

Pastoral letter from 1st Session of the 9th Synod

DIOCESE OF NSUKKA

(ANGLICAN COMMUNION)

1. REV. ALOYSIUS EZE AGBO (JP)

(BISHOP OF NSUKKA)

PASTORAL LETTER FROM THE 1ST SESSION OF THE 9TH SYNOD

Dearly beloved people of God,

Grace and peace be to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ forever, Amen.

Under divine guidance, the first session of the synod of our beloved diocese held at St. James Anglican Church, Orba, Orba Archdeaconry, Udenu Local Government Area, Enugu State from Wednesday 24th October to Sunday 28th October, 2018. The blessings of God on our dear Diocese and our individual families within the year under review are numerous but confronted with storms of different magnitude. Nonetheless, we took solace in God and His faithfulness has remained unfathomable. Brethren, we are glad on your continued commitment and love to things of God and His Church. Despite the harsh economic situation, this year we witnessed improvement structurally, spiritually and otherwise across the Diocese. We thank God for your moral and emotional strength through the dark and tragic seasons of our diocese and the loss of our pioneer bishop, clergymen and some members as well as other challenges. The lord has comforted us so be comforted.

The theme of this year's Synod is The Pursuit of God. This is born out of a burden to refocus the church on the need to see the primacy and centrality of pursuing God as our foremost Christian calling. The Church is now in an unfortunate state, where many Christians now see God as means of achieving their desires but not the End of their lives. The implications of this aberration are superficial worship and 'polished' idolatry. This is because once the Christian gets what he is looking for from God, he forgets the God who gave the provision and then worships the provision or if the Christian does not immediately get from God what he is looking for, he goes into idolatrous alternative means. Both are wrong.

The sincere desire to know God personally and intimately as a primary Christian calling is now dwindling. At best, people now seek God just to get solutions to their temporal problems, not to deeply commune with their Creator.

Brethren, it should not be so with you. We encourage every member and all the churches to make deliberate efforts to;

seek after God,

commune with Him deeply so as to see Him with our inner eye;

commune with Him with an expectation to truly reflect Him;

know Him intimately and personally;

thirst for Him such that we can say, like the Psalmist,

"As the deer pants after the water brooks, so pants my soul after You, Oh God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before Him? – Ps.42:1, 2.

Beloved, our January fasting and praying as well as other programs should be a deliberate attempt to meet with God at the mountain. We must seek God beyond material things.

Our burden for a definite and practical action towards the

pursuit of God has led to the vision of floating a Diocesan Assembly, a meeting to focus and deepen our relationship encounter with God. It will be **a 5- day Annual Diocesan Convocation** to be known as **WORD ALIVE CONVOCATION (WAC)**. Pray and make deliberate plans towards it and God will bless you.

The Synod through the wisdom of God decided to relax the one month burial policy of the diocese to a maximum of three months except in cases where the bishop see a genuine reason to can grant extension. But it should be noted that the issue is not just the extension of burial waiting time from one to three months but how do we curtail the negative socio-economic impact on our people. We are gravely worried by the extreme financial commitment & wastage by our people in executing funerals for the dead. Every funeral is now a heavy capital project no matter the financial standing of families of the dead. The negative impact is that most average people in communities continually live in debt from one funeral ceremony to the other. As the conscience of the society, we must continue to work against this negative trend.

Brethren the sustaining grace of God is still keeping us to this time when we are planning to celebrate our 25th anniversary as a diocese which is on the 11th January 20189 but will be celebrated in February 4th – 10th 2019. We remark with enthusiasm the importance of this coming landmark event and encourage every member of our diocese to support it. An anniversary uniform will be produced for it. Schedules for football, quiz and match past competitions have been communicated to all Archdeacons and Administrators. We expect that every Archdeaconry will joyfully participate in all these events. Please continue to pray for the success of the anniversary.

As we go on in the pursuit of God and grow spiritually, the synod stressed the need to properly understand the actual meaning of spirituality which should not be necessarily based

on running programs but in actual discipleship and raising the spiritual lives of the members of the church, leading them to Christ. We also encourage the clergy to endeavor to make adequate enquiry concerning the genuineness of any minister before inviting them in the church program. Your spirituality with regards to discharging your ministry is crucial.

We encourage our ministers to avoid any practice or dealings that will undermine their spiritual virtue and godliness especially on matters that concerns ministry appatenesis and material gains. Were instructed that making demands by the ministers for gifts/rights and benefits from the church should be avoided as it compromises the integrity of their calling. However, we strongly encourage the church not to avoid an active involvement in the welfare and taking care of the Priest. The church should not to make the pursuit of money as a central goal for ministry.

We have noticed the zeal at which our Churches are committed in raising projects across the Diocese; this is encouraging and we thank God for that. We are still urging our Churches to find a way of engaging in serious agricultural enterprise and other worthy endeavor, as that will go a long way in empowering our people. However we underscores the negligence of some churches in proper record keeping of their activities and stress the need for Priests to motivate this, again, the priests on transfer is charged to leave a proper and detailed handover letter before departure, particularly taking into consideration a proper record of all the activities within his jurisdiction especially on projects. We express complete disapproval to the habit of poor response and non-payment of assessment by some churches under the leadership of their priest especially in the light of the fact that some of them are still engaged in other huge church projects. This will not be condoned anymore in the diocese. You are encouraged to make positive effort and the Lord shall be your helper.

Brethren, due to the limited time during the synod in session

as limited for giving archdeaconry report, the Synod has adopted that a one day pre-synod conference will hold at the cathedral on an agreed date to read and deliberate on the archdeaconry reports whose minutes will be attached to the synod proceedings and report booklet.

In the spirit of evangelism and missions we are prayerfully planning to plant a Hausa speaking church in two strategic locations in our area; one in Nsukka and one in Obollo-afor. This is to serve as a place of succor and to reach out to the Hausa Christian migrants to the southeast and for reaching the unreached among the northern traders with the gospel.

Brethren, paucity of fund has been part of our greatest challenge affecting administrative responsibility in the diocese. Among other efforts done to meet this challenge and following the resolutions from both the Nsukka Anglican Consultative Forum (NACOF) and Nsukka Anglican Clergymen in diaspora, an endowment fund should be raised and invested and the proceeds used in running the projects and programs of the diocese. The diocesan board has set up a committee tagged Nsukka Diocesan Development and Investment Committee (NDDIC) to raise an endowment fund of 250 million naira in five years from 2019 to 2023. Every member of the diocese is strongly encouraged to make individual contribution to this vision.

From the experience of Psalm 63, all members and the church is charged never to replace the giver with the gifts but holding tenaciously unto God coupled with a strong desire for deeper communion with him. It is therefore our wish and prayer that through this year's Synod theme, "The Pursuit of God" Psalm 63:1-11, all the members of the Diocese is charged to press further on these matters in order to refocus our lives and the church on the need to see the primacy and centrality of pursuing God as our foremost Christian calling.

People of God, it is evident that God is doing great things for us in this Diocese, and in Nigeria but greater and more

marvelous things are yet to spring up when we rekindle our desire in the genuine pursuit of God. Let us therefore pray that God will grant us the grace to pursue God.

And now unto Him who is able to keep you from falling I commit you; may the Lord bless you and keep you. May He lift up the light of His countenance upon you and be gracious unto you and give you peace. May the blessings of God Almighty, the Father, the Son,, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. Amen.

Your Friend, Brother and Bishop,

His Lordship, The Right Reverend Aloysius Eze Agbo (JP)