Sunday School Facilitators on Saturday 9th June 2018 at the Cathedral, a good number of them attended. The aim was to encourage, educate and correct the lingering time management problem during Sunday school, for allowing our discovering that some facilitators preach instead of facilitating. We also discovered that some facilitators are not time conscious and lack the ability to control their classes, about 130 facilitators attended the workshop. Through quarterly reports from the churches we are getting feedback, on how effective our Sunday School Manual has been. Reports have shown that in some areas it has attracted some new members to our Diocese. We advise the co-ordinators who has not been submitting this report to change their attitude. We also urge the Parish Priests to help at ensuring that co-ordinators in their parishes are working to the rules. This report should be submitted through the Bishop's Secretary at the end of every quarter. As usual the new edition of our Sunday School Manual is ready. The manual covers the 2018/2019 synod year and was prepared based on the current synod theme "Don't Just Take a Stand; Make A Move" (Rev. 3:14-16, Matt. 5:13-16). We continue to appreciate the effort of the Diocesan Sunday School Coordinator, the Rev. Canon Ik Nwabueze Onumaegbulam, Mr. Samuel Nnodim, Diocesan Sunday School Board Chairman and the team of Bible Study contributors for their effort in packaging the work with its Igbo translation, we pray God to bless you all. To the glory of God churches and individuals will go home with their copies on Sunday. We call on all the synod delegates who can help in facilitating the Bible study and Sunday school sessions in our local churches to allow God use them to the glory of His Name. Delegates must be present during Sunday school sessions as a matter of devotion.

### **Staff Training, Development and Welfare**

We continue to emphasize the need for our Diocesan staff to update their academic and professional knowledge to meet the needs of the time. Within the last three years three priests have completed their PhD programs while three are completing their Doctorate, one his masters, with five completing their Bachelor in theology degree programs. It is expected that in five years' time all our clergy should have completed their graduate studies. A good number of our Catechists, Church teachers and clerks have completed their national diploma and degree programs. We hope that this academic upgrade coupled with the systematic spiritual exercises on ground will effectively equip our staff members to meet the spiritual demands of our calling. We ask that our congregations support our workers to be at their best.

### **Diocesan Lay Readers Association**

This body of Christ is helping us in their different local churches as well as in the Diocesan level when ever their services are needed to the glory of God. Their quarterly meetings are well attended as expected. We thank the Archdeacons, Supervisors and our workers in making sure that our church sanctuaries are open for them during their meetings, with Holy Communion & feeding them after meetings. Their zonal meetings were held rotationally with the aim of appraising their performance during the services, visit, and pray for their members as well as other activities.

The 9th edition of their Retreat was held at St. Barnabas Church Okpu-Umuobo from Friday 18th to Sunday 20th May 2018. The theme was “God's Goodness Is Beyond The Services Of A Vending Machine” (Luke 9:23; Acts 14:22). The retreat featured, Talks, Exposition, Bible Study and Commitment prayer. We are grateful to the Vicar of St. Barnabas and the entire members of this church for their warm hospitality, about 125 members attended this retreat. We also thank the chaplain, Ven. Emmanuel E. Egbulefu for his dexterity in co-ordinating this arm on our behalf. To this end, we direct that any member who could not attend the Retreat should not function as one in his or her local church till he or she gets clearance from us.

### **Sports, Physical & Health Development**

We continue to remind all our workers to make the most of our monthly sports and physical exercise program. It is a requirement that all participate. In addition to this, we must be mindful of what we eat and take regular medical checks very seriously. There's no doubt that the God we serve is guaranteeing our good health, but we must play our own part.

### **EVENTS:**

#### **Diocesan Harvest 2017**

This was gloriously celebrated on Saturday 9th December 2017 with the theme “Harvest of a Prosperous soul” (3 John 2). We led the entire Diocese to the Altar to show appreciation to God Almighty. It was a glorious moment as the Archdeaconries and Mission Areas were present both spiritually and materially for the thanksgiving. We are specially grateful to the Planning Committee ably led by our brother Mr. CY Ubani for a wonderful outing. In the same service, a book titled “Building on the Sure Foundation” was presented and launched. This is the collection of our synod presidential addresses from 2009 - 2017. All the proceeds from the book are for the development of our Diocese. The date for this year's Harvest is Saturday the 15th of December. We therefore urged everyone to be more committed to this year's harvest to attract more blessing from God. We pray that God would cause us to be more conscious of His grace, enlighten our hearts to be grateful and willing in giving both our lives and resources

#### **Diocesan Thanksgiving**

As it has become an annual ritual. We began this year with a thanksgiving service on Saturday 3rd February 2018 at All Saints' Cathedral Abayi Umuocham to thank God for His numerous blessings upon us as a diocese leading to the New Year. All the Archdeaconries, Mission Areas and Arms were well represented in their good numbers, and the preacher was our own son Ven. Solomon Kanu, we appreciate him and his family. Designated Choirs from our Parishes rendered special numbers to the glory of God Almighty. During the service, Workers and their wives rededicated themselves to God for His service alongside the Diocesan officials. We are grateful to the Cathedral Community for the hospitality and support towards the success of this service. May the good Lord continue to reward you all. Amen.

#### **Bishop's Birthday Anniversary**

Again this year, our Diocesan faithful gathered to celebrate Mama Aba Ngwa North and I, on 24th March. There was as usual a warm reception organized by the

Cathedral Community where our guests had fellowship to the glory of God. We thank Umuocham, World Bank and Aro Amano parishes for being present. We will not fail to appreciate the initiator, the Cathedral Administrator and wife, Ven. & Mrs. Bennett Nwokedi, and the Cathedral Community for their loyalty, commitment and service, we pray God to reward them mightily, Amen.

## RETREATS

### CPC/PCC/Vestry Committee Retreat 2018

This year's event was on Saturday 10th 2018 February at the Cathedral, We gathered over 600 members representing all the churches in the Diocese to re-echo into their mind the vision of the Diocese. The theme was "The Cost of Discipleship" (Luke 9:23).

Several lessons were taught on the theme. We thank the speakers especially Ven. Okike Osiogogu for feeding us spiritually at the retreat. There was dedication/re-dedication for both old and new members and taking of oath of office/allegiance to God. We remain grateful to the Admin Assistant to the Bishop, my secretary, my chaplains, as well as Central Office Admin for the organization. We appreciate our churches for their support. As a rule anybody who did not participate in this retreat ceases to participate as a member of her church committee until cleared otherwise.

### Diocesan City Wide Crusade 2018

The 2nd Edition of our Diocesan City Wide Crusade took place from Monday 26th February - Saturday 3rd March, 2018 at Ngwa High School. A large number of our members attended and the theme was "God Is Not A Vending Machine" (Luke 9:23; Acts 14:22). We had the privilege of ministering at the Crusade. The crusade started with a rally which took us round the city of Aba to announce the Lordship and sovereignty of our Lord Jesus Christ. Many people gave their lives to Christ during the crusade. We appreciate the designated choirs that rendered special numbers to add colour to the crusade. We are also grateful to our guest artist, Agape Love Band, Bro. Israel Anyamele and his team for their wonderful performance. At the end we had a commitment prayer for our Diocese and her members for a prosperous life, business breakthrough, as well as spiritual upliftment. We continue to receive testimonies of the grace of God and answered prayers after the program. Our parishes and Archdeaconries and Mission Areas were directed to organize theirs as well in order to carry the same message home to the glory of God.

### H.O.D 2018

As part of our efforts to provide qualitative leadership and followership. We gathered the leaders of our Diocese from different arms and level for a retreat. This was held from Wednesday 21st to Friday 23rd March 2018 at St. Philip's Chapel Ngwa High School Abayi and the theme was "You Did It Unto Me"(Matt. 25:31-46). The Retreat started with a Holy Communion Service. The Exposition of the theme was handled by Ven. Obinna Ibezim from Aba Diocese. .

The retreat featured among other things, Group Discussion with a summary report at the end. There was also Bible Study in groups and discussion on vital issues as it relates to Churchmanship, Morality, Politics and Christian living in everyday life.

Majority of our officials were present during the retreat while those who were absent sent their apologies. We thank the organizers ably led by my Admin Assistant for job well done. All these meeting and retreats are not for formality, it is time to put them into work for the development of our Diocese through the way we show commitment to duties. May the Lord richly bless you as you do so.

### **Diocesan Clergy & Wives Retreat**

This programme has come to stay as we thank God for the initiative, and our Diocese for whole heartedly accepting this annual re-filling event for our clergymen and their wives. On Monday 2nd April to Friday 6th 2018, we with Mama Aba Ngwa North took all the Clergymen and Wives to Ibru Centre Agbarha - Otor for the Retreat. It was a glorious moment in the presence of God. The theme was “Empowered To Multiply”. A team from Jos led by Rev. Canon Timothy Olonade took us on the process of mentoring and need to make disciples and its importance and benefits to both our Diocese and Church. The Retreat featured among other things, Talks, Exposition, Health check and Physical Exercise. May the good Lord bless all our churches for approving our going and sponsoring us. The fallout from this retreat mandates every clergyman and wife to consciously lookout for people they can through exemplary lifestyle pour their lives into. The Diocese has directed that this mandate shall not be toyed with by any worker, but must be taken seriously.

### **Diocesan 11th Anniversary**

To the glory of God our Diocese turned 11 this year, it was observed in all the Parish Headquarters on Thursday 19th April, 2018 with a Holy Communion Service. Truly we are not doing badly. We thank God very immensely for His numerous blessings upon our Diocese amidst all challenges associated with every developing organization or institution especially when there is no strong financial base or investment on ground. Our prayer is that God would increase our knowledge of Him, enlighten our understanding on how to serve Him with what He has blessed us with and raise men and women even among the workers who will see the Diocese as theirs, and so devote their calling in building a formidable Diocese to the glory of God and the blessing of His Children. We thank all for being part of the celebration. May God continue to bless our Diocese.

### **Diocesan Prayer Conference 2018**

Our 4th Diocesan Prayer Conference was held from Wednesday 13th - Thursday 14th June 2018 at the Cathedral and the theme was “Watchman over the Land” (Isaiah 62:6-7). The Conference featured among other things Holy Communion, Bible Study and commitment prayer. We, by the grace of God handled the exposition of the theme.

We made the participants to understand that every child of God is expected to be a prayer warrior and not a certain set of people, and should live a life of prayer. We emphasized on the need for spiritual watch men over our souls. The attendance was very commendable as every arm of the Diocese was well represented. We thank our prayer coordinator and his team for a job well done.

## Diocesan Endowment Fund

This project which is in its second phase is going on well. We appreciate the commitment of those who are diligently participating in it, while we remind those who are not, to see the need to participate for the good of our Diocese. As directed by the Diocesan board, proceeds of the project are being invested in Agriculture and other ventures on behalf of the Diocese.

## PROJECTS

### Agricultural Investment

To the glory of God, we are moving forward. We have gradually started investing in agriculture, so far we have succeeded in planting plantain at Umunnano. Meanwhile, we have contacted Umudike for the improved variety of the following products: Coconut, Guava, Pawpaw, Avacado Pear, Udara, Bread fruit, Maize, Cucumber & Tomatoes. In addition, we have started our starter snail farm and our poultry farm is ready and soon the birds will arrive. We thank the committee for their efforts so far.

### Bookshop/ICT

Last year we reported of our intention to collaborate with the Africa Christian Text Books (ACTS), which is the largest publishers and marketers of Christian literature in Africa to boost the scale of our bookstore. We are glad to report, to God's glory that, that aspiration was achieved over six months ago. We have at the moment quality theological and Christian books worth over five million Naira. We ask that we help in patronizing and advertising this our venture. In the same vein, as we expected last year, our ICT has been relocated to the new building to accommodate our new and more modern facilities. Our patronage of this facility is highly solicited. We continue to remind us to continue to visit our Diocesan website for information and advertisement. For those who don't have it, the site remains [www.abangwanorthanglican.net](http://www.abangwanorthanglican.net).

## DIOCESAN SCHOOLS

All our schools-Diocesan School of Ministry, Ngwa High School Abayi and St. Anne's Secondary School, Umuobasi Amavo, are doing well. Like every other venture of men, they also have their shares of challenges, but trusting God, we shall overcome. Details of their reports are in the report booklet.

### Foundation/Dedications/Inauguration

03/12/2017: Commissioning of Cathedral BB Stand, Clinic, Archives, Youth Ministry Library and Tennis Court at All Saints' Cathedral Abayi Umuocham

24/12/2017: Dedication of Marble Altar Table at St. Clement's Church Osokwa

29/01/2018: Foundation Stone Laying Cathedral Women Ministry Shopping Plaza along Umuocham Road

23/05/2018: Foundation Stone Laying for Parsonage at St. John's Church Umuchichi

27/05/2018: Dedication of Women Ministry Van for St. Gabriel's Church Umuode

14/06/2018: Dedication of car for Ven. Obioma Chukwuma

10/07/2018: Dedication of car for Ven. Emmanuel Enyinnaya Egbulefu

26/07/2018: Foundation Laying Stone of Administrative Block at Ngwa High School.

14/09/2018: Dedication of Marble Readers Desk, Curate Desk, Bishop's Chair and Gospel Band set

### CONFIRMATION AND ADMISSIONS

Within the period under review, we visited the under listed Parishes for confirmation and admissions

Date	Parish	Con.	CM	FMU	WG	GG	Evan.
05/11/17	Abayi Ogbuligba	30	8	3	5	-	31,270
12/11/17	Okpu-Umuobo	42	16	2	4	14	38,780
26/11/17	Aro-Ngwa 1	20	6	-	-	-	25,750
03/12/17	Cathedral	30	12	6	17	16	50,520
10/12/17	World Bank	33	1	-	-	-	76,000
16/12/17	Mbutu Umuojima Ogbu	27	-	2	1	-	65,570
16/09/18	TACP	37	6	3	5	3	32,400
	<b>Total</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>320,290</b>

### Mission and Evangelism Fund:

The evangelism support realized during our Episcopal functions within the period stated in the table above was administered in the following:

1.	Two pastors wives delivering	N150,000
2.	A student from St. Stephen's Aro-Ngwa1	N 45,000
3.	Part of ACM Hall at Church of Holy Spirit Umumpata	N200,000
4.	2 ACM Students School fees	N129,000
5.	A Student from Benin School fees	N 20,000
6.	CNMS Conference	N 84,000
		N499,000

### OUR JOY

1.	Rev. Barnabas Anoruem	Baby Girl
2.	Rev. Ikechukwu Okechukwu	Twin (Boy & Girl)
3.	Rev. Emeka Agua	Baby Boy
4.	Cate. Moses Epelle	Baby Girl
5.	Mr. Onwunata Christian	Baby Girl
6.	Mr. James Nwaogwugwu	Baby Girl

- |                          |          |
|--------------------------|----------|
| 7. Mr. Promise I. Pepple | Baby Boy |
| 8. Mrs. Glory Matthew    | Baby Boy |
| 9. Mr. Michael M. Atasie | Baby Boy |

### **OUR SORROW**

1. Sir Solomon I. Onwuka
2. Sir G.O. Sampson
3. Sir Patrick Ochiegbu

### **NEWS FROM ABA PROVINCE**

#### **Provincial Harvest:**

2017 Provincial Annual Thanksgiving and Harvest was celebrated on Saturday 2nd December 2017 at Anglican Church of Pentecost Umuariaga, Ikwuano Diocese with the theme “Harvest of Choice” (Gal. 6: 7-8). Good number of delegates from our Dioceses attended, ably led by their Bishops and wives with their harvest items. It was indeed a joyous moment for all of us. As we all know the money raised is invested to the Joint Provincial Hostel Project Building. Meanwhile, this year’s harvest will be hosted by Umuahia Diocese at St. Stephen’s Cathedral on Saturday 1st December 2018. As a way of encouragement, the council has resolved that 75% of the Diocesan proceeds from the Provincial Harvest Thanksgiving shall be credited to them as the investment share in the Joint Provincial Hostel. Pray and support this program.

#### **Provincial Council Meetings:**

Our first Provincial Council meeting this year was held on Thursday 3rd May 2018 at St. Stephen’s Cathedral Umuahia Diocese. The theme was “Sentimental Faith and Lame Patience, A Threat To Christian Witness” (Rom. 5:1-5, James 1:2-4). Also another council meeting was held on Saturday 25th August, 2018 at the same venue and the theme was “Lord Where Are You Going?” (John 13:36). We thank the Archbishop, Mama Province and the entire Umuahia Diocese for their hospitality.

#### **Hosting of 20th Annual National Prayer Convocation**

Also our Province played host to the 20th Annual National Prayer Convocation from Monday 26th February - Friday 2nd March 2018, at St. Stephen’s Cathedral, Umuahia and the theme was “Standing In The Place Of Prayers For Church Renewed and National Transformation” (Ezek. 22:30). The conference featured Intercessions, Seminars, Bible Studies, Expositions and Talks, and it was well hosted by our province. We are grateful to our Papa and Mama Province and other Diocesan Bishops and their wives for the team work and commitment to ensure a successful hosting to the glory of God.

## NEWS FROM FORMER PROVINCE II

Within the period under review the Joint Provincial Council of all the Dioceses and Provinces East of the Niger meetings was held at St. Andrew's Church DCC, Nnewi in Nnewi Diocese from Wednesday 21st - Thursday 22nd February, 2018 and theme was "Let All God's Creature Praise The Lord" (Benedicite Omnia Opera). We appreciate the Bishop of Nnewi, the wife and the entire Diocese for their hospitality. We also congratulate our father and mother His Grace the Most Rev. Igenatus Katty, the chairman of the Joint Council for the last council in the active service.

## NEWS FROM CHURCH OF NIGERIA DIVCCON 2017

It should be recalled that the Primate of all Nigeria Most Rev'd Nicholas Okoh introduced the Divine Common Wealth Conference as a gathering of Bishops, Clergy and Laity of our church for spiritual awakening and edification of the church. It is a spiritual gathering for the proclamation of the gospel through Bible studies, Lectures, Talks, Seminars, Worship and Revival Programmes. From Monday 13th - Friday 17th November 2017 we gathered at Ecumenical Centre, Abuja with the theme "We have the Man Jesus" (John 5:1-11). About 130 delegates including youths attended from our Diocese. This year's registration is ongoing; we encourage our members to register and attend this all important spiritually enriching programme. Meanwhile it is compulsory for all the workers in our Diocese. The 2018 edition will come up from Monday 12th - Friday 16th November, 2018. We would be glad to see good number of our synod delegates registered for this year's conference.

## St. Matthias's Day Fund

Since this programme started we have been faithful and sincere with it. This year a substantial amount of money was gathered from all our Dioceses and this amount has been utilized to assist financially weak Dioceses, and also to fund some key Church of Nigeria Mission related activities. For this year our Diocese contributed the sum of N1,951,475.00. We use this opportunity to thank the churches, the priests and workers who have been faithful in remitting their proceeds to the Diocesan office. May God replenish your sources more abundantly.

## 2018 Bishops' Annual Retreat

The Bishops' Annual Retreat remains a time when Church of Nigeria Bishops gathered together to study and pray together at every beginning of the year. This year's Retreat was held from Monday 8th to Friday 12th January 2018 at Ibru Ecumenical Centre Agbarh-Otor. The theme was "The Episcopate and the Future of the Church of Nigeria". It was indeed a wonderful moment in the presence of God. Our thanks and gratitude goes to the Primate and wife who have continued to uphold these programs for the leaders of our Church. The communiqué issued at the end of the retreat is appended in the address.

## GAFCON

The third GAFCON was held in Jerusalem (the City of God) from Friday 15th - Tuesday 26th June 2018. About 450 delegates attended from Nigeria and our Diocese was

represented by Mama Aba Ngwa North and I. We thank you for your prayers during the conference. The grace of God was abundant upon us and the theme was “Proclaiming Christ Faithfully to the Nations”.

### Church of Nigeria Missionary Society

This year again we sponsored two people from our Diocese to represent us CNMS Conference held at Ibadan from Monday 23rd to Friday 27th July 2018 and the Theme was “The Necessity Of The Gospel” (1 Cor. 9:16). The chairman of CNMS Most Rev'd Joseph O. Akinfenwa, the bishop of Ibadan Diocese was the chief speaker in the conference and many others we congratulate them. They all stressed on the need for mobilizing the youths for mission, coping with challenges in spreading the gospel and finally the reward for faithfulness in proclaiming the gospel effectively which is the crown of glory. Those who represented us are Rev. Canon George Anokwute and Dr. Emmanuel Onyeukwu.

### Standing Committee Meeting

Our Diocese since the last Synod has been responsive towards the National Church programmes, the Church of Nigeria Standing Committee held at Cathedral of St. Barnabas Sabo-Oke, Ilorin, Kwara State in the Diocese of Kwara from Monday 5th - Friday 9th February, 2018 with the theme “Poverty of Riches” (Rev. 3:17). And the most recent one held from Monday 17th - Friday 22nd September, 2018 at Cathedral Church of St. Peter Minna Diocese, Niger State with the Theme “God, Our Refuge and Strength”. Our Diocese was fully represented.

### Legal Officers Conference 2018

The 8th edition Conference of Chancellors and Legal Officers of the Church of Nigeria was held from Monday 30th July to Thursday 2nd August, 2018 at the Basilica of Grace Gudu Abuja. As usual, our Diocesan Legal Officers were in attendance. The aim of this conference organized every year by the Church of Nigeria Anglican Communion is to equip the legal officers on the important position they occupy the support required of them in their dioceses and to the National Church. The Theme for this year's conference was “Proclaiming Christ Faithfully to the Nations”, the same theme of our GAFCON 2018.

### Advent Sunday Fund/ New Secretariat Project

By the grace of God this project of our National Church Secretariat in Abuja is in progress. On every first Sunday in Advent is set apart for a special collection towards the realization of this project. To the glory of God, since inception our Diocese has been faithful and sincere in observing this. We are grateful to churches and her workers who have not bring bad name to our diocese, for instance in this year's Advent collection we realized N410,475, and it had been remitted to Abuja Office for the completion of the project.

### NEW BISHOPS

- |                                     |                   |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. The Rt. Rev. Emmanuel Adekola    | Igbomina Diocese  |
| 2. The Rt. Rev. Emmanuel Morris     | Maiduguri Diocese |
| 3. The Rt. Rev. Dr. Stephen Fagbemi | Owo Diocese       |

- |  |                           |
|--|---------------------------|
| 4. The Rt. Rev. Dr. Emmanuel Onsachi   | Okene Diocese             |
| 5. The Rt. Rev. Victor Agberan         | Northern Izon Diocese     |
| 6. The Rt. Rev. Stephen Oni            | Ondo Diocese              |
| 7. The Rt. Rev. Dr. Cornelius Alagbada | Oke-Ogun Diocese          |
| 8. The Rt. Rev. Paul Ojarewaju Ojo     | Ijumu Diocese             |
| 9. The Rt. Rev. Godwin Awoke           | Ngbo Diocese              |
| 10. The Rt. Rev. Wisdom Ihunwo         | Niger Delta North Diocese |
| 11. The Rt. Rev. Dr. Solomon Akanbi    | Offa Diocese              |
| 12. The Rt. Rev. Prosper Ama           | Ogbaru Diocese            |

### TRANSLATIONS

- |                                     |                      |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. The Rt. Rev. Abiodun Ogunyemi    | Zaria Diocese        |
| 2. The Rt. Rev. Tunde Popoola       | Ibadan South Diocese |
| 3. The Rt. Rev. Dr. Samuel Ezeofor  | Aguata Diocese       |
| 4. The Rt. Rev. Humphrey Olumakaiye | Lagos Diocese        |

### RETIRED BISHOPS

- |                                    |                  |
|------------------------------------|------------------|
| 1. The Rt. Rev. Dr. Cyril Okorocho | Owerri Diocese   |
| 2. Most Rev. M.O. Akinyemi         | Igbomina Diocese |
| 3. Most Rev. Ephraim A. Ademowo    | Lagos Diocese    |
| 4. The Rt. Rev. James Oludanjoye   | Owo Diocese      |
| 5. The Rev. Prof. Emmanuel Ajulo   | Okene Diocese    |

### NEW ARCHBISHOPS

- |                                  |                       |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Most Rev. Prof. Godwin Okpala | Province of the Niger |
| 2. Most Rev. Gabriel Akinbiyi    | Ondo Province         |
| 3. Most Rev. Tunde Adeleye       | Niger Delta Province  |

### NEW DEAN

The New Dean Church of Nigeria is the Most Rev'd Dr. Ali Buba Lamido the Bishop of Wusasa and Archbishop of Kaduna Province. He will serve a tenure of five years based on the new constitution amendment. We pray for him and wife for a successful tenure.

### THE SYNOD THEME

#### Introduction

It is said that evil triumphs when good people do nothing. As Albert Einstein put it " the world will not be destroyed by those who do evil but by those who watch them

without doing anything." And so it is our personal stand, and now that of this synod, that inability to provide an alternative to evil is an eloquent way of encouraging the evil. THEREFORE OUR SYNOD THEME : "DON'T JUST TAKE A STAND; MAKE A MOVE" IS A CALL ON THE CHURCH IN PARTICULAR AND EVERY CITIZEN OF THE WORLD TO CONSIDER IF WE ARE DOING ENOUGH, IN THE MIDST OF THE EVIL AROUND US, TO BUILD THE GODLY, JUST, UNITED AND PEACEFUL WORLD THAT WE HAVE BEEN CHARGED WITH. The base passages for the theme are Revelation 3:14-16 and Matthew 5:13 &16.

### **The Book Revelation.**

The book Revelation has generated lots of question and controversy more than any other book of the Bible. Many people are asking questions about revelation. Most of the questions are based on a misunderstanding of Revelation, which assumes that it is a symbolic code predicting the exact persons and events leading to the end of the world. This type of understanding has existed in heretical Christian circles since the second century A.D. A group even went off into Phrygian wilderness to see the heavenly Jerusalem descend out of heaven. Like such prophets ever since, they were disappointed in their expectations. There is a particular passage from the Scripture which nullifies all the predictions of the prophets of doom. In Matthew's Gospel, Jesus, in answer to a question about the end of the world, says "As for the exact day or hour, no one knows it, neither the Angels in heaven nor the Son, but the Father only. And again He reminds His followers:"Stay awake, therefore!! You cannot know the day your Lord is coming." (Matthew 24:36,42).

This address however, acknowledges and believes that there are certain futuristic and eschatological dimensions to the book of Revelation, but at the same time strongly understands and asserts that such dimensions do not any way form the main message of the book. Where such dimensions are expressed, they are not intended to scare the Church, but to quicken and spur her into making definitive and decisive moves that will draw the entire world to her Lord. The Church did not end the sacred Scripture with the book of Revelation in order to provide glorified predictions of future events. Anyone who expects predictions of that sort misses the message of Revelation.

### **Setting, Theology, and Ethics.**

To fully appreciate the book Revelation, and the message there in, and its relationship with our theme, it is important to understand what went on in the early days of the Church which Forms the background of the book. The first century after the death of Christ was a time of persecution for the early Christian community. These men and women were living under tremendous tension. They had thus deep conviction that Jesus, who had been born in Bethlehem, had suffered and died, and had risen from the dead, was with them in the Spirit. This was the basic message "kerygma" of the apostles. And their followers in that first century proclaimed that Jesus, who had been crucified, had risen and would return again at the end of time. That same message is repeated at our Holy Communion service today when we proclaim: "Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again."

Because of this intense conviction, there began series of unbelievable prosecutions. They were instigated by the Roman emperors who reigned beginning with the cruelty of Nero who blamed Christians for the burning of Rome and subsequently declared himself "God" and acted like it. He ruled the world and with him came the imperial cult. So the confession of their faith, and their refusal to acknowledge and worship the emperors who had proclaimed themselves "divine" brought untold hardship and persecution on the Church. As Christians, day in and day out, had to face tremendous negative experiences with thousands of individuals, and sometimes and entire community of Christians martyred just for their faith. This is the atmosphere in which the early Christians found themselves, and the setting of the book of Revelation.

The theological theme of Revelation is made manifest in this conflict between pagan Rome and the Christian community. Rome says, "We are the greatest" The emperor says, "build a temple and worship me. I am the power of the world. I am the power of the universe. Rome is the justice of the universe. Without Rome there is no universe,". And Rome spells this out clearly. "If you don't agree with us you will die." On the other hand Christianity says, in the book of Revelation,, " power and justice belong to Jesus Christ, not Rome. The only power and the only justice in the universe lie in the risen Lord". They do not rest with any group of men or with any government. Jesus is the Leader. He has conquered; He is conquering, and He will continue to conquer. The entire world belongs to Him for all eternity. One of the key passages in the book of Revelation that illustrate this is verse 15 of chapter 11. "Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet. Loud voices in heaven cried out, "The kingdom of the world now belongs to our Lord and to His Anointed One, and He shall reign for ever and ever." This is the theological theme of the book of revelation. The entire book elaborates on this theme.

Ethically, Revelation exhorts the faithful to loyally resist any temptation to comprise with the world and its pagan values. It also spells out the censures reserved for those who fail in this regard. It summons Christians to stamp out evil in our own communities and to personally commit ourselves to wipe out all evil, never compromising with it. We must practice loyal resistance through the power of the risen Lord, to the unchristian values which surround us on every side. With the call to moral commitment to resist evil, the book of Revelation calls Christians and non-Christians to repentance and commitment. Jesus is not just the Lord of the Christian world. He is Lord over the entire universe. Through the book, Jesus is calling all people to repentance and to faithful resistance to pagan influences and values. Now, although Revelation is meant for all people in general, we should not lose sight of the fact that it speaks to each one of us individually. We must note that the purpose of the book is not just to calculate numbers and to figure out who is 666. Nor to be concerned with finding out who the ant-Christ is-Russia, Obama or any one else. Revelation insists that we resist worldwide pagan influences and unchristian attitudes in our own relationships-between husbands and wives, parents and children, ourselves and others. So Revelation says "Compromise in any of the teachings and value system of Jesus Christ is out of the question for the followers of Jesus Christ. If our present day values do not match the value system of Jesus Christ,

the book of Revelation reminds us to resist them both as individuals and as a community.

The Christology of the book of Revelation, when compared with that of other writings of the New Testament, is very revealing. Constantly the attributes of God are ascribed to Christ, as in the opening vision of the opening chapter, which is significantly a vision of Christ and not of God. Christ is confessed as Alpha and Omega (22:13), as God is also (1:8). The implications of the claim are drawn out in the book as a whole, wherein Christ is presented as the mediator of creation (3:13), as He is of redemption (ch. 5) and of the final Kingdom (19:11ff). More central is the concept of Christ as the Lamb of God, which reflects a highly original insight into the relation of Jewish and Christian interpretation of the Messiah. This makes a clear and powerful correlation between Revelation and Matthew's Gospel, the second text for our theme. As we may recall, the special concern of Matthew's writing is to place Jesus of Nazareth within the traditions of God's chosen people and to show how this same Jesus burst the bond of those traditions and brought them to fulfillment. Like Revelation, Matthew identifies Jesus as the Son of God. Both identify God's people through the tension between tradition and the new way.

### The Letters to the Churches

The book of Revelation begins with letters to the seven churches of Asia. These letters are set in every case in relation to the vision described in chapter one, to the situation of the addressed, and to the closing vision of the kingdom of Christ and the city of God in chapters twenty through twenty two. Since there were many churches in Asia Minor at the time of John's writing, these seven were selected by Christ because they represent the conditions of all the churches at that time. So the seven letters were addressed to all the churches then in existence. Also the seven churches are named in a definite order. By noting the location of the seven cities on the map of Asia Minor, you will see that they form a rough circle coincident with the main trade route of that time. The circle begins at Ephesus and moves northward through Smyrna toward Pergamum, then returns southeast through Thyatira, Sardis, and Philadelphia to Laodicea, finally returning westward to Ephesus. The completing of the circle, together with the total of seven churches (signifying completeness), implies that this group of churches represents the Church universal. By the generalization which concludes each one, the messages to the individual congregations are applied to all the churches and to those beyond their circle in Christendom generally.

As we get to the seventh letter addressed to the seventh church, the name Laodicea suggests that the church was full of lukewarm Christians who possessed status, wealth and knowledge but did not use them for the benefit of the faithful. Laodicea's position at an intersection of three imperial trade roads favored its development as a commercial and administrative Centre. The city was known for three major things- its banks, its linen and wool industry, and medical school with widely famous medicines. In Roman times it became the wealthiest city in Phrygia, so that when it suffered all but total destruction by earthquake in AD60, it refused the offer of imperial aid, which other similarly affected cities were glad to accept. Various

indications in the seven letters reflect John's awareness of the circumstances which conditioned life in the cities of the seven churches, but no letter shows it so clearly as the letter to the Laodiceans.

Christ speaks to this church as He who is true God, as He who is the Author and Finisher of our faith. As He who rules all things as the Creator and Maker of all things. Significantly, the coming of Christ is never mentioned in the letter to Laodicea, and this is the only letter in which Christ stands outside, knocking and appealing to the individual for entrance. He came for the Philadelphians, but the Laodiceans were left behind. Why? Because they were lukewarm. So Christ threatens with eternal destruction, for they have quenched the Spirit given at their baptism through sloth and attention to temporal matters. This is evident from the tepid use they make of their riches in helping the needy and from their failure to profit others through their study of the Scriptures. Such behavior is hypocrisy and dishonors God. And so the Lord says to them that they are neither cold nor hot, that is that they are neither unbelieving nor believing, for they are all things to all men. The Laodiceans do not reject the gospel of Christ, nor do they affirm it with joy. They maintain it without conviction, without enthusiasm, without reflection on its implications to life. So alien to the spirit of Christ is the religious profession of the Laodiceans.

"I know your works," says the Lord, "you are neither cold nor hot." He who is fervent in the Spirit is hot, for the apostle speaks of those who are fervent in the Spirit. Likewise he who lacks the power and indwelling of the Holy Spirit is cold. But you, he says, are lukewarm. He calls that person lukewarm who in baptism received the communion of the Holy Spirit but has quenched that grace through sloth and attention to temporary matters. And so, this divine directive: "Do not quench the Holy Spirit." Would that you would be either hot, aglow by the work of the Spirit, or totally cold, unbaptized and utterly void of the Spirit's grace, but not lukewarm. For the person who has the mental fire of the Spirit come to maturity, since the senses have been trained to distinguish that which is good from that which is evil, and that person is spiritual. And that person who has never received the grace of the Spirit, yet may hope at some time to receive it, and so is not counted among the hopeless. But that person who is lukewarm is moribund and moving toward death, and risks losing both baptism and previous zeal. They learn good and do evil. They repose in the law and know its intent and approve of those things that are the more profitable. They have the form of knowledge and of truth in the law. They do not do what they preach and so confess God by words but deny Him by deeds.

To have enough religion to disguise one's need of a living faith is to be in worse condition than having no faith at all. An honest atheist is more acceptable to the Lord than a self-satisfied religious man, for such a man's religion has blunted his conscience and blinded him to his need for repentance. The road to the cross has always been easier for the republican than for the Pharisee. And since they who are neither cold nor hot must of necessity be lukewarm, they produce nausea, the Lord says "I will vomit you from my mouth."

The metaphor signifies abhorrent rejection, and puts in picture form the adverse verdict in judgement such as we find in Matthew 7:23. It is nevertheless to be

observed that the judgement has not yet been carried out. Verse 16 does not express an irremediable present rejection, but a threat of what will happen if there is no change of heart on the part of the laodiceans. The burden of the rest of the letter therefore constitutes an urgent appeal for repentance, that the Laodiceans may not suffer this fate but have part in the inheritance of God's Kingdom.

### Revelation And Our Theme

Revelation addresses serious questions about how Christians are to live in a larger, often hostile society. We may not know people today who are compelled to such veneration of political power as was the case when John wrote, but we don't have to look far to see the harassment or even murder of those who oppose governmental oppression in the name of Christian love and concern for the poor and powerless. The most perplexing cases are those in which governments of so called Christian or secular countries purposely promote policies that run directly counter to the ethical teachings of Christianity. Revelation speaks about such experiences. It warns us against the temptation to be silent or look the other way in the presence of evil and injustice.

The book of Revelation not only prepares Christians for the present conflict in the church but makes the hope of the church alive. All that was lost to the human race in Genesis is regained in Revelation. In Genesis we find a curse but in Revelation we see a new creation. Genesis begins the story of redemption and Revelation climaxes the story. In Genesis satan enters and in Revelation he makes his exit. In Genesis the tree of life is lost but in Revelation the same tree is regained. In Genesis there is separation and isolation but in Revelation there is reunion and communion. In Genesis fellowship is lost but in Revelation fellowship is restored. In Genesis Paradise is lost but in Revelation Paradise is regained. In every sense, Revelation is the consummation of the revealed word of God.

Finally, the grand sweep of Revelation should lead us to resist the kind of pessimism that looks at the vastness of evil in the world and decides that any effort to change things would be a waste of time. Such judgements are false because Christians are not to measure what is true or right by statistics. Such judgements are arrogant because God is the only one who can determine what's worth it. Such judgements are demonic because they only contribute to the hold that evil and pessimism have on human lives. Revelation is not a book aimed at scaring Christians into being good, rather it is aimed at encouraging them in the face of the most awful shape that evil can assume: when it takes all the trappings of divine, imperial power; when it also has the force of local opinion behind it, when even some religious leaders are lined up against the few who would resist. Yet it is the faithful few who share the victory that Christ's death has won over evil. The book of Revelation strongly says to the Church and to all men "Do not fold your hands and watch evil overtake good. Don't just keep complaining against the evils of our time. Provide alternatives!. Don't just take a stand; Make a move."

## APPLICATION OF THE THEME TO ABIA STATE

We congratulate our dear governor Okezie Victor Ikpeazu- PhD, his wife, and all Abians on the 27th anniversary of the creation of our state. We can't thank God enough for His protection, providence and sustenance. We express our appreciation to the governor for his good and progressive vision for the state which is evident in the infrastructural and social advancement he has made for the short length of time he has been in office. Like the city of Laodicea, Abia is blessed with huge human and natural resources which if judiciously harnessed and utilized would position her on a higher developmental plain than she is at the moment. We therefore enjoin our Governor to remain focused on his vision. Remember, dear governor that a wise man does not let he who pushes him determine where he will land. Because whatever becomes the outcome of the fall will be the responsibility of he who falls and not of the one who pushes. So our governor, as you continue your mission in Abia, we enjoin you to make a conscious move to reposition Abia. Look around and select mature, well meaning, God fearing Abians to assist you in governance. Always seek and pay close attention to the advice of some of the Church leaders in the state. In doing so, you will not stumble. Be assured of our prayers and partnership.

We call on all Abians to be patient with the present administration considering where we were, where we are, and where we hope to be. Let us all prayerfully support the government by sincerely performing all our civic duties. We call on all government agencies, especially those who collect revenues to please reconsider the level of harassment, obstruction and risk they pose to Abians on our roads. We believe there should be better and more civilized ways of collecting revenues than posing danger to the citizenry and chasing visitors away from our state.

## TO OUR NATION NIGERIA

We congratulate all citizens of Nigeria on the celebration of our 58th independence anniversary. Nigeria as a nation must remain eternally grateful to God for continually delivering us from self destruction. We cannot express enough shock over the current incidents of killing going on in different parts of the country. What shocks us most is that in the midst of this unprecedented loss of innocent lives and properties, our political leaders are only concerned with enriching their personal pockets and planning who loots the national treasures for the next four years. We remind all the national and state political leaders from the states where these killing are going on that they will stand before God to answer for every of the blood shed while they sit quietly feasting in their chambers and homes. Due to the goings on in the nation, our nation has seen more agitations from different groups in the last three years than in any other time in recent history. It is not our goal in this address to justify not not justify the case of those agitating. But we must advise the agitators that identifying area where they are short changed or marginalized is a good stand to take, but making the right move to right the wrong is another and the most important part. We must diligently look in house to see if there are catalysts that are facilitating the said marginalization. As our people would say, it is the mouse at home that tells the one outside that there is fish in the closet. Furthermore, we

must ensure that while we continue to make our case, we don't do anything that will subject those we hope to liberate to further economic or security hazard.

The truth of the matter is that there is no one at the helm of affairs of this nation at the present, who has a clue of what he or she is doing. No vision, no focus, and no sense of direction. Unfortunately, pride and greed will not allow them to give way voluntarily. Like the city and church in Laodicea, this nation is at the risk of being vomited out of the mouth of the Lord of economic, political, and social sanity. To avoid this looming doom, the citizens of this nation must make the needed move and rescue the nation from total chaos and anarchy. History bears witness that the salvation of the very country that had same fate as Nigeria, came by the citizens deciding to take their future in their hands.

A political situation where a particular group of individuals gang up every four years to loot our resources, invest them overseas where their families are, must be rejected by the citizens at all cost. The business of changing the name of the gangs every four years and same individuals being recycled is not only ungodly and undemocratic, but an assault on the humanity of the rest of us as well as a national embarrassment. It is not enough to sit, complain and suffer, we must reject any temporary gain that may mortgage our future and that of our children. The preparation for and the activities during the forth coming general elections must be an opportunity to take our future into our hands and cut the path for the future of Nigeria by the citizens. No compromise, no intimidation.

The youth of this nation must rise up and prepare themselves to really be the leaders of tomorrow. It is not enough to argue whether we are lazy or not. We must make a conscious move towards the Nigeria of our dream by taking the acquisition of quality education seriously. By rejecting titles and qualifications we did not work for. We must be actively involved in the political activities that will define our future. Nigerian youth must peacefully and wisely, but systematically prepare and position themselves to take over from the present political terrorists running our nation.

## TO THE CHURCH

In our text, we hear Jesus saying to His disciples, ““You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot. “You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.”(Matthew 5:13-16 NIV). This challenging and empowering injunction has some implications for the disciples then, and the Church today. Firstly, it implies that the Church exists in a world that is both decaying, tasteless and in utter darkness. Secondly, that the preservation, taste, and lightening of the world are not just the responsibility of the Church but are also the very essence of her existence. Thirdly, that accomplishment of this responsibility by the Church must be decisive, practical, evident, and testimonial. And fourthly, that God awaits to be glorified by the successful accomplishment of this responsibility.

As the early church began her mission she was confronted with the social and economic imbalance of the time which was contrary to her ethics and value system. In dealing with the issue, “All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had. With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And God’s grace was so powerfully at work in them all that there were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned land or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales and put it at the apostles’ feet, and it was distributed to anyone who had need.” (Acts 4:32-35 NIV). In this case the church did not just take a stand against the social issue of economic imbalance by just preaching against and condemning those who practiced it, rather they made a move towards providing a practical alternative of dealing with the issue. They demonstrated in practical terms how the economic gap could be breached. The Church practically showed the rest of the society that the only godly use of individual wealth is to serve the need of others. Same is expected of the Church today. Like the early church, the church in Nigeria today cries, and very audibly condemns the high levels of social and economic inequalities of our time. Different denominations have gone further to take a stand against these inequalities by building schools, hospitals and other such facilities. But like the church in Laodicea, these facilities are neither accessible to nor affordable by even the poor members of the very churches that built them. And even when you go into these modus operandi of these institutions and facilities, most do not differ from those run by the politicians or non-Christian proprietors. What a high level of lukewarmness and hypocrisy?

As an immediate fall out of the early church’s move to create a level economic play ground for all, it was faced with the evil of deceit, hypocrisy, insincerity, and fraud. As we read “Now a man named Ananias, together with his wife Sapphira, also sold a piece of property. With his wife’s full knowledge he kept back part of the money for himself, but brought the rest and put it at the apostles’ feet. Then Peter said, “Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land? Didn’t it belong to you before it was sold? And after it was sold, wasn’t the money at your disposal? What made you think of doing such a thing? You have not lied just to human beings but to God.” When Ananias heard this, he fell down and died. And great fear seized all who heard what had happened. Then some young men came forward, wrapped up his body, and carried him out and buried him. About three hours later his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. Peter asked her, “Tell me, is this the price you and Ananias got for the land?” “Yes,” she said, “that is the price.” Peter said to her, “How could you conspire to test the Spirit of the Lord? Listen! The feet of the men who buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out also.” At that moment she fell down at his feet and died. Then the young men came in and, finding her dead, carried her out and buried her beside her husband. Great fear seized the whole church and all who heard about these events.” (Acts 5:1-11 NIV).

In handling this matter, the young church demonstrated that the value system of the Church is completely different from that of the world and that all who come to Christ must come sincerely and wholeheartedly or be "vomited out of His mouth." There's no doubt in our mind that, if this incident were to have happened in the Church in Nigeria today, a panel of inquiry would have been set up to investigate Ananias and his wife. And when the panel presents their report, another would be set up to analyze the findings of the first panel. And so by the time the panels that would analyze the reports of the panels of inquiry would have finished their work, Ananias and the wife might have used the money they kept to either buy their innocence or finance unending inquiries and investigations. Sign of a lukewarm church. Sign of a church that is running the risk of being vomited out of the mouth of her Lord, Master, and Savior. We must move to avoid this.

The issue of unity among Christians is key in the authentication of the Christian message. As our Lord Himself prayed in John's gospel "...that they may be one" (John 17:22), the early Church took seriously the issue of Christian unity. In the progressive years of Christianity in Nigeria, three of the main established churches-The Anglican, The Methodist, and the Presbyterian took this stand of unity seriously and made practical moves that gave birth to three major institutions in our nation- Queen Elizabeth Hospital, now FMC, Umuahia, Trinity (Union) Theological College Umuahia, and Emmanuel Theological College Ibadan. I don't think anyone would think that the establishment of these institutions by these three churches, each having her own theology, liturgy and practices, was with no differences, difficulties and disagreements. Our fathers then were mature, mission minded, and heavenly focused enough to overcome all this. This "Ecumenical" move, no doubt unified and boosted the Christian witness and mission in the country. Unfortunately about two decades ago, a major leg of "the tripod stand" was broken. The unity could not stand a mere pushing of the enemy of the Gospel, resulting to the kicking out of both the Methodist and Presbyterian Churches from Trinity College Umuahia, and so remove the "Union" that was part of the College from inception. What a tragedy! We may not have all the details about the feud, but the sole interest of this address on this is that no excuse or reason is enough for "The Christian Church" to knowingly cast doubt in the minds of those she offers salvation through the Gospel of Christ. Bitterness, Unforgiving spirit, disunity, and Uncharitableness cannot be marks of the Church of Christ. So this separation and disunity, no doubt, puts a big question mark on the sincerity of these denominations in proclaiming a faith they claim centers on love, peace, unity and forgiveness. This confuses our youth on the practicability of the Gospel we preach to them and "the Church" we encourage them to be committed to. Let me quickly add that since this sad and avoidable removal of "Unity" in a Christian institution whose primary mission is to produce the "army" that would fight to unite the sinful world with her loving Lord, the said Trinity College Umuahia does not seem to have known any peace. By the way, I am a proud alumnus of TRINICOL). What am saying is that only taking the stand to preach unity, forgiveness, and tolerance for the sake of the Gospel is not enough, rather a practical move to demonstrate these Christian virtues no matter the urge to the contrary, is what is required of the Church and same is what this synod is asking of our church.

What really is the benefit of being a Christian in Nigeria? I mean, with all the wealth and numerical strength of Christianity in Nigeria, what does the church do toward the protection of her members against sinful, economic, physical and violent attacks and harassment? A church whose leaders swim in huge wealth while the followers are among the poorest in the land. A church that does not create any wealth, neither does she teach her members to do so. Rather members are encouraged to pray and wish they could become millionaires through miracles, wonders, and breakthroughs.

Recently, hardly does a week pass without news of the killing of Christians and the destruction of their properties. Embarrassingly we have an umbrella body whose objective are, among others, to serve as the basis of response to the unity of the Church and to promote mutual understanding, peace and unity among Nigerians through the propagation of the gospel, to act as a clearing house for common statements by Christians and to act as watchdog of the spiritual and moral welfare of Nigeria. In one of those killings CAN asked Christians to carry play cards and stand in front of their churches as a protest to the killings. So members of St. Stephen's Church Umuobasi Amavor will carry play cards and stand here and by so doing President Buhari in Abuja would feel their anger and respond. What a joke. It's like you telling someone who slaps you that if he does it again, you will cry. Instead of making practical moves to defend Christians and challenge these attacks, what we hear everyday is how Christian leaders take turns in visiting the President of Nigeria and encouraging him to continue the good job he's been doing. A few weeks ago one of such leader advised the President to remain focused and avoid distractions. So if the President heeds to his advise, which unfortunately he will, the killing of Christians and innocent Nigerians will go on unabated.

Everywhere you go in the last decade, you will hear this recurring "noise"- "Islamization of Nigeria". Christians all over Nigeria in their ranks and files keep sing the song of "Islamic agenda" as if the word "agenda" is exclusive to or synonymous with Islam. I have always asked what is wrong with a group of people having an agenda? What is out of place if followers of a faith feel that theirs is the best and plan that all may be made to follow them? Is this not the whole idea of "the great commission? Yes the mode of evangelization may be wrong, but what is wrong in evangelism itself? Does Islamic agenda stop Christians from having an agenda? What and where is the Christian -CAN agenda to "Christianize" Nigeria?

How can there be when every Church group and their leaders are more interested in their personal material gains and status than the propagation of the Gospel, the peace and unity of the nation, and the souls of the citizenry.

There are also the smaller situations of daily life in which Christians prefer to remain silent and apathetic. Some would require us to act as a group, a church, or group of churches to oppose wrong in the local community. Perhaps we allow people to slander or make fun of what we believe in rather than speak up. We would rather avoid controversy that questions opinions, attitudes, and practices that we think are wrong. Of course some times people remain silent because they do not know what to say in defense of what they believe. People often want to defend their beliefs, but lack the words with which to do so. Like the Church in Laodicea, the Church in

Nigeria needs go beyond the parade of financial and numerical affluence and use her God given affluence to create wealth, fight economic and social inequality among her members. We must go beyond the knowledge of what is right and wrong, and make practical moves towards providing alternatives to the evil bedeviling our society. A situation where the Church cannot give a definitive direction to her members on theological, moral, and polity issues leaves every member to their interpretations and to "every wind of doctrine" We need to do everything we can to help one another become more articulate believers. After all, as Revelation insists, no Christian is immune from the obligation to bear witness. We must avoid the danger of being vomited out of the mouth of the Lord Jesus Christ.

To feel threatened by the present state of the Church is a tool in the devil's hand to hinder revival. God reminded Elijah that there were seven hundred people who had not bowed their knees to Baal. So we remind the church and all Christians that we are living in the age of evangelism. This is the most spiritual harvest period that the world has ever known, and the mustard tree of Matthew 13:31-32 has literally filled the earth. In spite of widespread apostasy, God has promised to send a gracious outpouring of His Spirit at the end of this age, even as He did at Pentecost. It will be as the latter and former rain unto the earth, and God is looking for cooperative partners in order to bring this to pass. May He count on you, me, and our Diocese.

### OUR CHARGE

Surely, the world will not be destroyed by men who do evil, but by those who watch them without doing anything. Whatever we believe in does not affect our lives until we act on it; in the same way, we must continue to walk through a path, no matter how rough and dangerous until a new path is chatted. We live in a world filled with evil and gross ungodliness. Alongside lives the Church charged with the responsibility of ridding the world of evil and saturate it with godliness, love and unity which are the initial plan of the creator. In our Matthew text (5:14), our Lord gives the Church the stand she must take in this dark world - that of the light, a perfect alternative to darkness. He further directs that their stand as the light must be strategic and well defined. However in verse 16, Jesus directs Christians to go beyond mere presenting themselves as the light, but make a practical move of shinning, warning that it is only by shinning that their being light can be relevant in the world. The word "so" in the phrase 'so shine', emphasizes the fact that the shining must be practical, evident and productive. Therefore, we, the Church must go beyond complaining and condemning the evil and unrighteousness of the society but practicality show the world through our words and actions the alternative life style to evil and unrighteousness. Let us dedicate half the time, resources and energy we spend in praying for economic breakthrough to creating wealth and employment opportunities for our members and so solve the problem of economic imbalance in our nation. Instead of agitating and complaining of political and social marginalization by other faiths and groups, the Church must consciously disciple her members so that those who end up in political and social services may serve with the fear of God, provide the Christian alternative to the corrupt practices bedeviling our nation, and so advance our cause. AFTER ALL, THE CHRISTIAN VALUE SYSTEM IS

NOT ABOUT PREACHING , CONDEMNING OR COMPLAINING ; IT IS ALL ABOUT PROVIDING PRACTICAL GODLY ALTERNATIVES.

**A&M 303**

1. Soldiers of Christ, arise,  
And put your armor on,  
Strong in the strength which God  
supplies,  
Through His eternal Son;
- 2 Strong in the Lord of Hosts,  
And in His mighty power,  
Who in the strength of Jesus trusts  
Is more than conqueror.
3. Stand then in His great might,  
With all His strength endued;  
And take, to arm you for the fight,  
The panoply of God,
4. From strength to strength go on;  
Wrestle, and fight, and pray;  
Tread all the powers of darkness  
down,  
And win the well-fought day:
5. That, having all things done,  
And all your conflicts past,  
Ye may o'ercome through Christ  
alone,

And stand complete at last. Amen

**ABU 221**

1. Ony' ugu Kraist, bilie,  
Yiri ih'agha-gi;  
D'ike n'ike Chuku nenye  
Site n'Okpara-Ya.
2. D'ike nim'Onye-nw'ayi,  
Nim' ike uku-Ya;  
Onye tukwasiri Y'obi  
Gabu onye-nmeri.
3. Guzo kwa n'ike-Ya,  
Yikwas'ike-Ya dum;  
Chilie ih'agha nke Chuku  
Guzogide nd'iro.
4. K'ih'agha-gi di'ocha,  
Nече ya nche mgbe dum;  
Naga n'iru Ony'isi-gi,  
Nekpa kwa ekpere.
5. Si n'ike ba n'ike,  
Lus' Ekwensu ugu;  
Zoda ike ochichiri,  
Buru onye-nmeri. Amen

**!And to Him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you faultless before His throne; to the only wise God be all glory honor and majesty now till the end of the age. Amen.**

**We appreciate your presence and patience.**

**Your Brother and Bishop,**

**+Nath, Aba Ngwa North.**