

AN ADDRESS TO THE THIRD SESSION OF THE EIGHT SYNOD OF THE DIOCESE OF NSUKKA AT ST. PAUL'S CHURCH, UDA, UDA ARCHDEACONRY, IN IGBO-EZE NORTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF ENUGU STATE ON FRIDAY 27TH OCTOBER, 2017 BY

HIS LORDSHIP, RT. REV. ALOYSIUS EZE AGBO, JP (BISHOP OF NSUKKA)

PROTOCOL

The Archbishop of the Ecclesiastical Province of Enugu, and Bishop of Enugu, Your Grace, The Most Rev'd Dr Emmanuel Olisa Chukwuma OON,

My Lord Bishops,

The President of the Women's Ministries, Diocese of Nsukka, Mrs. Ifeoma A. Agbo (JP) (Mama Nsukka),

Your Excellency, Rt. Hon. Lawrence Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi (Gburugburu), The Executive Governor of Enugu State.

Your Excellency, Senator Ike Ekweremadu, The Deputy Senate President, Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Senator Chukwuka Utazi, The Senator of Enugu North Senatorial Zone.

The Chancellor of our Diocese, Sir Hon. Justice F.I.N. Ngwu,

The Deputy Chancellor, Lady Prof Ifeoma Enemuo,

The Registrar, Sir Barr Onyinyechi E. Ugwulor,

Other Legal Luminaries here present,

The Representative of Nsukka/Igbo-Eze South Federal Constituency, Rt. Hon. Dr. Pat. Asadu, KSP,

The Representative of Udenue/Igbo-Eze North Federal Constituency, Rt. Hon. Dennis Agbo, KSP,

The Member representing Nsukka West in the Enugu State House of Assembly, Hon. Dame Nkechi Omeje Ogbu,

The Vice Presidents of the Synod,

Respected Members of the Clergy,

All the Traditional Rulers here present,

The Gallant Knights and Ladies of St. Paul,

My Wonderful Nominees,

Distinguished Synod Delegates,

All the invited Guests,

Watchful members of the print and electronic media,

Ladies and Gentlemen.

PREAMBLE

In the name of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit! Amen.

God has remained faithful to us. He has over the years remained our Hope, Strength, Light, Wisdom, Guide, Defence, Refuge, Provider, Sustainer, Inheritance, and Treasure, and the Ruler over our Lives and the Diocese. This is the only secret behind the tremendous growth evident in our endeared and robust Diocese. In sincere thanksgiving to this GOD we say:

My heart is confident in you, O God ...

Wake up, lyre and harp!

I will wake the dawn with my song

I will thank you, LORD, among all the people

I will sing your praises among the nations

For your unfailing love is higher than the heavens

Your faithfulness reaches to the clouds

Be exalted, O God, above the highest heavens

May your glory shine over all the earth.

✠✠✠ Psalms 108:1-5 ✠✠✠

With this heart full of thanks and gratitude to the Almighty God, dearly beloved, we celebrate your presence in this year's Synod. We see the glory of God radiating on you; and what a wonderful thing to be in the fellowship of such lovely, caring, supportive and committed children of God. You are welcome in the name of the Lord to Uda. We wish you a life transforming and historic encounter with YAWEH, the covenant keeping God.

We welcome all our fathers in the Lord from various Dioceses, especially our Archbishop, His Grace, Most Rev. Dr. Emmanuel Olisamedualim Chukwuma, OON. We pray the good Lord to bless you all for coming again to identify with us.

We welcome in a special way our father and mother in the Lord, the pioneer Bishop of our Diocese and his wife, Rt. Rev. Dr. J. C. Ilonuba, JP and Mrs. R. U. Ilonuba (Nnediugwu). Your un-expiring love and unflinching support have encouraged us a lot. We are grateful to you.

I acknowledge the presence of the most beautiful, most loving, most caring and most illustrious woman on earth – a gift to my life and ministry, my wife, Mrs. Ifeoma Anthonia Agbo, JP. We welcome you and pray God's blessings upon you and your endeavours. We also welcome in a special way, the chancellor of our Diocese, Sir Hon. Justice F. I. N. Ngwu. He is a rare gem and an inestimable gift to our Diocese. We welcome the Deputy Chancellor, Lady Prof. Ifeoma Enemu, the Registrar, and Sir Barr. O. E. Ugwulor, and other Legal Officers of the Diocese. We welcome the Vice Presidents of the Synod, the Archdeacons

and their wives, all the clergy and their wives, the gallant knights and ladies of St. Paul, the Diocesan officials, my nominees, chairmen and members of different Boards and Committees, the Lay Pastors and their wives, the Directors, Chaplains of organizations, the Secretariat staff, the Choir, Brigade, Band, Media Crew, Security personnel, Bishops court family and my personal staff. You are all welcome in Jesus name. Amen.

The Sir Dr. Emenike A. Onwurah led Synod Planning Committee has done noble over the years. We are enjoying your intellectual and managerial wonders again this year. Though you have been always available we still welcome you officially and appreciate your commitment. The Archdeacon of Uda and wife, Ven. Dr. George and Mrs. Ebele Asadu, all the Clergy and Lay Pastors in the Archdeaconry and their wives, the Sir Arc. Innocent Agbo led Local Organizing Committee and the entire people of Uda Archeadonry; we thank you so much for wonderful preparations. God bless you.

OUR JOY

We rejoice with those who got appointments/promotions and other blessings. We crave your indulgence to mention few of them:

1. Dr. Mike Ajogwu (SAN), appointment as Chairman of Enugu State Independent Electoral Commission (ENSIEC).
2. Prof. Joshua Umeifekwem ~ Professorship
3. Rev. Canon Prof. Chris Ikem Okoye ~ Professorship
4. Prof Mrs. Uche Onyechi ~ Professorship
5. Prof. Smart Obiora ___ Professorship
6. Lady Dr. Florence Ezeudu ~ Associate Professor
7. Dr. Ezichi A. Ituma ~ Associate Professor
8. Rev. Canon Joe Chukwuma ~ Ph.D
9. Ven. George Asadu ~ Ph.D

We also felicitate with:

1. Rt. Rev. & Mrs. Sosthenes I. Eze, Bishop of Enugu North for the Centenary celebration of their Cathedral Church of St. Mary, Ngwo.
2. Rt. Rev. Prof. & Mrs. Evang. J. Ibeagha, Bishop of Nike for their 10 years of Episcopacy, 30 years of Priestly Ordination and 40 years of wedding Anniversary. Also, for the dedication of the Cathedral Church of St. Cyprian and other projects in Nike Diocese.
3. Rt. Rev Dr. Emmanuel Afam and Dr Mrs Joy Ugwu whose daughter Ekene wedded recently.
4. Prof. Mrs. Ifeoma Stella Madueme for her 50th Birthday celebration

5. Ven. Christian C. Eze for his 50th Birthday.

We also praise God for the gift and blessing of new babies to us through different families in the Diocese especially the following ministers' families, Diocesan officials and nominees:

- § Rev. Nnaemeka & Mrs. Nkiru Ezike - baby boy
- § Rev. & Mrs. Cyprian Ezugwu - baby
- § Rev. & Mrs. Basil Okenyi - baby boy
- § Rev. Dr. Emmanuel & Mrs. Charity Agbo - baby boy
- § Rev. Ejike & Mrs. Helen Nwobi - baby girl
- § Rev. Can. Prof. Chris Ikem & Mrs. Oge Ikem Okoye - baby boy
- § Rev. Oliver & Mrs. Uzoamaka Onyeke - baby boy
- § Rev. Chibunile & Mrs. Blessing Elejere - baby boy
- § Rev. Christian & Mrs. Chinyere Ajibo - baby boy
- § Rev. & Mrs. Onuoha Chigozirm - baby boy
- § Rev. Can. Joel & Mrs. Sabina Ugwoke - baby boy
- § Rev. Samuel & Mrs. Chinyere Olinya - baby boy
- § Rev. Can. Kingsley & Mrs Ifeyinwa Obeta - baby boy
- § Rev. Joshua & Mrs. Rita .L. Ngwoke - baby boy
- § Hon Okey & Barr. Mrs. Amaka Ukwueze - baby girl
- § Ven. Engr. Obidi & Mrs. Azuka Ekpunobi - grand child
- § Rev. Can. Prof. Benjamin & Dr. Mrs Obioma Mba – twin grand children
- § Rev. Canon & Mrs. Williams Okolo - baby boy
- § Ven. Nnamdi & Mrs. Ijeudo - baby boy.
- § Ven. Chijioke & Dr. Mrs Kay Onyechi – grand Son
- § Ven. Eric & Mrs. Florence Ugwu - grand Child
- § Mrs. Priscilia Asogwa - grand child
- § Dr. Shedrack & Mrs. Ijeoma Asogwa - grand child
- § Rev. Can Chris & Mrs. Ngozi Obileke – grand Child

Pastors wives

- § Mrs. Blessing Amah - baby boy
- § Mrs. Chinwendu Ezemagu - baby girl
- § Mrs. Blessing Ugwunwaoti - baby girl

§	Mrs. Lovelyn Ezi	- baby girl
§	Mrs. Charity Asadu	- baby boy
§	Mrs. Charity Eze	- baby boy
§	Mrs. Amarachi Okoli	- baby girl
§	Mrs. Charity Abugu	- baby girl
§	Mrs. Calister Igara	- baby boy
§	Mrs. Promise Opech	- baby boy
§	Mrs. Maurine Ezugwu	- baby
§	Mrs. Eunice Okonkwo	- baby
§	Mrs. Pricilla Nnamani	- baby girl

We rejoice with my daughters (nieces) and their husbands Mr. Okechukwu and Mrs. Ginika Agbodo and Mr. Stanley and Mrs. Lovelyn Ezema for the gift of baby girls. We congratulate my daughter (niece) Deborah who wedded her heart throb, Micheal Okoye few weeks ago.

We equally felicitate with all who wedded and those who had their children wedded. We celebrate other blessings of God on every side and congratulate all of you. May God's name be praised! Amen.

OUR SORROWS

We commiserate with all who lost their loved ones since last Synod. We pray that God will grant them the fortitude to bear the loss. Some of these dear ones that have been called to glory include:

1. Most Rev'd Emmanuel Mani (former Archbishop of Jos/Bishop of Maduguri)
2. Rt. Rev. Prof. John Akao, Bishop of Sabongida-Orah
3. Ven. Nathan Okwu
4. Rev. Felix Nwani
5. Rev. Samuel Ajibo
6. Mrs. Benedeth Aleke (mother in-law of Rev. Canon Joe Chukwuma)
7. Mrs. Grace U. Odezue (mother of Rev. Dan Odezue)
8. Mrs. Ezinne Irene O. Nwosu-Obileke (mother of Rev Canon Chris Obileke)
9. Mr. Sampson O. Ezike (father of Rev. Nnaemeka Ezike)
10. Ezinne Mercy A. N. Ike (Mother of Ven. Prof. Sam Ike)
11. Mrs. Lucy Lolo Obeta (Mother of Ven. Fidelis Obeta)
12. Mrs. Chineze Okwuchukwu (wife of Ven. Emma Okwuchukwu)
13. Mrs. Elizabeth Nwabude Okwor (Mother of Rev. John Okwor)
14. Mrs. Regina Ugwoke (Mother of Rev. Edwin Ugwoke)

15. Mrs. Helen Okike Atta. (Mother of Rev. Gideon Attah)
16. Prof. Engr. Osondu J. Eze-Uzoamaka
17. Princess Esther N. Ezenweze (Nne Okwukwe)
18. Mrs. Mary Ngozi Omeke (Bishop's Wife Nominee)
1. Elder Raphael O. Ozioko (Father in-law of Ven. Dr. Collins Ik. Ugwu)
2. Sir Caleb Obele Okeke (Knight of St. Paul)
3. Elder J. C. Agbo (An intimate friend of the Diocese)
4. Leticia Onwurah (the woman who trained Rev. Sunday Dike)

We continue to remind ourselves, especially those that are in grief, of the word of God that says: "And I heard a voice from heaven saying to me Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them" (Rev. 14:13).

Please accept our condolences.

OUR RESOURCE PERSONS

THE SYNOD PREACHER: Ven. Prof. Pic Charles Onwochei

Our preacher in this Synod is well known to us, haven ministered to us last year as the Bible Study Leader and in many other programmes in the Diocese. He is Ven. Prof. Pic Charles Onwochei. We felt strongly after the Bible Study last year that he still has a message for us, so we invited Him to tell us what the Lord has given him for us.

Pic Charles Onwochei is a Venerable in the Anglican Diocese of Jos. He is the Cathedral Archdeacon. He is a teacher of the word of God and has been privileged to teach God's word around the world. He is a worship leader and by God's grace leads the Jos Worship Assembly, which is an interdenominational hour of deep, spiritual and appreciative worship. He is a song writer and has many published songs.

Pic is an International faculty of Haggai Institute and facilitates the Advanced Leadership Training of the Institute both locally and internationally.

Besides, he is a professor of Ethics and Philosophy in the University of Jos and has taught Ethics and related courses for many years. He has a keen research interest in social ethics related issues with a Christian reflective and evaluative response. He has researched extensively in this area, and has presented and published many scholarly papers both locally and internationally. He has also authored books including: "Music, Morality and Church Growth: The Nigerian Experience", "The Effective Music Minister: The Spiritual and Moral Demands" and "They Go About Naked: A Moral, Social and Biblical Reflection on Today's Dressing Patterns".

He is married to Sister Modupe Pic-Onwochei and together they have four biological children. Pic is a grateful person, always mindful of the fact that he does not qualify for God's work. He believes that it is only by God's grace and mercy has he been allowed to touch God's work.

Ven. Pic is a friend and we appreciate him for accepting to be used of God as our Synod preacher after that highly inspiring Bible study that he led last year.

BIBLE STUDY LEADER: Ven. Samuel O. Obeta

Our Bible Study Leader in this Synod is one of us; a Clergyman in this Diocese in whose faith and doctrine there is no guile.

He is Ven. Samuel Okonkwo Obeta, the current Archdeacon of Ibagwa-Aka Archdeaconry and the Secretary of Nsukka Diocesan Education Board.

He is from Okutu in Nsukka LGA of Enugu State; and was born on 20th June 1956.

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS ATTENDED AND QUALIFICATIONS

He attended Anglican Grammar School, Nsukka (Nsukka High School) where he obtained his WAEC in 1973. He then proceeded to St Cyprian's T.T.C Nsukka where he obtained his TCII in the year 1975. He got his NCE in Physics/Chemistry from Anambra State College of Education Awka in 1980. He read Physics/Education at University of Ibadan and obtained his B.Ed in 1985. As a lover of education, he proceeded to University of Nigeria Nsukka for his Masters' degree and got his M.Ed in Counseling Psychology in the year 1989. Because of his call to the ministry, he went to Trinity Theological College, Umuahia, where he obtained his Diploma in Theology in 2015.

CAREER

He was a Physics Teacher, School counselor, supervising Principal – PPSMB, Enugu State, and presently Education Secretary, Nsukka Diocesan Education Board and also Member, Diocesan Christian marriage & family life Directorate.

POSTS HELD

He was the President S.U (Nig) Odenigbo Group – 1994-1998, Zonal Rep S.U (Nig), Odenigbo Zone 1998-2004; Area Secretary, S.U (Nig) Nsukka Area 2004-2010, Area Prayer Secretary S.U. (Nig), Nsukka Area. He was also the first Director of the Diocesan Directorate of Discipleship and Publications.

ORDINATION

He was made Deacon on 6th Dec. 2008, Priesthood on 7th Dec. 2009, Preferred Canon on 2nd Nov. 2011 and Archdeacon on 21st Dec. 2014.

FAMILY LIFE

He is married to Dr (Mrs.) Nwamaka Obeta. The Marriage is blessed with 6 Children.

His love for the work of God, his reputable life, the level of grace of God we see in him, what we have seen God use him do in the diocese and beyond, his readiness and willingness to be used of God besides many other reasons, compelled us to entrust this responsibility of taking the bible study sessions of the Synod to him. And you will agree with me that he is the right hand to handle this.

May God bless you my dear brother.

THE HOST ARCHDEACONRY

We are grateful to the entire people of Uda Archdeaconry for accepting the challenge of hosting this Synod. Despite your age and size, your acceptance, commitment, organization and execution was second to none. There is no doubt you really laboured and prepared for a successful Synod as we have started seeing the fruits of your labour since we arrived two days ago; both in the Church edifice and in the financial contributions and organization so far. We thank the pastoral staff in the Archdeaconry, for the leadership they provided- Ven. Engr. Godson Obidi and Mrs. Azuka Ekpunobi, who started the Journey before Ven. Dr George and Mrs Ebele Asadu took over, Rev Amara and Mrs Joy Ozulu and our beloved Lay Pastors and their wives, the chairman of the Local Organizing Committee, Sir Arch Innocent Agbo and all those that labored for the successful hosting of this Synod, we appreciate you. We must mention Rt. Hon Dennis Agbo who took over the Church building to complete it to ensure that it is dedicated within the Synod. We pray that God will remember your labour of love and reward you.

The Archdeaconry was inaugurated as a Missionary Archdeaconry on 17th May, 2015 by us, Rt. Rev. A.E. Agbo (JP), Bishop of Nsukka Diocese. On that day, Ven. Engr. G.O. Ekpunobi was installed as the first Archdeacon. On 24th April 2017, Ven. Dr. George C. Asadu who is currently on his second missionary journey succeeded Ven. Engr. Ekpunobi who relocated to USA haven got Green Card.

The Archdeaconry is made up of two parishes namely St. Paul's Parish, Uda and St. James' Parish, Ugbaike. The churches in the Archdeaconry with their current workers are as in the table below.

TABLES

HISTORY OF THE CHURCHES

ST. PAUL'S CHURCH, UDA

St Paul's Uda started in the year 1945 and has patriarchs who can be seen as saints triumphant and saints militant. In a common language, they are the founding fathers. They are Mr. Zephaniah Agbo, Godwin Agbo (the only abroad member then), Isaac Ugwuja Onyeke, Michael Ugwuanyi, Christopher Eze, Lawrence Abugu, Hezekiah Ali, Gabriel Eze, Emmanuel Eze, Nwa Ugwu Okpe, Pius Ugwuanyi, Aaron Ayogu and others.

Other people that played important roles were their wives. These women introduced the tradition of cleaning the church weekly. Some of them were Mrs Joy Agbo, Mrs. Patience Onyeke, Mrs. Rebecca Ugwuanyi, Mrs. Bridget Agbo who was coming all the way from outside Enugu Ezike, Mrs. Salome Ugwuanyi, Mrs. Rose Ayogu (the youngest among them).

The church started at Afor Uda in the year 1945 as an offshoot of St Luke's, Amufie under the Diocese on the Niger. Afor Uda was the center of Uda then and it was the first church that introduced strange news (gospel) to the soil of Uda.

After a year or two, through the efforts of some of the pioneers such as Zephaniah Agbo, a land was secured through Eze Nwa Mama and Ugwu Onyeke. The land was a free gift to the church. The land am talking of is where we are now.

Through the effort of their teacher, Mr Gilbert Onoja (late), some of the Patriarchs were poised to be first evangelists in the land of Uda. The sacrificial life of Late Zephaniah Agbo in the area of evangelism, this document is not enough to carry it. His younger brother, Godwin Agbo was with him through their lives and activities.

Since the inception of the church (1945) to the end of the civil war (1970), about seven catechists served in this church such as Gilbert Onoja, Jonathan Edoga, Lawrence Ogbu, Patrick Mba, Anthony Idoko, Steven Elejere and Felix Obi.

After the war, 8 other catechists also served tirelessly. They are: Jonah Aba, S.S. Ayogu, Apollos Eze, Paul Ossai, Michael Ossai, (under whose leadership the old church building was constructed), Charles Ugwu (Now Rev.), Festus Ezema, Paul O. Eze (now Rev Canon) and Lawrence Eze (Now Rev). It was

Paul O. Eze who started a dramatic parsonage which became the first storey parsonage in the land of Enugu-Ezike within the Anglican community.

On 15th June, 1999, the young church was made parish through the effort of Rev. Benjamin C. Okwor and he became the first parish priest. Rev. Canon George C. Asadu (Now Archdeacon) replaced him while Rev. Canon Christian Chukwuma Eze replaced Asadu. Canon Eze (now Archdeacon) was the parish priest who started this new church building.

Rev. Canon Collins Ugwu (now Archdeacon) replaced Rev. Canon C.C. Eze (now Archdeacon). Late Rev. Canon Anselm Ogbaje replaced Collins Ugwu . Rev Canon Ijeudo replaced Ogbaje. Rev. Nehemiah.S. Ogbuele replaced Ijeudo. In the year 2004, Uda was pronounced an Archdeaconry during the time of Rev. N.S. Ogbuele. On January 9th, 2015, the pioneer Archdeacon was posted to Uda, by name Ven. Engr. G.O. Ekpunobi who replaced Ogbuele.

From 2008 to date, the following lay pastors served at St. Paul's Church, Uda:

Pastor Kenneth Eze (Now Rev)

Pastor Emmanuel Ezugwu (now Rev)

Pastor Dan. Onah (now Rev)

Pastor Emmanuel Ndubisi (now Rev)

Pastor Luke Eze (now Rev)

Pastor Thompson Chigozie (now Rev)

Pastor Gideon (now Rev)

Pastor Ejiofor

Pastor Onyeke Ogidi

Pastor Chika Eze

Pastor John Eze

Pastor Louis Tochukwu Chidume, (serving at ascension Anglican Church Isiolu Uda)

Pastor Sunday Okoro, the present Pastor.

This church produced the first educationist in the entire land of Enugu-Ezike. He was the first standard six graduate; A certificate he got from Ikem in the then Isi-Uzo District (I am talking of Late Godwin Agbo). Today, we can boast of Professors, Ph.Ds, Engineers, Medical Personnel such as Nurses and Lab Technicians, Press people, Pharmacists, Traditional Rulers, etc., but we cannot forget this humble beginning.

In the past, we have also produced secretary to the local Government, Chairman of Local Government, secretary to the State government, a commissioner in the state. The church has also produced a member of the Federal House of Representatives. It is good to know that 90 percent of these people are the children of these patriarchs, which confirms the word of God which says; "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as ye know that your labour is not in vain." (1Cor. 15:58)

I want to remind us that the success behind the progress of this church is the unity of members. Because of the unity at home, it has metamorphosed to having St Paul's Church Uda, Enugu Branch, Abuja Branch, and Lagos Branch. And we plead that this unity should be sustained.

Apart from collective efforts, the following people and groups have made material contributions to the development of the church apart from their outstanding financial contributions.

1. The family of Zephaniah Agbo (as a group)
2. The family of Godwin Agbo (as a group)
3. Late Godwin Agbo First lectern Bible
4. The Aaron Ayogu's Family Trumpet for the Gospel Band
5. The AYF First ever lectern
6. Mrs. Promise Okafor (Nee Agbo) Electronic Lectern
7. Sir Hon. Dennis Agbo First modern Pew
8. Sir (Hon.) Innocent Agbo wouldn't want his donations mentioned
9. Mrs. Grace Agada (Nee Ayogu) Rugged the Parsonage
10. Men's Group Alter seat
11. 2003 confirmation Candidates Alter Seat
12. Ven. & Mrs. Eze Modern Lectern and Alter seat
13. Engr Jonathan Agbo wouldn't want his donations mentioned
14. Prof. Samuel Agbo Chalice
15. The Girls Guild Bishop's Seat

There are few others who will not like their names to be mentioned. Some youths have made wonderful contributions in financial development of this church. Another group that cannot be forgotten is the women. Another contribution, which is very important is the one made by the prayer wing of this church.

ST. JOHN'S CHURCH, UMACHI, ENUGU-EZIKE.

The church started in 1963 with three persons. Late Mr. Fidelis Ugwuja, who was attending church services at St Luke's church Amufie caught the vision of establishing an Anglican church in his own community. He made up his mind with the help of his brother, Ugwuja Alexandra. Mr. Onah Clement Also joined them. They really started gathering and fellowshiping on their own; no crusade was organized, no mission work. The church just started.

After about five years of the church's existence, the church closed down for a long time, the reason being that few members stopped coming to church services. By the special help of our Lord, in 1990, the Church was revived and the Lord blessed the church with a portion of land, where the few members started erecting a little structure (thatched house) to protect them against rain and the scorching sun. But each time they finished the structure; their enemies came at night and pulled down the structure. At a time, a worker was sent from the Diocese (Enugu Diocese) to the church in 1991, in the person of Edwin Eze. To the glory Of God, the church continued growing and the main church building started about ten years after the revival of the church.

Later, Edwin Eze (the Catechist) was transferred. Then, Mr. Matthew Ezenwida was posted to replace him. But his stay was cut short because he died in his residence which was rented by the church. This happened after attending a Diocesan meeting. He came back to his house and in the morning, the news of his death was heard. His death almost scattered the church.

After the death of Pastor Matthew Ezenwida, the church embarked on the building of the church parsonage through the efforts of Venerable Christian Eze, who was the vicar of Uda Parish. It is good to note that the church almost closed down because of the story of the mysterious death of the pastor, which partitioned the church into different groups. Some left the church and joined Roman Catholic Church. Others did backslide. The few that remained continued with the vision of building a parsonage, which by the grace of God became a reality.

Another serious challenge that the church faced was after the roofing of the church and the parsonage around 2000/2002. A terrible wind blew off the church roof of the church and also pulled down the parsonage. At this stage, it was like every hope of survival was lost. But few faithful members went out raising money, pleading with friends and churches, Diocese, and to the glory of God, the problem was solved; the Church continued to march forward till this day. Even the absence of Diocesan workers due to their inability to take care of them could not stop the church from moving forward. By

the grace of God, between 2012 and 2015, the church was able to put up two rooms for kitchen and store. They have also embarked on the project of renovating the parsonage: ceiling work, changing of the doors to iron, plastering and many other things.

The church also started Nursery and Primary School, which by God's help, has gotten up to primary five. They are building a five classroom block for the school.

The following workers have served in this church:

Clement Onah	1963-68
Edwin Eze	1990- 19
Gaius Omenma	1995-2000
Matthew Ezenwida	2000
Bro. Solomon Ugwuja	2000-2003
Abel Adonu Eke	2003-2004
Stephen Ugwu	2005-2005
Emmanuel Chukwuma	2005-2008
George Michael	2008-2011
Chijioke Vincent	2011-2012
Elijah Eze	2012-2016
Kinsley Ugwunwoti	2016 till date

ASCENSION ANGLICAN CHURCH ISI-OLU UDA

The church of ascension is a church that was born out of passion owing to the inconveniences of trekking to Saint Paul's church, Uda from Isi-olu which was a distance. The vision started with Ven. C.C. Eze during his selfless service at St Paul's Church and others that served after him followed suit. The church got started with few members observing their weekly activities under a village hall. Moreover, no one saw any reason(s) to relocate to a two plot of land donated to the church by a philanthropist, Ven. David Agbo which is the only land he inherited from his father, Late Elder Zephaniah Agbo until when the owners of the village hall locked the church members out of the church and every effort made to get the hall open was in vain. Prior to this, Rev. Nehemiah Ogbuele had consulted Ven. Agbo for the piece of land in conjunction with Zonal EFAC members who had the mandate to plant at least a church in their location.

Under Rev. Ogbuele and with EFAC Zonal executives' directive, some groups of missionaries came and stayed in the land of Isi-olu fasting and praying. At the end of their stay and missionary expedition, St Paul's Church Uda conducted a send-off service and celebrated every of their member they planned to send down to Isi-Olu to start the dream church. Consequently, one of the missionaries, Alex Onyeka Ejimchi was asked to preside over the church and three months later agreement was made. Pastor Alex, as the church members were calling him, was active in his pastoral activities until close to the third month when the church began to grow numerically. Evidently, arrangement was made, and a lay Pastor at St Paul's church by name Chidume Louis Tochukwu was asked to come down to Isi-olu and continue from where Pastor Alex Onyeka stopped.

Furthermore, St. Paul's church, not tired of showing her motherly affection and roles towards her baby church (Ascension), raised some pillars with roofs by the help of women ministry and often supported Pastor Tochukwu's monthly salaries. It is also worthy to note that the first service of the church was on 1st September, 2012 and was horrible because it was under the rain with Rev. Nehemiah S. Ogbuele.

In the same manner, the church was faced with serious challenges after their first service. Tragically, the church building fell down three times as a result of a terrible wind that blew down palm trees that were behind the church. In connection to this, the satanic attack was again targeted to church members immediately after the first incidence. For instance, two members fell down respectively, from trees and one died and was revived few minutes after God's intervention. The other had a serious injury on his spinal cord and as a result of that, he spent 9 months in the hospital.

On 1st June, the church was officially named "church of Ascension Isi-olu Uda" in a service presided by the then Archdeacon of Amufie Archdeaconry, Ven. Ephraim Ikechukwu Asogwa. In attendance were Rev. Nehemiah Ogbuele (Vicar), Mr. Solomon Agbo, Ven. David Agbo, Sir Hon. Innocent Agbo, James Abugu (chief launcher) and pastor Tochukwu Louis among others. The occasion favoured the church financially and as a result of that, the church bought new musical instruments, was able to survey her landed property (2 plots of land), and moulded some blocks for infrastructural development.

Ven. Engr. Godson O. Ekpunobi, the pioneer Archdeacon of Uda Archdeaconry had his first visit to the Church on 17th of May, 2015. During the service which was on a Sunday, the Archdeacon elected for

the first time 12 committee members, baptized 10 children and 5 adults. 3 members from Roman Catholic Church were admitted.

ST. JAMES' ANGLICAN CHURCH UGBAIKE

Mr. Isaac Agbedo was a teacher teaching in Roman Catholic mission School in 1960 but he attended church services at St Luke's Anglican Church Amufie. In the year 1960, he planted Anglican Church at Ukwu Agbudu near Ugbaike Bore hole. The church did not stand due to persecutions. The establishment of the church did not go down well with the then Roman Catholic Parish Priest, as this was seen as sabotage to the Roman Catholic. As a result of this, Isaac was sacked from teaching in RCM School. He ran to Eha-Amufu to save his dear life and nothing was heard about Anglican Church in Ugbaike for thirty four years (34 years).

As the Lord may want it, those who loved to attend service in Anglican Church went to St Paul's Uda and St Luke's Amufie respectively. In 1994, Late Mr. Godwin Eyadima,

Lawrence Odo, and Mr. Joseph Idoko led delegation to St Paul's Uda requesting them to help and re-establish Anglican Church in Ugbaike. The request was urgently granted. In the same year, they got a parcel of land opposite Ugbaike primary School from Late Mr. Samuel Mama which they bought at the cost of ten thousand naira only.

On 4th March 1994, the first church service was conducted and the church was named St. James' Anglican Church Ugbaike. The following people were the first converts: Late Mr. Godwin Eyadima, Mr. Remigius Odo, Late Mr. Linus Onu, Mr. Romanus Ugwu, Mr. John Mark Ezea, Mr. Sunday Idoko, Mr. Christopher Abugu, Late Mrs. Ignatius Mama and Late Mrs Ada Mama.

In 1995, there arose another persecution against the church from the kingdom of darkness. Many members left the church and joined other denominations. Some members stayed while others hung around to see the end result of the crisis. In the same year, EFAC members in St Luke's Amufie organized a two day crusade with praying and fasting at St James Ugbaike. The crusade yielded positive result in that about twenty seven souls were converted and were added to the few members left behind before the crusade. So the persecution was turned into blessing. The Anglican faithful became rooted in Christ and I believe that no amount of wind of persecution will easily carry them away again.

The following workers have served in this church since inception:

Pastor Matthew Ogbonna	1999-2003
Pastor Fidelis Ugwuoke	2003 -2004

Pastor Christian Agbara (now Rev.)	2004-2006
Pastor Chukwukadibia Eze (now Rev)	2006-2009
Pastor John Eze	2009-2011
Pastor Levi Eze	2011-2013
Rev. Levi Omeje	2013-2015
Rev. Christopher Ezema	2015-2017
Rev. Chijioke A. Ozulu	2017-til date

NEW JERUSALEM ANGLICAN CHURCH OKPADERE, INYI

The church started in the year 2013 through the effort of Pastor Nwankemadu whom God told to establish a new church in Inyi because the old H.T.C. will take time for revival to take place in the church due to some historical occurrences. On February 10th 2013, a meeting was called to ascertain the mind of the people towards the opening of new church in Okpadere. In the meeting were Raymond Odo, Gilbert Odo, Gabriel Ogbonna and Pastor Japheth Nwankemadu.

Gabriel Ogbonna, Raymond Odo and Gilbert Odo accepted the proposal with all their heart. Then on 13th February being Sunday those three men came for the first time to start Sunday service on a particular venue given by Raymond Odo. Pastor Nwankemadu conducted the service with the three men that day. Three of them continued the church until March 28th when a group of EFAC members from Enugu Ezike based in Lagos came to do crusade in Inyi. Their intention was to do it at H.T.C. but Nwankemadu told them about the church that needs evangelical assistance which they agreed and hosted the crusade at the venue given to them by Pastor Nwankemadu and Raymond Odo. The crusade lasted from March 28th -31st 2013. Catherine Onuja, Bridget Odo and Abuchi Onuja were converted during the crusade and they became full members of the church. The crusade served as an eye opening to the people of Inyi to know more about Anglican Church.

As the church continued growing, the one room apartment given to the church by Raymond Odo could not contain the church members. It was this situation that pushed one of the founding members, the same Raymond Odo, to give a piece of land freely to the church. The church then relocated to the land given to her as her permanent site. By the permission of the Archdeacon, Rev. Levi Omeje who was the vicar of Ugbaike parish visited the Church on September 2013 and named the church New Jerusalem and baptized about 15 new converts few among them are: Sis. Mariam Omeh, Sunday Omeh, Catherine Omeh and Mercy Eze.

On April 13th 2014, the church received her first Diocesan Pastor in the person of Pastor Samson Idoko from Amachalla. Pastor Samson started with the church at their temporal site with tapeline shelter. Later on, the church moved to their present permanent site after erecting a well roofed structure with Zinc with total of over 42 members as at December 2014 and Pastor Emmanuel Replaced Pastor Samson Idoko in 2017 and Joseph Eze is now the present Pastor.

The history of this church will not be complete without mentioning the impact of the Diocesan Mission Partners who have helped the church in evangelism and prayers. The 2014 mission outreach in August raised a church in Adani Inyi which Franklin Onyeke, a volunteer missionary is pastoring.

HOLY TRINITY ANGLICAN CHURCH INYI

Holy Trinity church, Inyi started on March 28th 1999, when the Evangelical Fellowship in the Anglican Communion (EFAC) of St. Paul's Uda hosted A 3 day crusade at Inyi, from 25th -28th March 1999. At the end of that crusade, Mr. Benedict Ekere and Mr. Basil Ekere with their families gave their lives to Christ, and through them the church started and was planted.

The church started in the house of a man called Mr. Donatus Onuh –Eya and lasted for over five years in his house. i.e. from march 28th1999 when it was planted to April 10th 2004. After this, the church was located to its present permanent place where we are worshipping now which was freely given to the church by Mr. Basil Ekere and Mr. Benedict Ekere.

By the special grace of God, the church building is now roofed, and the church is growing spiritually despite the oppositions and series of setbacks the church encountered in the past.

Bro. Benson Ejimchi, Sunday Ugwuanyi and many other EFAC members coordinated the church from 1999-2002 before pastors were posted to the church. The following workers have served in the church:

Pastor Elijah Eke	2002-2004.
Pastor Chukwukadibia	2005 -2006
Pastor ChibuzoUgwuoke	2006-2007
Pastor Philip Ajogwu	2007-2009.
Pastor John Ugwuoke	2009-2011
Pastor Ogechukwu Alaka	2011-2012.
Pastor J.O. Nwankemadu	2012- 9th January, 2015.
Pastor Celestine Chukwuma	9th January 2015 till date.

By the grace of God, the church is marching forward and the gate of hell shall not prevail against it any more, in Jesus name. Amen.

EVENTS IN THE DIOCESE

The year under review was eventful and full of God's goodness. Let us undertake a brief speech on some of the events.

January Fasting and Prayer

Since the beginning of this spiritual journey, the experience has been worthwhile. This year's own was awesome. Many have been sharing testimonies of its results – we return all praises to God. The climax

of the program was the Covenant Service held on Sunday 29th January and the three days Triumphant Nights, from 29th to 31st January. We commend your commitment to it and pray it will become a habit in all members of this Diocese. We look forward to having greater participation and impact come January 2018.

Sonship Manifestation Youth Conference (SOMAYCO)

The 2nd edition of this conference was held from Monday 17th to Saturday 22nd, April, 2017 at the Cathedral Church of St. Paul, Nsukka. About twelve thousand (12,000) people were in attendance. The theme was “Ambassadors of Christ” which was well exposed to the transforming of lives and society by God's own chosen resource persons. This year's conference was different from last year's because the Theme Expositions and the plenary sessions were held differently for Ages 10-15 and 16-40 same time at different centers. This enhanced understanding and impact. There was also a programme structure for one year mentoring of the participants which is on going now. The participants were given four (4) books each to study within the one year period. The whole aim is “proper Discipleship” to raise godly generation for the transformation of the society. The conference was indeed successful. As we return all praise to God who gave the success, we appreciate you all for your wonderful support that enabled the feeding, accommodating and transporting the participants without any financial commitment from them, and for other logistics of the conference. The garri that was provided by the women, the yam provided by the men and the kitchen utensils provided by the women ministry were more than enough for the conference. The kind donations from some individuals like Rt. Hon. Pat. Asadu (KSP), Rt. Hon. Dennis Agbo (KSP), and others went a long way in carrying the financial burden of the conference. The Vice Chancellor of UNN, Prof. Ozumba accommodated all our resource persons and fed them with sumptuous meals while the Director of Shalom Academy released his Nursery and Primary School to us as male hostel. In short, we cannot mention all the assistance received. All we can say is that the good Lord will reward you all abundantly in Jesus name. Amen.

While we appreciate those that contributed to its success, we appeal to those who have not shown any interest to repent and join the Lord's train. We have attached the record of the contribution of the food stuff in the appendix of this address.

Continue to pray for the third edition come Easter Monday 2nd April – Saturday 7th April, 2018. We sincerely covet more of your support. We will tell you what we will be requesting from each Parish before the end of this Synod, so that we can give these precious youths as much balanced diet as possible. SOMAYCO is our Vision, SOMAYCO is our Mission, and SOMAYCO is our passion. It is our

responsibility to fund our Vision. That is the way to be committed to the great Commission. "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as ye know that your labour is not in vain." (1Cor. 15:58)

Trinity Ordination

We appreciate the Almighty God for the gift of more labourers into His field for more harvest. On Sunday 9th July, 2017, at St. Paul's Cathedral, Nsukka, the following were made Deacons:

1. Ord. Gideon Ezeugwoke
2. Ord. Matthew Nkwachukwu
3. Ord. Gideon Attah
4. Ord. Godson Arua

The following were also ordained priests:

1. Rev. Oliver Onyeke
2. Rev. Emma Okoro
3. Rev. Chinedu Agbo
4. Rev. Valentine O. Ugwu
5. Rev. Joshua Ngwoke
6. Rev. Peter Asogwa
7. Rev. Ifeanyi Isiwu
8. Rev. Samuel Ugwu
9. Rev. Chimezirim George
10. Rev. Chigozirim Onuoha
11. Rev. Luke I. Ugwu

We congratulate them and pray earnestly that they will not disappoint He who called them but shall be useful to God, the church and the society.

Foundation Stone Lying/Dedications

We appreciate God for the infrastructural development of the Diocese at the station, parish, Archdeaconry and Diocesan levels. We commend the workers and the members for their commitment, zeal and sacrifices towards this aspect of the church's life. We are happy and pray for God's blessings on you.

For emphasis let me repeat our warning on building without approval of design.

We appreciate our churches for the rate of infrastructural development all over the Diocese. Your efforts are worthwhile and we pray that the zeal and commitment you have demonstrated in this area

will continue. However, you will agree with me that it is better not to finish building on time yet achieve a solid structure that will stand the test of time, than finishing fast but erecting a faulty building. The problem of reconstructing and restructuring has become alarming and we frown at it, especially with the economic situation of the country. On this, we advise all churches to pass through the process of receiving approval for their building plans, involving Diocesan Engineers and builders for periodic supervision and using certified, tested and proven engineers and builders for every building project. We won't take again any of such cases of building outside design or without proper supervision, so that we don't give room for any case of collapse building.

We only dedicated the Archdeacon's lodge, at St.Stephen's Church, Umulokpa on Saturday 30th September 2017.

Confirmations and Admissions

We thank God for continuous release of His gracious Holy Spirit to His children. Our confirmation and admission services have been avenues for the impartation of the Holy Spirit and fanning of spiritual gifts into flame.

By God's grace, 28 Parishes, Christ Church Chapel UNN and Nsukka Prison Chapel were visited for confirmation and admission within the year under review and the remaining ones will be completed between now and January ending to end our three year plan.

Within the period under review we confirmed a total of 2154 people (797 Males and 1354 females) and admitted 180 into Girls Guild, 497 into Women Guild, 123 into Mothers Union and 80 into Christian Men's Fellowship.

The table below shows the data of the Parishes covered between November last year and October, 2017. We commend the effort of the Clergymen, Lay Pastors and their wives, in utilizing this avenue for discipleship and mentorship that resulted in increased number of candidates. There has also been improvement in preparation of the candidates. May God reward your labour. However, we frown at the attitude of some of the workers that don't give quality time towards the preparation of the candidates. We have emphasized that the preparation of candidates for confirmation and admission should be seen as opportunity to make disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ.

As a way of encouragement, we will appreciate specially the outstanding Parishes, in the number of candidates, quality of preparation as shown in dressing and response to questions. Though 95% of the Parishes did well but the following three were outstanding:

1. Holy Trinity Parish Ndioke x 1st with a total of 158 confirmed, 16 admitted into Girls Guild, 27 into women Guild, 11 into Mothers Union and 9 into Christian Men's Fellowship.

2. St. Luke's Parish Amufie x 2nd with a total of 149 confirmed, 18 admitted into Girls Guild, 24 into women Guild, 8 into Mothers Union and 6 into Christian Men's Fellowship.

3. St. Micheal's Parish Okutu x 3rd with a total of 128 confirmed, 5 admitted into Girls Guild, 29 into women Guild, 10 into Mothers Union and 10 into Christian Men's Fellowship.

Thanks so much and please keep it up.

S/NO	DATE	PARISH	CONFIRMATION			GG	WG	MU	CMF
			Male	Female	Total				
1.	6/11/2016	St. John's Ohodo	14	17	31	1	9		9
2.	27/11/2016	St. Stephen's Eha-Alumona	25	34	59		14	3	
3.	26/11/2016	St. Peter's Okpuje	26	38	65	7	20	11	1
4.	18/12/2016	Christ Church, Iheakpu	27	50	77	18	13	2	10
5.	20/12/2016	St. Andrew's Adani	29	29	58	5	9	2	
6.	21/12/2016	St. Philip's Umuida	31	64	95	10	24	2	8
7.	23/12/2016	St. Peter's Olido	30	60	90	4	17	10	1
8.	5/2 /2017	St. John's Akwari	34	39	73	2	18	4	7
9.	19/2/2017	St. Mark's Abbi	17	51	68	2	21	5	3
10.	5/3/2017	St. Paul's, Ijekpe	9	12	21	2	12	5	2
11.	12/3/2017	St. Mark's, Ohodo	22	50	72	17	26	6	
12.	19/3/2017	St. James', Alor-Agu	22	66	88	1	26	6	
13.	8/4/2017	All Saints' Agu-Ibeje	10	65	75	9	19		
14.	9/4/2017	St. Peter's Ovoko	26	76	102	10	24	7	
15.	13/4/2017	Nsukka Prison Chapel	28		28				
16.	2/4/2017	St. Michael's Okutu	42	86	128	5	29	10	10
17.	30/4 /2017	St. Peter's Parish, Uburu/Uzoego	10	25	35	4	39	2	4
18.	14/5/2017	St. Paul's Amaechenu	22	32	54	1	7		
19.	25/5/2017	St. John's Isiugwu	14	20	34	4	8	1	
20.	4/6/2017	St. Paul's Cathedral, Nsukka	21	21	42	15	6	7	3
21.	11/6/2017	Christ Church Chapel, UNN	69	32	101	11	8	7	
22.	19/7/2017	St. Matthew's Ekwegbe	31	51	82	4	19	3	2
23.	12/7/2017	Emmanuel Parish, Ochima	22	17	39		10		
24.	13/8/2017	Christ Church, Eziani	19	15	34	4	10	2	2
25.	24/9/2017	St. James' Ugbaikpe	23	47	70	6	12	2	4
26.	30/9/2017	Stephen's Umulokpa	23	48	71	2	32	5	
27.	1/10/2017	HTC Ndioke	49	107	158	16	27	11	9
28.	8/10/2017	St. Barth's Amachalla	38	79	117	13	19	3	
29.	21/10/2017	St. Peter's Ukpata	7	34	41	2	14	1	
30.	22/10/2017	St. Luke's Amufie	60	89	149	18	24	8	6
		TOTAL	800	1354	2157	193	516	125	81

Bishop's Golden Jubilee/Book Launch

According to the design of heaven and in relation to the time of life, I was born on the 15th day of September, 1967. The Almighty protected me and made me survive the hostility of this troubled world since then till now. Going down the memory lane, we could not count the blessings of God nor measure His mercies. We therefore thought it necessary to give thanks to God for fruitful 50 years of existence on Earth. To make it historic, we embarked on the publication of a book, "Growing in Grace". The occasion which was held on 15th and 16th of September, 2017 was glorious.

We appreciate you all for the love you showed us – your material gifts, messages and prayers. We appreciate in a special way the committee that planned the event led by Sir Engr. Dozie Eze. May the Almighty God reward you all. Amen.

We have committed all the money realized from the book launch to the Cathedral building.

Directorates and Chaplaincies

Directorates are administrative units in the office of the Bishop created to tap the abundant human resources in the Diocese, develop team Spirit and create a platform for equipping the Saints for the work of the ministry. We have sixteen Directorates covering all the areas of the Church's life and ministry. To the glory of God, the directorates and chaplaincies have contributed tremendously to the growth of the Diocese. Their Directors and Chaplains have been wonderful and veritable instruments in the realization of the mission, visions and goals of the Diocese. We appreciate them so much and pray for increase of grace and unction.

After the first half of the year, we decided to do a little restructuring which saw the amendment of terms of reference of some Directorates. It also saw changes among the directors. Some chaplains who have served for long were changed and some who had other responsibilities demanding greater attention were relieved. Therefore, at the present, the directorates and chaplaincies with their directors and chaplains are:

S/NO	DIRECTOR	DIRECTORATE
1.	Ven. A.N.C. Ogbochie	Pastorate
2.	Ven. G. U. Nnamani	Training and Manpower Development
3.	Ven. E. I. Asogwa	Theology and Ecumenism
4.	Ven. Clifford Ugwuanyi	Planning, Research and Development
5.	Ven. Nnamdi Ijeudo	Politics and Inter- Governmental Affairs
6.	Ven. Emeka Ezea	Youths
7.	Rev. Chukwukadibia Eze	Media and Communications
8.	Rev. Sunday Dike	Prison and Social Justice
9.	Rev. Emmanuel Isiwu	Women and Children
10.	Rev. Christian Orji	Mission and Evangelism
11.	Rev. Izuchukwu Ewulu	Music
12.	Rev. Robinson Agbo	Sports and Social Events
13.	Sir Bar. Johnson Onah	Public Relation, Protocol and Security
14.	Dr. Harford Njoku	Discipleship and Publications
15.	Dr. Edwin Omeje	Prayer and Spirituality
16.	Prof. Mrs Patience Osade be	Christian Marriage and Family Life
CHAPLAINS		
S/NO	CHAPLAIN	CHAPLAINCY
1.	Rev. Samuel Onyeidu	Anglican Children Ministry
2.	Rev. Daniel Odezue	Anglican Communion Brigade
3.	Rev. Caleb Ugwuobute	Young Anglican Crusaders
4.	Rev. Can Ekene Eze	Diocesan Guild of Stewards
5.	Rev. Daniel Amoke	Anglican Youth Fellowship
6.	Rev. Can Dr. Joseph Chukwuma	Diocesan Lay Readers Association
7.	Rev. Can. Prof. Ikem Okoye	Christian Men's Fellowship
8.	Ven. Dr. Collins Ugwu	Council of Knights
9.	Rev. Ekeleme Ukazu	Women Ministry

In order not to make any of the directorates

a sole business, we intend to create what we will call Advisory Committee in each of the Directorates, to be chaired by the Director. We believe this will add strength to them and improve their already recorded achievements.

As we appreciate those who were relieved, we congratulate the new ones and remind them that much is expected of them. We therefore commend them into God's hands and grace.

Mission and Evangelism

After the Sonship Manifestation Youth Conference (SOMAYCO) 2017, the following week featured School of Evangelism for all our clergy and lay pastors with one of the SOMAYCO resource persons from USA, Rev. Dr. Hendrick Krabbendam. This served as a preparation to the clergy for the annual clergy mission. A similar training was held for the Diocesan Mission Partners and all interested youths in September. The same resource person handled them. The trainings were educating and motivating. We appreciate our friend and ministry partner, Dr. Krabbendam who at his age is so committed to equipping us for the work of the ministry at his own expense. He has equally given both the youths and myself so many theological books and other Christian literatures. Uncle K, may God reward you.

2017 Clergy Mission

About 113 clergy participated in the 2017 clergy mission held from 5th to 11th June, 2017. About 323 converts were won during the exercise from the reports received. 371 persons were baptized. 39 persons were admitted from RCM. Indeed, it was fruitful and we give God all the glory.

2017 Diocesan Mission Partners Outreach

On the first day of August, 2017, 93 youths were sent out on mission to 16 mission fields within the diocese and 2 mission fields outside the Diocese (Afikpo and Idah Dioceses). There were resounding testimonies that accompanied the exercise. Churches were revived and souls were won including a male Muslim from Idah. Two new churches were planted at Aji and Amachalla Ovoko. The mission lasted for one month.

We commend the missionaries and their leaders for job well done. We appreciate the Women Ministry of the Diocese for donating the sum of one hundred thousand naira to support the August mission this year. We pray that God will raise more people that will be committed to sponsoring missions. Be a witness of Christ by either groaning, giving or going for missions.

Music Festival/Choir Competition

The Diocese, as resolved in the last Synod, Organised Diocesan Festival that ended with the grand finale on Saturday 14th Oct. 2017 and was a resounding success.

music in Anglican Church according to Izuchukwu Ewulu, the Diocesan music director, is a recipe on its own both to the worshipers and our maker. Through it we confess our faith and reaffirm our belief. Through singing, we have a connect with the greatest Deity who hearkens unto us. It is a prayer itself. The most interesting aspect of the festival was the involvement of “the children choir”. It shows submission to the clarion call of “catching them young for Christ”

The exceeding great performance of most of the participants from the village churches was instructive. The Lord showed us that He has spread His gifts abroad and that talent has nothing to do with location; it is about discovering and developing it.

We sincerely appreciate all the Churches that participated and even as our God to whom the worship and Glory belong appreciate them more. It is our prayer that the lessons of the festival will reflect in our worship in every church. It is our desire to make the festival a frequent programme (every three years) in the Diocese if we will get sponsors.

Rev. Izu, the Diocesan music Director and your powerful team, you are wonderful, God bless you.

Below are details of the result of the Grand Finale in their grades

ACM

1st - Cathedral Deanery ACM

2rd - Ovoko Archdeaconry

3rd - Ohodo Archdeaconry

Grade 3

- 1st - St. John's Church Choir, Ohodo
- 2nd - St. Banabas Church Choir, Eha-Ndiagu
- 3rd - St. Matthew's Church Choir, Ejuona Obukpa

Grade 2

- 1st - St. John's Church Choir, Edem
- 2nd - St. Paul's Choir, Uda
- 3rd - St. Michael and All Angels Choir, Owere-Obukpa

Grade 1

- 1st - St. John's Church Choir, Onuiyi
- 2nd - St. Peter's Church Choir, Ovoko
- 3rd - Cathedral Church of St. Paul Choir, Nsukka

We invited the winners in the children choir competition to the synod to receive their award as special people in the church. That will be done on Sunday of the thanksgiving.

ORGANIZATIONS

Our Diocese is blessed with a number of organizations. The contribution of these organizations to the wellbeing of the Diocese cannot be overemphasized. Permit us to comment briefly on each of them.

Christian Men's Fellowship (CMF)

The revival and reawakening evident among our fathers in the Diocese is already household news that has gone beyond the shores of our Diocese. During the CMF conference this year, the participants went into the village for door to door evangelism. It was a wonderful experience and a sign of the resolve to reinvigorate the zeal and spirit of evangelism in our Diocese. The conference resolved that "Ozioma uka eke" should be revived in our churches. We, therefore, mandate all clergy and lay pastors to get our churches involved in systematic and result oriented evangelism – that is our great commission.

We congratulate the workers and people of Ozalla Archdeaconry for a successful hosting of the conference. We congratulate the out-gone chaplain of the CMF, Ven. C. A. Onyechi and his team of executive for bringing the fellowship to its present height. May God reward your labour of love. We also congratulate the new chaplain, Rev. Canon Prof. Chris Ikem Okoye and remind him that the expectation is high, but God will help you.

The Women's Ministries

This branch of the Diocese has continued to grow from glory to glory in all ramifications. Their commitment to missions, evangelism, church growth and welfare of the widows is challenging and

deserves commendation. We appreciate their action packed President, Mrs Anthonia Ifeoma Agbo, my dear wife and her able team of the Clergy wives, Executive Committee and the Unit Co-ordinators, and the entire women of this Diocese. May God remain your strength and reward.

It will interest you to know that after completing the cathedral window project, they committed five million naira (N5,000,000) to the floor tiles of the Cathedral. Their sacrifice towards the completion of this Cathedral is great. We are impressed and very appreciative of this gesture. Their conference this year was marvelous, very refreshing to the soul. We thank the workers and people of Unadu for their hospitality, love and support. In fact, it is the best conference since we assumed office in organization and result. May God bless the people of Unadu Archdeaconry.

Council of Knights

We will continue to give God the glory for the gift of this organization. We appreciate few of them who have remained committed and faithful to their oath and vow. With the active few, the group has been very supportive to the growth of the Diocese and useful to their churches. They donated the sum of one million, five hundred thousand Naira for the ceiling of the cathedral. We thank the leadership for the spiritual work they are doing in the council and appreciate specially the vibrancy that is seen among the Ladies- courtesy of their president Lady Chinwe Onwurah. As a way of pursuing revival among the Knights of this Diocese, we, under God, appointed a new chaplain for the council – Ven. Dr. Collins Ik. Ugwu. As we congratulate him, we are very expectant that he will work well with the leadership of the Council and articulate an appropriate roadmap to repositioning the council for increased effectiveness and fruitfulness.

Bishop's Nominees

There is a rekindling of zeal, passion and commitment among the Nominees. Before the midyear meeting of this group with us, it was as if they went on relegation. Their supposed functions were not attended to. But we thank God for bringing revival through the two times meeting we held with them in this second half of the year. They attested to having understood clearly their responsibilities. We congratulate their newly appointed coordinator, Prof. Johnson Urama and his team of executive. We pray earnestly for the wellbeing of the group.

Note that every Bishop's Nominee is an automatic member of the Parochial Church Committee of his church. Workers are to take note of this as we prepare for our PCC elections come January, 2018.

Evangelical Fellowship in the Anglican Communion (EFAC)

EFAC has remained a veritable instrument in strengthening already existing churches and in planting of new ones. We commend their mission outreach to Diogbe and Ikolo communities which increased

the numerical strength of the stations and encouraged the members. We also commend their commitment to the expansion of the Diocese. They planted four (4) new churches between April and June this year. The churches are:

- Anglican Church, Amaja, Enugu Ezike with 20 members (done in partnership with the Archdeaconry).
- Anglican Church, Achara Ohodo with 55 members
- Christ Church, Eziora Umulokpa with 40 members and
- Ascension Church, Umulokpa.

We appreciate both the leadership and members of this fellowship and pray for increased zeal and commitment as we wait the return of the Master.

Anglican Youth Fellowship (AYF)

We thank God for the wind of revival and rejuvenation among our youths. More churches and Parishes can now boast of a hand full of committed and zealous youths. This has restored our native air with local instruments which give indigenous flavor and aura to our worship life – securing our God given identity. However, the journey has just begun. All hands must be on deck until we reach perfection. We congratulate the new Diocesan AYF Chaplain and wish him God's grace for the desired result.

We need to come to terms with the need to give more and deliberate attention to our youths. They easily drift away in search for satisfaction to their youthfulness. They are easily brain washed and confused with heretical teachings on “Grace and Dominion” clothed with aura of actuality. This stands as a challenge to us. We must labour consciously to save them and raise them as an end time Army. It is on this that we emphasize the need for youth church where the message will be brought down to their level and the application touching their matters and needs directly. This may not be necessary everywhere but in those places where we have a number of youths; this should be done to achieve the needed attention, closeness and result. We have to correct the negative impression that youth church must hold services in English. How many of the youths, especially in villages understand English very well? The language of the youth church should be one that will bring clarity of understanding; therefore, both English and Igbo should be used considering the environment.

We urge workers to embark on systematic and well thought out teaching to enable the youths understand our faith and tradition. We here condemn the lopsided teaching on Grace by the Grace Movement pocket ministries. We forbid our clergy, lay pastors and lay members from such teaching. We advise those who have already adopted it and are confusing our members/churches with it to

repent now or face disciplinary measures. We also plead with the workers to give attention to the youths, give them lovely corrections, raise them and give them the chance to be useful in the church and society. Henceforth, all Churches, Parishes and Archdeaconries must have financial budget for the youths annually and the Synod report annually must show the appropriation of the budget.

Youths are the church of tomorrow, if we must have a healthy church tomorrow; we must as a matter of urgency give attention to raising a godly and healthy generation of youths today.

Young Anglican Crusaders (YAC)

This unit has been doing well. We commend the increase in commitment to secondary school outreach and pray for more. We congratulate the new chaplain and request that you improve on the achievement already made.

Anglican Children Ministry (ACM)

God has continued to show His love for the children. The survival of this ministry amidst neglect from some workers and some adult members of our stations, Parishes and Archdeaconries is a testimony. Beloved people of God, we need to give greater attention to children ministry. If we get it right at this level, we will have fewer problems with the youths and adults in future. But if we fail at this point, we breed encompassing problems for the future. To this end, the following are needful:

- A befitting place of worship for the children: We encourage churches to start building good children church halls that will have good facilities if not better ones like the adult church. Where a church is not yet buoyant enough to build a children church hall, they should return to the old tradition of holding Children services earlier before the adult service in the same Church hall.
- Mature and godly teachers should be raised and given the proper training.
- Use of study manual from church of Nigeria must be compulsory for all children and churches should help to subsidize the cost.
- Cell groups in form of APA of those days should be created with leaders/coordinators appointed to serve as House Caring Fellowship. The focus is on studying the word, praying together, encouraging Christian friendliness and care for others and a strategy of evangelizing the children within the neighbourhood.
- Parents should give attention to the spirituality of their children.
- Churches, Parishes and Archdeaconries should henceforth have annual budget for the children ministry and report the application of same in Synod reports.

Anglican Communion Brigade (ACB)

We thank God for the ACB of our Diocese. We commend their commitment to service, especially in the area of security during functions. We commend the outgoing chaplain Ven Nnamdi Ijeudo for repositioning the Diocesan Brigade spiritually, structurally and morally and congratulate the new chaplain Rev. Daniel Odezue and pray for greater commitment.

The Enugu State Council of the Boys Brigade Nigeria in their State Executive election of 17th June, 2017 held at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church Uwani Enugu, elected Ven Nnamdi Ijeudo a State Vice President for Enugu North Senatorial Zone (Nsukka Area) . We congratulate him for this well deserved position and pray that he will be a good ambassador of the Diocese. His induction will be on 22nd April, 2018 at Emmanuel Church, Alor-Uno.

Prison Ministry

This ministry is very demanding. We thank God for those who have devoted their time and resources to this. God will indeed reward you. We went for confirmation there this year. 28 were confirmed. We thank God for the gift of the Holy Spirit to inmates and appreciate the women ministry for providing clothes for all the candidates.

Lay Readers

We appreciate the commitment of very few members of this forum to students' ministry and prison ministry. Many seem to be weak and tired of the work. We pray for rekindling of zeal for God's work. We advise that if submitted to training, Lay Readers could also become useful in handling Bible Study classes. We congratulate the new chaplain as we are expectant that God will use him to take the association to greater height.

Guild of Stewards

The relevance of this group to our services and worship life cannot be underestimated. The orderliness we enjoy, the coordination of sitting arrangements and other wonderful atmosphere provided by this group is commendable. However, more hands are needed in all churches and more training required. The leadership should therefore give attention to this with greater focus on young people.

Triumphant Ministry

We do not need to say much on this but to continue to appreciate the author and the perfecter of this platform, the Almighty God. The continuous manifestation of God's power in meeting the needs of people, in impacting lives here in Nsukka and beyond gives us great joy. We return all praise to God and pray God's blessings on all who have made themselves available to serve in this platform.

ESTABLISHMENTS

To the glory of God, our establishments are doing well. We look up for a better tomorrow. It is yet necessary to comment briefly on each of them.

Faith Foundation Mission Hospital, Nsukka

This establishment has come to stay and has gained popularity due to commitment to quality health care services. Though, there have been challenges, God has continued to demonstrate His faithfulness. We have not reached perfection but just begun the journey towards perfection.

We commend the effort of the management towards infrastructural development, quality services and public relations. We are expectant that the complex under construction will soon be completed as it is already nearing completion. We are also hopeful that it will not be long and the Nursing/Midwifery school, Medical lab. Technician School and Pharmacy technician school will begin in line with our vision.

Deus Refugium Printing Press

We thank God for the continuity of this establishment. The current management team is doing well and producing result. We commend them. However, we emphasize the need for retraining of the staff, especially the graphic designers so they can learn new concepts. This is in line with our pursuit for excellence. It is high time we gave serious attention to purchasing the needed machines to make the outfit self running.

We have noticed drastic drop in patronage of the firm by our churches and organizations. Be reminded that we have not cancelled the order that all printing work for churches and organizations must be in the Diocesan Press, including that of schools. We will not hesitate to discipline any identified defaulter henceforth. Nonetheless, we advise the management of the press to revisit their costing/charges.

His Glory Bookshop

The establishment is expanding. Theological, liturgical and devotional books are available. Church vestments, Video and audio tapes are available also. We solicit your patronage.

Agric Farm

This sector is still facing challenges. We are however trusting God to give us solutions to those challenges and redirect us on the right way in this Synod, especially as we take decision on the proposed Agricultural Commission in the Diocese.

Our Schools

Our pursuit for quality education is still strong. The Diocesan Education Board (DEB) is very much committed to this. Serious effort is being made towards giving face lift, quality academic life, high

moral standard and balanced spirituality to the schools. Commitment to punctuality and zero tolerance to Exam malpractice are not negotiable. The intensive supervision and inspection of schools by DEB is commendable. We appreciate their labour of love and pray for more grace. We however commission them to see to the approval of all our schools for WAEC and NECO Examinations. If there is any school that its condition is bad and the church that owns it cannot afford to upgrade it within the shortest possible time, such schools should be closed down. It is true that we need more schools, but we will not compromise standard.

We commend the vision of making St Cyprain's Special Science School a full Secondary School that was engineered by the immediate past Principal Mrs Amaka Ejimchukwu. The result is glaring and the future of that school very bright. The school now has Junior Secondary School One, Two, and Senior Secondary School One, Two, and Three, with a population of 271. Mrs Ejimchukwu after her retirement and one year contract with us has handed over the headship of the school to Mr Uche S. Eze, who is now the Acting Principal of St. Cyprain's Special Science School Nsukka. We commend the out gone principal for her innovative actions and sanitizing the school. We pray for the new Principal to take the school beyond her past glory.

Our Dream Cathedral: A Reality

In 2009, we began a journey of faith towards erecting a befitting Cathedral for our God. We had the dream of a Christian center which was reduced to a drawing and architectural design. The drawing posed a threat that swallowed up the faith of most members of the Cathedral Project Committee. Many members of the Diocese saw it as impossible but we believed the author of the vision for the perfecting of it. To His glory, the Cathedral Building which is indeed a Christian Center is almost ready for dedication. For the year under review, the sum of fifty eight million, nine hundred and ninety two thousand, four hundred and eighty five naira (58,992,485) was spent as at August. Much have been spent between August and now which we could not capture here. We thank you all for your prayers, moral and financial support that motivated God to grant this Diocese the miracle of this Cathedral.

The Archbishop, Metropolitan and Primate of all Nigeria, Most Rev. Nicholas Dikerieihe Okoh has slated the dedication of the Cathedral on Sunday 10th December, 2017 by 11.00am. We declare that day a Diocesan service of Praise and Thanksgiving. Workers are to begin now to motivate members and plan the easiest way to have all members attend the dedication service. We have embarked on production of wrapper for the event. Our expectation is that every member of the Diocese will have the uniform. It is a time to come together and appreciate God for His goodness.

People of God, we still have much to do in the Cathedral before the said date. The outstanding work includes:

1. Completion of the landscaping
2. 150 KVA Generator
3. Electrical fittings (Sockets, Switches, Lawn lights and Ceiling lights).
4. Clergy Vestry ward robe, & tables.
5. Conference seats for Greater and Lesser Chapters Halls
6. Granite slab and tiles for entrance foyer
7. Over head water tank carrier.
8. Pews
9. Pipe Organ
10. Electronic Bell

We therefore solicit more of your support. May God continue to bless you.

ENUGU PROVINCIAL NEWS

The Provincial Council meeting was held twice in the year under review. The first was hosted by Awgu Aninri Diocese and was very fruitful. The second was hosted by Ikwo Diocese and was also very fruitful. We commend the host Dioceses for their hospitality and wonderful planning.

Provincial Senior Clergy Workshop for New Archdeacons and all Canons was held this year in our Diocese. The 5-days programme was enriching, educating and motivating. Participants were trained to be transformational leaders who are, first, disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ and change agents. We commend the Local Organizing Committee chaired by Ven. G. U. Nnamani for job well done.

THE JOINT COUNCIL FOR PROVINCES EAST OF THE NIGER

The Council meeting was held at Nike Diocese in Enugu province on Wednesday 15th –Thursday 16th February, 2017 with the Theme: “Christian's challenges in Time like this” (Esther 4:13 -14). The meeting was successful; we thank the host Bishop and wife Rt. Rev. (Prof) Evan and Prof (Mrs) Peace Ibeagha, the planning committee and Enugu Province for their hospitality and care.

CHURCH OF NIGERIA MATTERS

1. St. Mathias Fund: The St. Matthias Day 2017 was observed in all the churches throughout Nigeria and fund raised was remitted by the Dioceses to the Church of Nigeria. Our Diocese realized

and submitted N2, 340,955.00. The total fund realized was N218, 735,043.47k. This fund has been disbursed by the Archbishops to some Missionary Dioceses and Institutions of the Church of Nigeria. We commend the comment and sincerity of churches in this Diocese to this exercise. God who rewards faithfulness will bless you for being faithful to this way of being our brothers keepers.

2. **The Church of Nigeria Secretariat:** You will recall that the foundation of the Church of Nigeria secretariat was laid on Friday, 13th November, 2015 in Gudu area of Abuja. It will please you to know that the work at the site has reached appreciable stage.

All the monies realized on Advent Sunday from all the Dioceses in Nigeria were also remitted to the National Secretariat in support of this project. Our Diocese realized and remitted N2, 098,765 while the total money realized was N367, 369,851.

3. **New Dean of the Church of Nigeria:** The Church of Nigeria has a new Dean in the person of His Grace, The Most Rev. Edmond Akanya, Bishop of Kebbi Diocese and Archbishop of Kaduna Province. He was duly presented on Sunday 30th July 2017 at Ibadan. We congratulate him and his wife. By the amendment of our constitution concluded in the last General Synod, a new Dean will be elected soon.

4. **Presentation of Archbishops:** His Grace, the Most Rev. Dr. Ikechi N. Nwosu, the Archbishop of Aba Province and His Grace, the Most Rev. Dr. George Lasebikan, the Archbishop of Ondo Province. They were re-elected and have been presented at Owerri on Sunday, May 5, 2017.

5. **DIVCCON 2016**

The Divine Commonwealth Conference (DIVCCON) was held at the National Ecumenical Centre Abuja, from Monday 7th – Friday 11th November 2016 with the theme: “Fear Not”. We thank those that attended the conference from our Diocese. we encourage our youth, men, women, priests and wives to attend this year's edition. It is mature Christian programme that so rich and edifying that no one that wanted to maintain a steady walk with the Lord would want to miss. DIVCON 2017 will hold from Monday 13th to Saturday 18th November 2017 at the same venue. I know many have already registered from this Diocese. Ven. Nnamdi Ijeudo or Sir Dr Ugo Nwoji the Co-ordinators for more details.

6. **GAFCON Jerusalem 2018:** GAFCON will be meeting in Jerusalem from 17th to 22nd June 2018. Arrival will be on 17th while departure will be on 23rd. Every delegate will pay \$149,000. This should be paid before 1st November 2017. The money paid will cover conference registration, feeding, accommodation and conference materials. Flight tickets will be the responsibility of each delegate. Nsukka Diocese was allotted four delegates-Bishop, Bishop's wife, the Synod secretary and the Chancellor, will be attending. We plead for financial support on this.

7. **ACNN: A new Management Board has been constituted for ACNN. Their names are:**

1. **Chief Folu Olamiti – Chairman**
2. **The Rt. Rev. Blessing C. Enyindah – Deputy Chairman**
3. **Rt. Rev. Chidi Oparaojiaku – Member**
4. **Mr. T. B. Akinyeye – “**
5. **Dr. P. S. Nmadu – “**
6. **Mrs. Bisi Amagada – “**
7. **Dr. G. T.N. Ajakpo – “**
8. **Ven. Dr. Dade Sadare – “**
9. **Mrs. Ngozi Adighibe – “**

Church of Nigeria General Synod: The 12th General Synod of Church of Nigeria was held at St. Paul's Cathedral Church, Diobu Port-Harcourt, River State, hosted by the Niger Delta province with the Theme “You shall not steal” Exodus 20:15. Our Diocese was represented by the Bishop, his wife, the Synod Secretary- Ven. Chinedu Onah, The Diocesan Treasurer,- Sir Engr. Dr. Ugo Nwoji, Ven. Prof. T. C. Madueme representing the clergy, and Mrs. Ngozi Urama the woman worker. The Legal Team was represented by Barr. Chinedu Ogbonna.

ELECTION AND CONSECRATION OF BISHOPS

The following Bishop's were consecrated and enthroned within the year under review:

1. **Rt. Revd. Temple Nwogu Isiala Ngwa Diocese**
2. **Rt. Rev. Yohannah Ahmed Audu – Bishop of Diocese of Damaturu**
3. **Rt. Rev. Godwin Adeyi Robinson – Bishop of Diocese of Lafia**
4. **Rt. Rev. Rufus V. A. Adepoju – Bishop of Diocese of Ekiti West**
5. **Rt. Rev. Augustine E. Ohilebo – Bishop of Diocese of Sabongidda-Ora**

6. **The Most Rev. Dr. Michael Olusina Fape Bishop of Remo was elected the Archbishop of the ecclesiastical province of Lagos, to succeed the Most Rev. Prof. Adebayo Akinde.**

7. **The Rt. Rev. Abiodun Ogunyemi was translated from the Diocese of Damaturu to the Diocese of Zaria.**

8. **Rt. Rev. Dr. Stephen Ayodeji Fagbemi Owo Diocese**
9. **Rt. Rev. Emmanuel Adekola Igbomina Diocese**
10. **Rt. Dr. Rev. Emmanuel Onsachi Okene Diocese**

11. Rt. Rev. Emmanuel Morris Maiduguri Diocese

We congratulate them and their wives and pray that God will bless them with good health, long life and fruitful episcopacy.

ELECTION ARCHBISHOP

1. Most Rev. Dr. Olusegun Okubadejo re-elected Archbishop of Ibadan Province
2. Most Rev. Caleb Maduoma re-elected Archbishop of Owerri Province
3. Rt. Rev. Dr. Buba Lamido newly elected Archbishop of Kaduna Province
4. Rt. Rev. Henry Ndukuba newly elected Archbishop of Jos Province.

RETIREMENT OF BISHOPS / ARCHBISHOPS

1. Rt. Rev. & Mrs Angar Fred Nyanabo Northern Izon Diocese
2. Rt. Rev. & Mrs Samson Adekunle Ile- Otu Oluji Diocese
3. Rt. Rev. Prof. C. S. S. Bello – Zaria Diocese
4. Rt. Rev. Miller Maza – Lafia Diocese
5. Rt. Rev. Samuel Oke – Ekiti Diocese
6. Late Rt. Rev. Prof John Akao – Sabongida Ora Diocese who died few days to his retirement.
7. Most Rev. Michael Akinyemi – Igbomina Diocese
8. Rt. Rev. James Oladunjoye – Owo Diocese
9. Rt. Rev. Emmanuel Ajulo – Okene Diocese
10. Late Most Rev. Mani – Maiduguri Diocese

We rejoice with them and pray that they will have peaceful and health retirement life, and express our heartfelt condolence the families of the deceased.

ENUGU STATE

Indeed, Enugu State is in the hands of God. We commend the man at the helm of the leadership of our state, His Excellency, Rt. Hon. Lawrence Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi (Gburugburu) on his genuine quest and unreserved drive for the holistic development of the State, touching the rural areas seriously. We commend your godly character and disposition on Denominational, Tribal divides and political differences – Your leadership prowess and application of wisdom earned you a Governor of the people rather than a PDP Governor or Governor for Enugu North people. Continue in your non-partisan and non-tribal governance.

We are very surprised at the complaints of some persons that you are giving much attention to Enugu North Senatorial zone than others. They are only exposing their insincerity about the true situation of things in Enugu State. Every sincere member of the state knows that Enugu North Senatorial zone was abandoned if not alienated from the developmental package of the State Government for many years. You came on board as a crusader of Equity and took the right decision that while development cuts across the State, special attention must be given to the marginalized area to bring them to the same level with others. This is a godly decision and pursuit and we encourage you to hold on to it. Give no attention to those “Samballats and Tobias.” Complete your vision for Nsukka and other neglected places and areas in the State.

We wish to remind you of the flood situation in Nsukka that may have come as a result of the newly constructed drainages. The worst hit areas are the Alu-Udele, University road and Obimo road. This as you know has claimed a life already. It demands serious and very urgent attention. The good Lord will give you the strength and the will to undertake and complete your visions for Nsukka and the entire State of Enugu.

OUR NATION NIGERIA

We rejoice with other well meaning Nigerians for God’s mercy and grace that has sustained Nigeria through the turbulence of our time. In the same way, we thank God for healing our president, His excellency, Muhammad Buhari. We commend the wisdom demonstrated by the vice president, His Excellency, Prof. Yemi Osibanjo in leading this nation during the ill health of Buhari. May God’s grace still see us through as the flood is not yet over, and grant us the will to play our part.

Ordinarily, one would have preferred to be silent about this nation at this time of National confusion and simply pray, but as a Church we are under obligation to speak as the voice of the voiceless. However, we will in this address comment only on three issues as we have below.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

The speaker of the Federal House of Representatives, Yakubu Dogara, described the conduct of local government elections in Nigeria as a shame and mockery of democracy. He based his assertion on two major reasons.

1. Local government elections have benefitted only those who constituted themselves into middlemen to grab the resources meant for the development of the grassroots.
2. Organizing elections where only one political party wins by sweeping all the votes.

While we agree with Dogara, our premise differs from his in addressing Enugu state. We see the Local government primaries held in recent past as “a shame and mockery of democracy.” We cannot call selection and imposition of candidates on the masses by the cabals a democratic process. It is completely a drift away from democracy. Such method brings mediocre into governance that are only instruments in the hands of a powerful few to mismanage our resources. This is the bane of development in Nigeria.

We advise our beloved state government to have a rethink on this. We also call on our electoral commission to sit up against this cankerworm eating deep into our democratic life. Let the masses vote credible candidates of their choice both at primaries and the main local government elections. That is the only way to practice democracy and it is the road to recovering our society.

THE COLLAPSE OF CIVIL SERVICE: THE PROBLEM OF GOVERNANCE IN NIGERIA

For the benefit of those still confused, who may be thinking that only those who work in the Ministries are civil servants, it is important to emphasize that any employee of state-owned institutions – be it Ministries, Departments, Agencies, Councils, Research Institutes, Corporations, Commissions or any government-controlled establishment of whatever arcane nomenclature – is a civil servant; and therefore a worker in the public sector (civil service). In its heyday, the Nigerian civil service was the poster child of robust bureaucracy, a sort of metaphorical heirloom honed in the best tradition of Victorian thoroughness and rigour, and handed down to honest, but inexperienced local administrators by the British colonial masters. It was an efficient and functional structure; a reasonably admired establishment and a fruitful hunting ground for job seekers inspired by productive forerunners to build a career under the wings of government.

It is no gain saying that civil service is central and inevitable to any government and good governance especially. The civil service is important both in policy formulation and implementation, it also gives technical and professional advice to successive government so as to guide the political office holders whose offices are transient in nature while that of the civil servants have some measure of permanence (Abifarin and Bello, 2015:77-87). In a nutshell, civil servants provide all the information needed for the administration of government and help to formulate and execute government policies. Civil service is therefore the hub or engine of government.

From the forgoing, we can appreciate Adegoroye's assertion that the civil service is a governance institution. He further summarized the specific roles of civil servants in governance thus: the workforce of government, the brain-box and institutional memory of the public sector, the bridge across administrations, and the guardian of public interest. This description establishes the fact that

the strength of the civil service is the strength of government and its collapse constitutes danger to governance in Nigeria. But without mincing words, the degree of collapse in the civil service is alarming and has left Nigerian government with conspicuous cracks.

Unlike what obtained in the past (and one actually refers to the glorious past), the civil service ethics, with its evident overarching kernel of service to the public, has been completely abandoned and its place taken over by a pernicious culture that has no other description beyond self-serving. The typical civil servant of these days is not just lazy, but also irrepressibly corrupt. A brief stopover in any government department, federal or state, will suffice for evidence. There is no passion to do the job. The staff just sit idly or hop from one office to another, blathering away the whole day. Records are poorly kept, that is when they are kept at all, and so an interminable search for letters and files is a normal, everyday story.

Files pile up untreated sometimes for as long as four weeks on the bosses' desk without anyone being struck by conscience, or awakened to the fact that such habitual act of undeviating slothfulness amounts to a huge disservice to the country. And then any attempt by an assertive outsider to point out the anomaly, if not dismissed by an outright contemptuous silence, gets the standard reply of "Na so government work be o!"

Given this kind of attitude, it is no surprise that programmes and projects rarely get implemented; while something as normal as requests for approvals for useful projects that ought to take no more than one week to wrap up take almost eternity, if it manages to overcome the obstacles of narrow-minded bureaucrats.

The dysfunction in the civil service reached astonishing level since the government started to subordinate the merit principle to patronage considerations, ethnicity and concern for quotas. This gave room to having unqualified personnel occupy sensitive offices in the civil service. That is the genesis of the corruption in that sector. Another is the pervasive corruption which involves collusion between higher civil servants and their political masters in mismanaging the budgets. The relegation of competence, cognate experience and seniority in civil service by the leadership of the federation, States and Local Government Areas contributed seriously to the collapse of civil service. The hijacking of responsibility of the Civil Servants by the Politicians that rendered the committed ones redundant dealt a big blow on the civil service. These Politicians pushed the Civil servants away from their legitimate responsibilities to be allowed to carry out corruptive merchandise. So civil servants visit their offices only on pay days and nothing happens in most of our Government offices especially the

ministries and Local governments. Also, none payment of staff as and when due, underpayments, startling of promotion, and lack of job security contributed their own quota to the problem.

As a result of the bankruptcy of its public institutions, Nigeria remains the only country in the world where it takes unduly long time to conclude paperwork on any issue. In a bid to reverse this negative identity, former president Olusegun Obasanjo established a service delivery watchdog called SERVICOM with a marching order to every government establishment to set up a branch of its own. The idea is to restore efficiency by fast-tracking services in all government offices.

Typical of the administration, the scheme was launched with fanfare. Then the public was charged to send observations and complaints regarding service delivery to this body. But it turned out to be a futile effort, as the unravelling of the civil service, in the face of widespread prodigality of the political class, assumed a more disturbing dimension even with Obasanjo still in office. In no time as expected, SERVICOM more or less disappeared from the radar of public governance.

If we must recover our government from collapse, the answer is to recover the civil service from collapse. To do this, attention must be given to the inroads of corruption in the civil service as identified above. Government should avoid patronage considerations, ethnicity and quota system and give attention to merit based on competence, cognate experience, qualification and seniority during employment and appointments. There should be effective enforcement of extant rules and regulations for curbing corruption in the civil service sector. There should be reorientation of the civil servants, training, retraining and provision of modern equipment for effective service delivery at all tiers of government.

But the unanswered question to the fight against corruption in Nigerian and saving the nation has remained; "Who will bell the cat."

RESTRUCTURING AND REGIONAL AGITATION: AN ADVICE

The agitation for restructuring and division or secession is not new to us. It has existed for decades. What we have today is only an increase in tempo, frequency and spread of the agitation.

The issue of restructuring of the Nigeria State is one that can no longer go away. What started as an isolated demand by the South-West at the aftermath of annulment of June 12 elections in 1993, bringing along some progressive elements and radical ideologies, has now assumed the dimension of a national imperative.

Along the line, restructuring was the term used by the oil rich, environmentally degraded and neglected people of Nigerian Niger Delta region, to demand for resource control.

Most recently, restructuring has been adopted as a term that answers the yearnings and demands by the federally marginalized South Eastern Nigeria. The political and intellectual elites of the region have adopted restructuring as the non-violent option that assuages their desperation and frustration within Nigerian state.

Even in the Northern Nigeria that had hitherto answered the call for restructuring with an iron cutton, the call has gained entrance and now, is no longer about whether or not, but rather what, when and how.

It is very clear now that the subject of restructuring will define the political campaigns in 2019, both for political parties and candidates, especially at the federal level. Indeed, in a remarkable show of legendary political sophistry, the North is moving to seize the debate on restructuring so as to control and dictate the scope and limits of the subject, if they can no longer stop the move to restructure. **SO WHAT IS AND WHAT SHOULD RESTRUCTURING MEAN?** Restructuring does not mean separation and disintegration. Well meaning Nigerians have fairly agreed that restructuring can be conducted in one united Nigeria. It is suggested that a just and equitable nation can be restructured for sustainable peace and progress. In terms of size, population, resources and diversity, the United States of America is a much bigger federation than Nigeria. But they have remained united under a just and equitable constitution. The United States of America has actually benefitted in world affairs from its size and diversity. Not too long ago, independent nations in Europe came together under the European Union to harness common interests from size, economy of scale and diversity.

So the Nigerian state does not have to break up by restructuring. So, separatist agitations are not necessarily the hallmark and goal of a restructured Nigeria. Restructuring entails amending those sections of our constitution that inhibit creativity, innovation, productivity, efficiency and effectiveness. It will tamper with the conduct of our national life that yields to a unitary command and control character. It therefore seeks to free the centre of excessive burden, responsibility and resource control, in favour of the federating units. It seeks to redefine the federating units in our federation. Restructuring boldly challenges those issues of our collective future that stand in the way of a modern society, progress and development. It tries to ensure that no section of the federation monopolizes political control in ways that are inimical to national interest. It creates healthy peer comparison and competition among the federating units for progress and faster attainment of modernity.

From a compendium of what have been extensively discussed and canvassed by Nigerians, restructuring will include the following demands:

1. Devolution of Powers.

2. Resource Control.

3. Regional Autonomy.

4. State Police.

5. Structure of Government.

1.) **DEVOLUTION OF POWERS:** Too much power and resources are concentrated at the federal level. This creates a situation of winner takes all; a zero sum game. The struggle for control of the federal government becomes too desperate. It is rightly said that the Nigerian President is the most powerful person on earth. Not even the American President is as powerful as his Nigerian counterpart. From the serious to the unserious; from the agitated to the sublime, the Nigerian President is in charge.

He dispenses appointments to over a thousand boards; through the Attorney General, he profiles the cases to be investigated by EFCC. He is Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces and the Police.

Why, for instance, is it possible for a President to order the investigation of a Governor of a federating state by an agency in which only he had nominated a head? Saying this is not in any way to condole corruption, but to indicate how the President with the enormity of powers available to him can fight corruption selectively. If indeed we are a federation, why is it that a state cannot manage its resources and establish such institutions and measures to prudently manage its affairs?

The power of a Nigerian President is overwhelming and absolute. No President has so far been able to manage these powers with discretion. The powers have corrupted absolutely and added to heighten the tension, anxiety and frustration in the country.

The extensive powers should rather be shared among the states or regional Governors for a more equitable and just society. The powers should be moderated by the constitution. Nigeria must heed the wise counsel of the third President of the US, Thomas Jefferson, who cautioned long ago that " In questions of power, let no more be heard of confidence in men, but bind them down from mischief by the chains of the constitution".

Closely following on the issue of over-concentration and over centralization of power, is the over concentration and over centralization of resources. While the federating States where resources are produced are starved of these resources, the federal government is awash with monumental resources that it has no need of, or the capacity to manage. This fact can easily be seen by the monumental fraud, corruption and sleaze that take place at the centre. If funds are needed for work, how can we hear of embezzlement of \$21 million and properties worth over N5 billion, a combined

total of approximately N12 billion, by an individual ex- Minister; stealing and misappropriation of \$16 billion (N5.6 Trillion) by a conspiracy of few individuals in the power probe; appearance of orphaned \$44 million, £28, 000 and N23 million, a total of N13 billion at Ikoyi Towers; discovery of abandoned N48 million at the Airport; or a contrived contract fraud of \$24 billion (N8.4 Trillion), an amount that is greater than our national budget.

These amounts are greater than the total budget of all the states in Nigeria for many years. They can be used to virtually bridge the infrastructure gaps in the country and instantly transform Nigeria to a developed nation.

This level of sleaze is agreeably, only possible at a level of government that never needed the money in the first place. There is practically no justification for a revenue of 52% for the federal government while the 36 states and 774 LGAs share 48%, except as surviving relics of prolonged military governments.

Incidentally, after all the disproportionate allocations, the states and LGAs are still abandoned to attend to the same responsibilities that have been appropriated for by the federal government.

We conclude therefore that the fiscal federalism of Nigeria is not working. It is not just faulty but bad. It has outlived its usefulness and should be jettisoned.

The federal government must urgently devolve power to the federating states. The exclusive legislative list of 60 items should be decongested to the concurrent list having only 12 items at the moment. It has been proposed for instance that Railway, Aviation and Power, should immediately join the concurrent legislative list to hasten progress in these critical sectors. The list should be reviewed to move more items to the concurrent list.

In the same vein, the revenue sharing should be altered to retain nothing more than 30% for the Federal Government.

2.) **RESOURCE CONTROL:** The agitation for states to control resources within its jurisdiction has cost the nation untold difficulties and human casualties. Rather than yield to this call willingly and wholeheartedly, the federal government had at various times conceded to mere tokenism, after so much unnecessary acrimony, fight and waste of lives and resources. For reason of not allowing states' control of resources, the development of these resources has been greatly slowed down.

Agitations in the Niger Delta have often resulted in shut downs, shut ins, destruction of pipe lines and oil production facilities, and waste of crude oil, with attendant environmental degradations. Resources are wasted and needed revenue is lost.

Incidentally, God had so generously endowed every part of Nigeria with natural resources to control. Unfortunately, due to the oil boom of later years, most of these natural resources such as solid minerals, vast arable lands, water resources and sunshine, have been neglected in pursuit of oil. The discovery of oil has regrettably been detrimental to the progress and development of the Nigeria Nation.

Restructuring demands that the state and communities that have been endowed with particular resources, and which endure the depletion and environment degradation of their exploitation, should be allowed greater control of those resources. It has been proposed that the states control the resources and pay up to 50% tax to the Federal Government, or conversely, the states should be allowed up to 50% share of revenue by derivation. Proponents of restructuring however prefer resource control with taxation rather than greater share of revenue by derivation.

When this happens, every part of Nigeria will start exploiting its natural endowments for resource benefits and for national progress and development.

3.) REGIONAL AUTONOMY: Initially, the Nigerian economy was planned and organized on regional basis. Then, the regions were the federating units. Regions exploited their advantages and prospered; the nation was better for it.

It is known that the breaking of these regions by successive state creations was arbitrary, and devised by successive military regimes to assert and retain political control. The states became the federating units. Along the line, local governments, were arbitrarily created and given line of sight to national resources; arbitrary because states, rather than federal government should create local governments. Now, high on the agenda of restructuring is what should actually constitute the federating units in our federation: should it be regions, or states or local governments.

The thinking is that in terms of unity, peace and progress, the country fared better under regional governments. Some proponents of restructuring have suggested that we return to regional governments, and regions as federating units. Even if the states should constitute the federating units, it is still proposed that the economy should be organized on regional basis.

There is a lot of credibility in this thinking. For instance, it is regions rather than states that can plan its economy and proceed at its own pace. The states are too multiple to organize economic development around them. The size of regions, whether the old 3, or 4 regions, or the present 6 geopolitical zones, are units around which credible economic planning can be organized.

In whichever consideration, the local governments definitely cannot be federating units and should disappear from the national line of sight. States or regions, as federating units should be free to create local governments as they deem fit for the planning and management of its own affairs.

A region for instance can select economic activity or activities in which it has comparative advantage for purposes of specialization and exchange. A region can plan power generation, transmission and distribution within its captive domain. A region can plan and construct Railway lines to service its transport needs, and regional lines to link it with other regions and countries. A region can choose to impose a certain amount of toll to develop and maintain roads and highways within its jurisdiction.

A region may have a number of states under it but is capable of working with those states to organize development within its borders. This will douse the feeling of marginalization or retrogression. It will create peer comparison and healthy competition among the regions, and accelerate the pace of national development.

4.) **STATE POLICE:** The centralization of command and control in the Nigerian police at the federal level is nothing other than another creation of the colonial and military regimes to exert political control. Police should be about security of lives and property, not about political control.

Police command can and should be decentralized. This is the practice in all civilized jurisdictions around the world. Why should police in Enugu, Port-Harcourt, Lagos, Kano, Sokoto and Maidugri, wait for direction or command from Abuja to act on security challenges in its locality? Why should one central police command oversee the affairs of 170 million citizens, and counting? Why should a PDP state government be under an APC police command and expect the right things to be done?

Rather, let there be one Federal Police with clear jurisdictions and responsibilities, and state police for the various states as obtained in other developed countries such as the United States of America.

It is better we do the right thing and confront the fears, challenges and trepidations of state police, rather than live in denial of our imperatives. Indeed the fears and anxieties for state police are unfounded and unnecessary.

If we fear what the state Governors will do with their respective state police, why don't we fear what one President will do with the entire Nigerian Police.

The concept of community policing, the contemporary system that has been very efficient around the world, is about involving the community served by the police in the work of police. It is about decentralization. It is in tandem with state police. It is about involving the locals in policing.

How effective will an Ibo man be as commissioner of police in Yobe state? What does he understand about the terrain, the behaviour, habits and ways of life of the indigenous people. Or for that matter a Kano man among Ibos in Ariaria or Ochanja market. In all considerations, state police is the way to go. State police is the way to curb the various security challenges facing the nation today. It will eliminate suspicions, distrust and feeling of oppression by the Nigerian people.

5.) **STRUCTURE OF GOVERNMENT:** The choice of the appropriate system of government to operate in Nigeria is another issue that begs the attention of Restructuring of the Nigerian state. There is the feeling that the system of government is over bloated, wieldy and costly.

We had operated the Parliamentary system inherited from the colonial masters. We abandoned that for its shortcoming and opted for American Presidential System.

According to Senator Ike Ekweremadu, the Deputy Senate President, who has been at the helm of constitutional development in Nigeria in the last 12 years, "The American Presidential System is 'good but' ... there is need to modify our own Presidential system to curtail the excesses of the President, and importantly create greater overlap, affinity and synergy between the executive and the legislative arms of government."

Suggestions have been made of a hybrid form of Presidential system with a strong, effective and compassionate constitution, as a solution. This form of hybrid is obtainable in Kenya for instance where the President is required to appoint a specified number of his cabinet from the Parliament.

This is also the case in Ghana where the President is required to appoint a greater number of his ministers from the Parliament, and fewer number of technocrats from outside, provided that the technocrats to be appointed possess the relevant qualifications to be elected as members of parliament.

Copious provisions in South African Constitution limit the excesses of the President in exercise of discretion. Article 85 of the South African constitution expressly limits the President to the constitution and extant laws, in exercise of discretion.

In addition to impeachment, the South African Constitution also provides for removal of the President by vote of no confidence duly passed by the parliament (section 92 (2)).

In terms of implementation, restructuring will involve constitutional review. The current review of the constitution has merely nibbled on the issue. The more touchy issues that bother on real restructuring

were either avoided or out-rightly defeated because the issues were not sufficiently canvassed or escalated to the front burner.

Restructuring by constitutional review will be smoother but will certainly require more time. Under the constitutional review approach, some vital aspects of Restructuring may never pass, and so agitations and restiveness may linger.

The other way is an implementation of the recommendations of the National Conference of 2014 under the last administration of Goodluck Jonathan. The recommendations of the conference contained some far reaching conclusions that advance the cause of Restructuring.

Thirdly, it may be inevitable to convoke another national conference or referendum to confront those issues that are the fears of the government and the people, where people know the truth but are afraid to say it.

In terms of dynamics, it will be advisable to discharge as many of the issues as can be handled by constitution review. Thereafter, the National Assembly should adopt the report of the 2014 National Conference as a working document and so discharge as many of those other issues as can be so handled. Thereafter, the new conference can be convoked when circumstantial imperatives compel government to summon the will to confront those areas of Restructuring that are otherwise regarded as no-go-areas.

DIOCESAN MERITORIOUS AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE/POST HUMOS AWARD

The church is the conscience of the society. In discharging this duty she is to condemn evil as well as commend righteousness. In the preceding discourse, we spoke up against ugly trends that are the bane of our society. Here, we have decided as a church and the living conscience of the society to appreciate godly lifestyle, commitment to good governance, philanthropy, hard work, humility, generosity and support to mission and Evangelism. The Diocese, through her Board has therefore chosen and approved the following five persons for this year's award:

1. Senator Ike Ekweremadu, Deputy Senate President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.
2. Rt. Hon. Dennis N. Agbo KGS, Representing Igbo-Eze North/Udenu Federal Constituency.
3. Sir Prof. Benjamin C. Ozumba, the indefatigable Vice Chancellor of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka.
4. Late Zephaniah Agbo (Ichie Ozioma)
5. His Royal Majesty, Igwe Dr. James Ogbonnaya Mamah

Permit us to comment briefly on each of these persons to enable you know reasons why we are giving them the award.

Senator Ike Ekweremadu, PhD, CFR

This servant of God has proven himself a Christian without denominational bias and a politician with a heart of service for humanity. His donations, both in cash and kind, cut across all the churches in the state and even beyond. He donated enormously towards the building of the St. Michael Cathedral, Awgu and single-handedly built an exquisite architectural masterpiece and bequeathed to his Anglican community in Mpu. In the midst of the political turmoil of this nation, he has refused to compromise his faith and has remained undaunted in his demand for fairness and impartiality in the much trumpeted fight against corruption by the Buhari led Federal Government. He is one of the few politicians that give Nigeria a hope for a better society tomorrow as his constituency projects, in terms of rural roads rehabilitation, provision of pie borne water, organized scholarship schemes and packages for widows and the less privileged, speak volume of his patriotic dispositions. We commend his doggedness and purposefulness as a trusted representative of the grassroots. We give him this award to assure him that the church is solidly behind him in prayers and urge him, as the highest political office holder from the South East, not to relent in his stance as a crusader of justice and equity. It is also a challenge to other politicians to emulate his spirit of selfless service.

Rt. Hon. Dennis Nnamdi Agbo, KSP

Many children of prominent Anglican forebears have abandoned the church and the legacies of their parents because of the status they have attained in the society. But this servant of God in conjunction with his siblings have kept alive the good spirit of their parents, whose contribution towards the growth of the Anglican church in Uda (and beyond) is noted earlier in this address. This he has done by continuing to hold on to his Christian commitment and strong drive towards the propagation of the gospel and expansion of the church at Parish, Archdeaconry and Diocesan levels. He has assisted many people and helped them pursue their destinies. These are worthwhile qualities that need to be appreciation and publicized, hence this award.

Sir Prof. Benjamin C. Ozumba

This servant of God came to the University of Nigeria, Nsukka at a time when the institution was regarded as dysfunctional. His arrival, goodwill, hard work and excellence in leadership salvaged the almost dead institution and brought it to enviable heights. He is committed to positioning the University of Nigeria, the first land grant University in Nigeria, midwifed by the Michigan State

University as a Global University. He has achieved the best atmosphere for working and learning processes in the University community. These are indeed giant strides.

Again, we have taken time to follow and examine employments during his stay in this office. In this, he has proven himself a Christian and a good leader. He is neither sentimental nor tribal; he does not give in to quota system. He sees the University as belonging to all and sundry. Therefore, he believes that from any side of the nation or religious bias, one has the right of employment on merit and based on need. So he stands for equity and fair play. Promotions and appointments of people into sensitive positions and offices has he based on merit and hard work. He is indeed a true citizen with pan-Nigerian spirit of our early fathers.

As a church, we commend him for these wonderful legacies for which unregenerate hearts are labouring assiduously to blackmail him. As the conscience of the masses and prophet to the society, we give him this award to commend his excellence in the office and encourage him to continue in his wonderful footprints.

Late Zephaniah Ugwu Agbo (Ichie Ozioma)

The history we already presented at the beginning of this Address captures the role of this saint triumphant in the propagation of the gospel and establishment of the church in Uda. Our Address during the Christian Men's Fellowship conference at Ogrute explained vividly why he was called "Ichie Ozioma". Choosing him for this award is to encourage commitment to our great commission especially among men.

His Royal Majesty, Igwe Dr. James Ogbonnaya Mamah, JP, MFR (Late)

If you read the history of our Church in Ugbaike very well, you will see the glaring disposition of this traditional ruler. He contributed to the survival of the church during the period of great storms that almost annihilated the church. Though not an Anglican, he against all odds supported the gospel and aided the continuous existence of St. James Anglican Church Ugbaike. This is worthy of commendation, hence his choice for this year's award.

The award is to encourage the beneficiaries to do more in their good works and motivate others to follow the good path of life patterned by even the fallen heroes of faith.

THEME: Covenant Keeping God

TEXT: 1Kings 8:23

And he said, LORD, God of Israel, there is no God like You, in heaven above, or on Earth beneath, who keeps covenant and mercy with your servants who walk before you with all their heart.

INTRODUCTION

The context of our theme is the Temple Dedication Prayer which Solomon prayed when he dedicated the temple of the Lord in Jerusalem. Among all the attributes of God, Solomon especially saw God as covenant-keeping God. You will recall that in our last Synod the Lord spoke to us from the theme; "The Return of the Ark". The message came with such intensity and clarity that no one was left in doubt that the Ark, among other things, represents God's presence, His covenant and His strength. We saw that the message of the Ark is the message of the true worship of God based on deep, personal conviction and unshaken covenant relationship with Him. In addition to the other things the Lord taught us on that theme, the issue of covenant was glaring. When we began to pray for the theme of this year's Synod, the word COVENANT came strongly in our heart. Covenant in the Christian theology is a vast area that may require more than a Synod life for a proper study. So, we don't intend to take the whole lump, but will concentrate on the area that will prepare our heart for true worship as a people unto whom the Ark has been brought back. Incidentally, the context of Dedication in our text coincides with the dedication of our cathedral, coming up in a matter of weeks. It is the Lord's doing and it is both instructive and interesting.

In 1 Kings 8:14-24, we see the record of Solomon's response to God after he had graciously completed the building:

Then the king turned around and blessed the whole assembly of Israel, while all the assembly of Israel was standing. And he said:"Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, who spoke with His mouth to my father David, and with His hand has fulfilled it, saying, 'Since the day that I brought My people Israel out of Egypt, I have chosen no city from any tribe of Israel in which to build a house, that My name might be there; but I chose David to be over My people Israel.' Now it was in the heart of my father David to build a temple for the name of the Lord God of Israel. But the Lord said to my father David, 'Whereas it was in your heart to build a temple for My name, you did well that it was in your heart. Nevertheless you shall not build the temple, but your son who will come from your body, he shall build the temple for My name.' So the Lord has fulfilled His word which He spoke; and I have filled the

position of my father David, and sit on the throne of Israel, as the Lord promised; and I have built a temple for the name of the Lord God of Israel. And there I have made a place for the ark, in which is the covenant of the Lord which He made with our fathers, when He brought them out of the land of Egypt."And Solomon stood before the altar of the Lord in the presence of all the congregation of Israel, and spread forth his hands toward heaven: And he said, Lord God of Israel, there is no God like thee, in heaven above, or on earth beneath, who keeps covenant and mercy with thy servants that walk before thee with all their heart.

At least three issues arise for determination from our theme text:

- The faithfulness of God to His covenant with man;
- Cultivating and sustaining a covenant relationship with God, and
- The consequences of following God casually.

Let us take the issues one after the other, beginning with a brief definition of the word covenant.

THE MEANING OF COVENANT

Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines covenant as a formal and serious agreement or promise; it also means a formal, written agreement between two or more people, businesses, countries, etc.

Covenant is largely a legal term; it involves at least two parties, with rights and responsibilities. God's covenant can be general or specific. The general covenant is the divine terms and conditions for relationship with and worship of God. The Old Testament covenant with Israel based on laid down principles of worship is an example of general covenant.

The book of Hebrews 9:1-15 summarizes the Old Covenant system of worshipping God:

1. Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service and a worldly sanctuary. 2 for there was a tabernacle made; the first, wherein was the candlestick, and the table, and the shewbread; which is called the sanctuary. 3 And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all; 4 Which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid roundabout with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant; 5 And over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercy seat; of which we cannot now speak particularly. 6 Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God. 7 But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people: 8 The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing: 9 Which was a figure for the time then

present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; 10 Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation. 11 But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; 12 Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. 13 For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: 14 How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? 15 And for this cause he is the mediator of the New Testament, which by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.

That is the picture of the Old Covenant pattern of worship; it was based on laid-down ordinances and principles. Worship was not arbitrary; there was order; there were rights and duties in that system of worship. Every worshiper was to comply with principle of that covenant if his or her worship was to be accepted.

However, that system of worship was weak in that it was mostly external – being a shadow of the reality to come. Jesus is that reality. By His blood, we are brought into the New Covenant relationship with God; no wonder the Bible says that God “...has accepted us in the Beloved...” – Eph.1:6.

The two major bases of God's covenant with man are His prescribed sacrifice and His word. The sacrifice as a mediator brings us to Him; His word keeps us glued to Him because in His word He both reveals His faithfulness and as well engages us to trust Him all the way. Both the Old and the New covenants agree on this principle. The New, however, changed the form but retained the principle of worship: that by the once-and-for-all sacrifice of Jesus on the cross, we acceptably come to God; and by the word of His power, we have an anchor for our soul, come what may.

Be that as it may, our emphasis in this message is on the specific covenant of God with man. God's specific covenants with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, etc are examples of specific covenant relationship with God. What do we mean by specific covenant? We mean a personal, deliberate,

cumulative and progressive walk with God for a definite purpose based on a certain word He has sent to you as an individual believer. That walk is engaging and the relationship is personal.

That is the context of our theme. Solomon celebrated the faithfulness of God in bringing to reality what he promised his father David. That now brings us to the essential ingredients of God's faithfulness to His word as collateral for our trust in Him.

THE FAITHFULNESS OF GOD

As for God, His way is perfect;

The word of the Lord is proven;

He is a shield to all who trust in Him - Ps 18:30

The above passage is a summary of all the scriptural references on the faithfulness of God. The Psalmist says: "As for God, His way is perfect..." In other words, in the matter of faithfulness to His part of the terms of covenant relationship, God is perfect. If there is any imperfection or unfaithfulness, it cannot be traced to God. If there is any breach in covenant relationship, it is obviously not from God; unfaithfulness to agreement and breach of covenant terms can only be that of man, not of God.

From creation to the point of personally committing Himself to Abraham by way of covenant, unto the time of Israel's sojourn into Egypt, up to the Exodus, stretching to Israel's forty-year wilderness journey and eventual entrance of the people into the Promised Land; continuing to the time of Israel's captivity due to her sin, unto the Return from exile and rebuilding of Jerusalem and the Coming of the Messiah, God has been serially and evidently faithful. "As for God, His way is perfect; the word of the Lord is proven; He is a shield to all who trust in Him."

What are the implications of His unchanging faithfulness?

- 1. It raises a justifiable ground for Him to demand from us obedience;**
- 2. It calls for true worship of God;**
- 3. It engages us for a rational, unwavering trust in Him;**
- 4. God's unbroken faithfulness explains His right to justifiably punish man's continued, wilful disobedience and distrust to Him.**

Therefore, a clear understanding of the faithfulness of God brings us to a place of both rights and duties in our worship of Him. By means of His word of promise, God engages us to trust His integrity; by means of His proven power, He destroys our excuse of doubting or distrusting Him. Circumstances change but God does not change:

As for God, His way is perfect;

The word of the Lord is proven;

He is a shield to all who trust in Him

DEVELOPING A COVENANT RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

"Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, who spoke with His mouth to my father David, and with His hand has fulfilled it" – 1 Kings 8:15

As we noted earlier in this message, God engages individuals in special covenant relationship in order to achieve a definite purpose in connecting with His overall purpose of drawing all men to Himself for eternal fellowship. When God encountered Abraham, His purpose was clear: that through Abraham all the nations of the earth will come to the knowledge of God; that through the lineage of Abraham Jesus shall come to save the human race. This is clear from Gal.3:16:

"Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, and to seeds, as of many; but as of one, and to thy seed, which is Christ".

From that passage we see that the major aim of raising Abraham was that through him, Christ would come to the world. That was the 'seed' of his covenant relationship with God. And to achieve that purpose, Isaac needed to be born, for God had said to Abraham: "...in Isaac shall thy seed be called"- Gen.21:12. As at the time God was speaking was deliberately and clearly to Abraham, Isaac had not been born; but God needed to give him clarity of purpose before the birth of the promised son. In other words, Isaac was God's means of advancing the covenant He had with Abraham; Isaac was not the end but the means.

To develop such a covenant relationship with God, we need obedience and a passion for deep communion with God because there are depths and layers of God's promises we cannot access from just superficial relationship with Him; after all, "deep calleth unto deep..."

Again, we need to ask God to help us see the 'seed' of our covenant relationship with Him. More often than not, miracles and provisions are God's means of bringing us into His purpose; but being human and desperate for solutions, we often sacrifice His purpose on the altar of our gratification. But if we

sincerely seek Him in covenant relationship, there is no needed miracle He will not perform just to bring us into the purpose of calling us.

God's covenant with David was that of rebuilding the temple and retaining the seat of His kingship in David's lineage through all generations. Therefore, the issue of provision for the temple was a work for God because to complete that temple was a needed miracle in the covenant terms He had with David.

For each and every one of us, there is something definite and deliberate in the heart of God while calling us unto Himself. When we locate that covenant purpose, we have enrolled on the path of compulsory miracles because whatever it will take God to achieve that purpose, on His own part, He is committed to us.

Therefore, this message raises the question of a call to covenant relationship with God. We can no longer be at the periphery because some times, God demands a minimum spiritual altitude before He would reveal some deep things to us. Little wonder God said to Ezekiel, "...Arise, go forth into the plain, and I will there talk with thee- Ezekiel 3:22.

We are in a generation where people are thirsty for miracles and the power of God, but many are not seeking the 'seed' of their covenant relationship with Him. That was the problem with Israel; they always needed God's power but hardly attached to His purpose. That is misplaced priority. And worse still, even when God decides to show His mercy and power by way of miracles in order to draw us unto Himself, we turn our object of worship to be the miracle and no longer on the God who performed the miracle.

I think this message aptly applies to us. For anyone that knows Nsukka Diocese, her composition, her economy, and the socio-cultural structure of the people; the building of such a cathedral can be nothing outside miracle. In the words of Rt. Rev. Prof Isreal K. Okoye, "This Cathedral is not built by money; rather it is built by faith, supported by money and supervised by men of integrity". It is an outstanding proof that our God is a covenant keeping God. He did what He promised He will do. In December 2008, when the design of this cathedral was presented to the Cathedral building committee, over 95% of the members turned it down on the basis that it was an impossible task, considering the design and the facts on ground. When they brought the matter to us, we asked them for a time to ask God who is the owner of the building in prayers, what he would want us to do. In the

Cause of the prayers, God spoke clearly to me that we should continue with the building as designed, and that He will build it Himself. He added, “You are not just building a Cathedral, you are building a Christian Centre.” To complete the Cathedral is the needed miracle in the covenant terms God has with us. It is the means, not the end. Therefore, we need to ask God to help us see, understand, and be committed to the 'seed' of our covenant relationship with Him.

In this case, the seed of the covenant between God and the Diocese of Nsukka is “Becoming a Christian Centre”. So, the definite and deliberate thing in the heart of God while calling us unto Himself as a Diocese is to be “A Christian Centre”. That is the covenant purpose, which has brought this compulsory miracle on our way because whatever it will take God to achieve that purpose, on His own part, He is committed to it. In my understanding, being a “Christian Centre” is nothing than what has been well expatiated in the refrain of our Diocesan Anthem;

“Centre of true Evangelism,

A solid base for the Gospel

Place of Redemption for the Christians...”

NIGERIAN NATION IN THE LIGHT OF OUR THEME

Genesis 1:2a may appropriately describe the present state of our nation. Nigeria is without form, and void; and darkness is upon the face of the deep.

Over the years, there have been covenant prophetic declarations about Nigeria becoming the pilot of the end time revival that will reawaken Christianity globally. This, as prophecies had it, was because of Nigerian Christians' fervency in the LORD. But what we now have playing out in the social media, news and reactions from church leaders and people look like a contradiction of the prophetic covenant and promises. There is so much fear about the Islamization of Nigeria and complete disappearance of Christianity from the soil of Nigeria that one wonders whether Christians still have any faith left in them. Christians seem to be magnifying this agenda and its preaching is replacing the preaching of the good news of the kingdom. The situation is in fact alarming.

In another sense, I try to relate the given situation with the covenant promise of Christ in Matthew 16:18, “... I will build my Church; and the gate of hell shall not prevail against it.” In Isaiah 43:19, there is another strong covenant promise, “Behold, I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth; shall ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert.” If the LORD (Yahweh) who is unchanging, absolute, independent, eternally self-existent and is present with His people to save, help, deliver, redeem, bless and keep covenant has emphatically made the above covenant

declarations, why should Christians in Nigeria be so engulfed in fear, so much so that we leave the salvific message and preach doom for the church?

For me, it is either the Christians in Nigeria have lost the understanding of the nature and personality of God, resulting to faithlessness and lack of confidence in God or we have not kept our own part of the covenant which is "Holiness unto the LORD". There is the need for us to increase our faith and retrace our steps. Let us appraise our Christianity and do away with syncretism that has so blended into our spirituality and the carelessness which we have Christened "grace movement," "hyper grace." Let us do away with those infiltrations and apostasy and go back to our covenant relationship with Yahweh. If we come to this point, our fears will disappear, the presence of God will fill the country and then victory over every devilish agenda is assured.

Conclusion

May I make bold reiterate here that the economic and political crises in Nigeria cannot have any effect (negative or positive) on the nature of God; the storms cannot bear on the faithfulness of God. He does not depend on the economy, politics or ethnic diversity/unity of Nigeria to fulfill His promises or achieve his purpose. If at his name, every knee must bow and the Psalmist says He lifts His word above His name, you can then see the extent of the assurance of the coming to pass of His promises. He is unchanging; and powerful, and all sufficient. His faithfulness reaches to the cloud and His righteousness is like Majestic Mountain; His wisdom is like the depth of the sea. By His mighty and outstretched arm, he saves, helps, delivers, redeems, blesses and keeps covenant. Whatever your problem, the answer is one of the listed works of the covenant keeping God.

We have heard it all. Our God is the same yesterday, today and forever more. He is a covenant keeping God. But above all, he is more than able to keep his promises. He did not disappoint Abraham; he did not disappoint Shadrack, Mischack and Abednego. He did not disappoint even Samson, Jonah. He did not disappoint Paul and Silas. He will not disappoint you if today you decide to enter into covenant with him. Just align with Him and give yourself wholly to His worship and He will take up your case.

This message is a wake-up call. Let us realign ourselves in God; let us approach Him in worship with a deep sense of covenant relationship. He has undertaken to do His own part of the covenant; His word is ever true; He is a covenant-keeping God.

Please rise as we jointly worship God with this song.

Covenant keeping God,

There is no one like You;

Alfa and Omega,

There is no one like You

God bless you all.

Your brother, friend and Bishop,

Aloysius

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APPENDIX I

Diocese of Nsukka

(Anglican Communion)

Rt. Rev Aloysius Eze. Agbo (JP)

(Bishop of Nsukka)

PASTORAL LETTER FROM THE 2nd SESSION OF THE 8TH SYNOD

Dear people of God,

May God's goodness and mercy be upon you all now and forever more. Amen.

The Second Session of the 8th Synod of our dear Diocese met under the guidance of God Almighty at the Cathedral Church of St. Paul Nsukka from Wednesday 26th October to Sunday 30th October 2016.

In last year's Synod, we heard the Lord say to us through the theme "I will do a new thing" and therein, the Lord opened our spiritual eyes to see and our hearts to understand that indeed our cry had reached the heavens and the Lord decided to open new door of breakthrough and favour to us. We equally understood that no matter how dry and hopeless our situations were that God promised to do new things which shall bring turn around in our lives as individuals, as a Church and in our diocese. We thank God that we are witnesses to all that the Lord has began to do for us.

By the grace of God, this year God has opened yet another wonderful page in the history and life of our diocese through the theme "The Return of the Ark". We immensely reflected on the theme "The Return of the Ark (1 Chron. 13:1-3). This theme was deeply captured in the Bible Study we had and series of wonderful and inspiring sermons delivered by our Guest.

It is clearly evident that God is interested in continuing with doing new things in our lives in a remarkable way much more than we have witnessed before. However, through this year's theme-the return of the Ark, we find that the Ark sometime ago left us and now we await its return. The Ark represents the presence of God. We miss a lot as a result of the absence of the Ark in our lives. It is therefore the mind of God that all of us should prepare our hearts and lives to welcome back the Ark of God. The Ark then in the Bible times dwelt in houses made by man but now the Ark is expected to dwell in our lives as the temple of God. It is time we receive Christ into our lives for it is Christ in us the hope of glory.

People of God, God has been doing great things for us in this Diocese, and in Nigeria but greater and new things are about to emerge as soon as the Ark returns into our hearts and lives. Let us therefore pray that God will grant us the grace to believe and live an acceptable life of holiness to be able to see them come true.

The Lord God has continued to show us mercy in all ramifications despite the fact that this year 2016 has been a troubled year in the history of Nigeria as a nation. This year witnessed a great dwindling of the nation's economy which is technically referred to as economic recession. It affected so many businesses both locally and internationally. In all these turbulent economic challenges and realities we want to say that God has continued to show us mercy and His favour and would continue to do so, for truly, the Lord is our Shepherd.

Brethren, we are glad on your renewed and undaunted commitment and love to things of God and His Church. Despite the harsh economic situation Nigeria is passing through, this year has witnessed improvement in infrastructural development in our local Churches. In fact it is noticed that almost every Church is undertaking one project or the other. Your devotion in so many projects scattered all over the diocese speaks volume of your readiness to continue with the vision and mission of the diocese as encapsulated in the revised edition of "The Way forward". You shall not lose your rewards in Jesus' name. Amen.

However, we frowned at the high rate of poor quality work and no recourse to standard that have pervaded the diocese. The Synod therefore warns that all building projects shall be supervised from design to through foundation to the completion of the project.

More so, we have noticed the preference of embarking on Church projects to paying diocesan assessment. This no doubt limits the various administrative duties of the diocese and other projects at the center. We therefore reiterate our earlier position that paying of Assessment is a priority and should be given the deserved attention it requires.

Brethren, we have also noticed the lack of interest in Church music. This is more worrisome when we now find so many Churches including Parish headquarters where there is no longer Choir. We therefore insist that every Church must have Choir, failure to do so will definitely attract sanctions from the diocesan.

We want to commend all those whom God is using in donating expensive materials that runs in millions for the completion of the Cathedral. We solicit for more donations as we have in our mind to complete and dedicate the Cathedral soonest and move into other projects in keeping with our Vision.

We have noted the challenging circumstances some small Churches are passing through and resolve that on 29th January 2017 we shall make donations towards assisting some of these Churches like the type we do on Matthias Sunday.

We commend you all for maximum compliance with the directive on uniform signpost for Churches and diocesan owned institutions and ask that other directives should be responded to in similar manner.

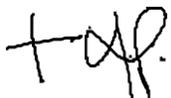
Brethren, the Lord has led us into establishing a Health Insurance Scheme within the diocese. This Scheme is aimed at providing health services at the cost of Six thousand Naira only annually (N6000:00). We therefore ask that our members should register now and Churches to register their Priests and Pastors.

Brethren, we bring to your notice our resolve to hold Sonship Manifestation Youth Conference (SOMAYCO) annually. This vision came from God to reposition our youths to take up leadership position in all godliness. We therefore urge all of us to key into this vision in mobilizing our youths and supporting the programme financially and otherwise. The 2017 edition will come from 17th -22nd April 2016.

We commend all the revival programmes that go on in our Churches nowadays. We pray God to sustain them. But we equally advise that revival should not be seen as a mere activity that ends up without any impact in the lives of the people but that which would lead to renewal of people's character to the point of godliness. It is therefore our desire that all the programmes will run will be Bible based and discipleship oriented. With this we can raise a godly generation from our Churches in this crooked generation.

And now unto him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy-we commit you; may the Lord bless you and keep you; May He deliver you from dwelling in the past and teach you both to know His present will and to follow His plans; May He bring upon you the blessings that follow all those lives who have welcomed the Ark into their lives and the blessings of God Almighty, Father, 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)
(Bishop of Nsukka)