

2020 FATHERS' SUNDAY MESSAGE

FATHERS Day Message

“Have no fear, for I am with you; do not be looking about in trouble, for I am your God; I will give you strength, yes. I will be your helper, yes, my true right hand will be your support” (Isaiah 41:10)

Dearly

beloved people of God, I am delighted to address you in times like this. It is true that entire world is facing a very difficult time in history, and we know obviously that it has not been easy for many of us. But we know that God will surely show us mercy and deliver us from this great storm of Covid-19 Pandemic for He says “weeping may endure for a night but joy comes in the morning” (Psalm 30:5).

As

we all know, Fathers' Sunday celebration is an age long tradition of the church. It is a celebration that is not observed as a mere tradition, but an opportunity to appraisal the fathers for their role both in the families as well as the Church. It equally provides time for fathers to evaluate themselves and seeking

God's grace in remaining faithful to their responsibilities.

On behalf of the entire members of our beloved Anglican diocese of Nsukka, we congratulate all our fathers for this year's fathers' Sunday and wish them a glorious celebration.

Though this year's celebration is coming in the midst of the challenges of Covid 19 Pandemic, we still rejoice in the Lord, who is both the God of the mountain as well as the God of the valley.

This year, God has laid in our heart, the theme, "RESPONSIBLE FATHERHOOD" as drawn from 1 Tim. 5:8 "But if any provide not for this own and especially for those of his own house, he has denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel". This is the theme that will engage us this year and much time will be devoted to discuss it in our conference that will be rescheduled as the challenge of Covid 19 will make it difficult to hold as earlier scheduled. But suffice it to say that, Paul's description and emphasis of Christian faith was not just a confession but a way of living. Fathers have great responsibility in the home. A neglect of this duty is so far a denial of the faith. That is to say,

if we profess faith in Christ while we refuse to care for those in need especially our own family and relatives, is to show a "dead" faith; essentially denying the faith and showing oneself to be less virtuous than an unbeliever. Fathers' authority and responsibility in the home should not just be for self-indulgence or pleasure, but for the glory of God.

As we celebrate our dear fathers, we appeal to them, to use this moment of celebration to be a source of encouragement in this difficult time to all people starting from our homes. Fathers should intentionally strengthen their relationship with their wives and children through genuine love and care. This is also an opportunity to demonstrate the Christian love or Christian love to our neighbours and relatives. We encourage both individuals and groups to visit the aging fathers of faith who can no longer attend church programmes regularly.

As you are all aware, our churches have not been what we they used to be since March. We have passed through challenging times. And almost every facet of the society including the Church has been affected. This period has challenged our ecclesiology in the light of the "new normal". And by every indication there is need for

a
paradigm shift in ministry.

We
are required to change our traditions our organizational
ecology and ministry
praxis. We are seeing the need for the ministry of the church
should be
decentralized. Where ministry should focus in the homes and
lives of church
members and in the community. This requires
that the Church programs should be organised for equipping
members through sound teachings while edification,
relationship, mission and
multiplication are done in the homes and small groups.

As
I conclude, I enjoin you to continue to encourage one another
in the Lord and
be steadfast, always abounding in the work of the Lord,
because you know that
your labour in the Lord is not in vain.
May we stand as we sing from SS & S 561/Abu 188 stanzas 1 & 2

Give
to the winds thy fears;

Hope,
and be undismayed:

God
hears thy sighs, and counts thy tears;

God
shall lift up thy head

Through
waves, and clouds, and storms,

He
gently clears thy way;

Wait
thou His time; so shall the night

Soon
end in joyous day.

CMF
Christ our Foundation

CMF
Christ our Example

CMF
Destined to Lead

Happy
Celebration!

Your

Brother, Friend and Bishop,

Rt.

Rev. A. E. Agbo (JP)

(Bishop of Nsukka)