

**PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS DELIVERED AT THE SECOND SESSION OF THE
FIRST SYNOD OF THE DIOCESE OF NSUKKA AT ST. LUKE'S CHURCH,
AMUFIE ON MONDAY, 19TH JUNE, 1995 BY THE RIGHT REV. JONAH
CHUKWUEMEKA ILONUBA, M.A., Dip. Th. (Lond.) Bishop of Nsukka**

SYNOD PRAYER:

Almighty God, give us grace to do the work to which you have called us with reverence and godly fear; not with eye-service as pleasers of men, but with singleness of heart as in your sight, and so direct all our thoughts, words and deeds by the power of your Holy Spirit, that as true disciples of Christ we may set your will ever before us, and give ourselves wholly to you and to your service through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

GREETINGS

My dear people of God and fellow labourers in the Lord's vineyard, I welcome all of you in the most precious name of God to the village of Amufie, where through his grace we are gathered for the 2nd Session of the 1st Synod of the Diocese. I thank the people of Amufie for accepting to host this year's Synod.

Last year our Diocese, by the time we held our first Synod, was still the youngest in the Province. Today we have grown out of childhood having two other baby Dioceses coming after us. We thank God for his continued goodness and mercy to us.

INTRODUCTION:

THE HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY IN AMUFIE

AMUFIE is one of the 33 villages that make up the town Enugu-Ezike.

Before the advent of Christianity in Amufie, she had been seriously engaged in inter-village wars with Ogrute, Igogoro and Ugbaike all in Ozzi Community of Enugu-Ezike. By this time, the colonial masters had set in motion a peaceful administration in Nsukka District by appointing Warrant Chiefs to help them quell inter-village disturbances; stop slavery and slave trade; collect taxes and help trade on Palm Produce to flourish. The then Administrative Officer in charge of Nsukka was D. O. Helbert and the Anglican (C.M.S) was having its Headquarters at Ngwo in Udi under the leadership of the Rev. Isaac Ejindu.

In 1927, the C.M.S. which was first brought to Alor-Uno penetrated into Nsukka town and spread to Edem-Ani; Ibagwa-Ani and their environs. In 1928, Mr. J. P. Okeke a church teacher was sent to Nsukka. In 1930, the Rev. A. N. Asiekwu was posted as a resident priest to Nsukka. He, having heard of the thick population of Enugu-Ezike, lost no time in requesting for some church teachers to help him in evangelism.

By March, 1930, Messrs Ebede from Nankpu and Igboeli from Abagana, all in the then Awka District, were sent to Amufie as local helpers or church teachers as they were called at that time. This was not an easy task, because of the dialectical, environmental, and societal problems. Here the appointed Warrant Chief by name Suleiman Adukwu, who had been recognized by Amufie in particular and Umuitodo in general played the most vital role.

The Rev. A. N. Asiokwu used the Chief's influence and that of the District Officer, Mr. Helbert in propagating his evangelical assignment. Chief Adukwu was given an injunction that unless Amufie produced an estimated number of scholars (now pupils) up to forty, his chieftaincy recognition will be abrogated by the district Officer. Chief Adukwu had to face two problems viz; siting the school and producing the required number of pupils.

1. **Site:** To be on a geographical centre, **Olido Hill**, the present adjacent hill near Olido bore hole site was chosen in order to attract pupils from Amube, Olido, Umachi and Amufie, considering his colleague – Chief Ayogu Ede of Amube as a would-be helper in producing the estimated number of pupils. It must be remembered that Amufie elders had to provide the two teachers' feeding, accommodation and security.
2. **Number of Pupils:** During the first four months, when the school gong sounded for the arrival of pupils who were used as church members then, only five children were enrolled. They were:
 - (i) Ugwuanyi Onoja Osayi
 - (ii) Ogbonna Obute
 - (iii) Azegba Eya
 - (iv) Odo Nwa Abanyi
 - (v) Odo Nwa Iyida

Nobody came from Olido, Amube and Umachi. Chief Adukwu had to augment the number by enrolling his three children namely Momo Adukwu, Awudu Adukwu and Abu Adukwu to make the total number of pupils eight with two teachers teaching the 3Rs – Reading, Writing and Arithmetic. Under the circumstances, frustration became the order of the day for both the Chief, the two teachers and the Rev. Pastor himself. Before the end of 1930, Mr. Ebede became sick and left for his home – Nankpu.

3. **Change of Site:** The Rev. Asiokwu had to seek the assistance of the D. O., Mr. Helbert to join him in warning Chief Adukwu about the inglorious situation of his mission and to threaten him once more of withdrawing his chieftaincy recognition if things did not improve. Chief Adukwu, having been duly warned of the situation summoned the Amufie elders and explained the issues at stake and also warned the elders that unless each elder donated a boy (a pupil) to go to school at once he would cause the wrath of the D. O. to arrest the defaulter and detain him in his court. He also changed the venue of the school to his spacious open corridor/veranda and provided accommodation in his premises for teachers. This had a wonderful result in that all the elders complied with the Chiefs' instructions. There was a levy of a child per elder, through the six kindreds that make Amufie, and soon the population of the school children rose to sixty five by April, 1931. These were soon baptized. With the baptized and unbaptized members the number soon increased and Church Services, Sunday Schools and Catechisms started in earnest. There was no clear demarcation between a church member and a pupil. Nkwo Sundays of every month was earmarked for open-air preaching from one kindred square to another with the pupils preaching under the guidance of the church/school teachers. Since the children were sons of the elders, there were very big turn-out as every elder wanted to hear from his or his neighbour's child. The church thus started to grow.

EVANGELICAL TURNING POINT IN AMUFIE 1932-33

As number of scholars increased, another experienced Awka trained Catechist was sent to help Mr. Nwosa. He was Mr. Francis Okwuadi from Igbodo – Asaba District. Before his arrival, Mr. Nwosa through Chief Adukwu and some scholars like Alphonsor Onoja, Peter Okoro, Thomas Obute, William and his fellow brothers of Adukwu family had requested for a portion of land to build the Catechist's house and a school at Ofueke Amufie – (the present site of St. Luke's premises).

The shrine Grove – Akpu-Inyama and the Umu Ogodu parcels of land were given out, to test the faith of these young believers, since INYAMA is an evil JUJU which they believed could favourably compete with the Christians. Mr. Okwuadi approached Rev. Asioku who in turn used the influence of one Police Sergeant, Mr. ozue from Nibo – Awka to ask Amufie to cut down the “AKPU INYAMA TREE”. After the uprooting of this big terrible tree, there was enough space for both the Catechist's house and school buildings which after the school take-over in 1970 is now the exclusive premises of St. Luke's Church Compound.

The Turning Point referred above was brought about by the friendship that existed between one married heathen a herbalist and a versatile wine-tapper by name Ome Nwa Eya Urama, later baptized on 27th July, 1933 as Abraham Ome Eya who died November 17th , 1984 at the ripe age of 102 years, and Messrs Okwuade, Nwosa and Rev. A. N. Asioku. Their friendship convinced him to the marrow, and like St. Paul, he gave all in him; with zeal and zest; to the Christian evangelism in Amufie and in all the C.M.S. Churches now in Enugu-Ezike. From 1933, after his baptism and renunciation of all idolatrous practices around him, he stood as a rock in the Christian evangelism with living examples, and made the C.M.S. penetrate to Amachalla – through Emmanuel Onojah Ugwu; to Uda, through Zephania Ugwu Agbo; to Igbelle and Uroshi through Messrs Stephen Idoko Eze and John Ossai Idu, to mention but a few.

With the late Abraham Ome Eya, the candle of Christianity was so much lit in Amufie that the C.M.S. (Anglican) has got a firm tap root that can never be shaken from her faith.

Before I speak on the Theme of this year's Synod, I want to thank my brother Bishop from the Diocese of Jos: The Rt. Rev. Benjamin Kwashi who in his characteristic manner spoke to us yesterday during the Synod Service. We thank God for the message which he used him to deliver to us, and it is our prayer that God through his Spirit will help us to live up to the challenges of his message.

You all probably may remember Bishop Kwashi very well. He was the one who preached during the Inauguration of Diocese of Nsukka.

Once more I say welcome to you. Ala, De jee ...

THE SYNOD THEME: “TRUE DISCIPLESHIP – A CHALLENGE TO CHRISTIAN COMMITMENT IN THE DECADE OF EVANGELISM”

The word ‘disciple’ simply means a ‘Pupil, learner’ or follower of any leader of religious thought, art, learning etc. It corresponds to the Greek “Mathētēs” from “Manthanō” to learn. In the Greek world, philosophers were surrounded by their pupils. Since pupils often adopted the distinctive teaching of their masters, the word came to signify the adherent of a particular outlook in religion or philosophy. The Jews considered themselves to be ultimately disciples of Moses: John 9:28, since his teaching formed the basis of their rabbinic instruction. They cursed him and said, “You are that fellow's disciple; but we are Moses' disciples”. Reference is made to the disciples of the Pharisees in Mark 2:18. “Why is it that

the disciples of John the Baptist and the disciples of the Pharisees fast, but yours do not?" In this passage reference is also made to the disciples of John the Baptist. They were his close associates. They practiced prayer and fasting in accordance with his instructions.

Our Lord and master Jesus Christ was popularly known as teacher or rabbi and his associates were known as disciples. The word is used of all who responded to his message Matthew 5:1 "Jesus saw the crowds and went up a hill, where he sat down. His disciples gathered round him, and he began to teach them". (Luke 19:37). The word can also refer more narrowly to those who accompanied him on his travels – (Mark 6:45) and especially to the twelve apostles. "At once Jesus made his disciples get into the boat and go ahead of him to Betsaida ... while he sent the crowd away". Luke 8:2 "The twelve disciples went with him".

Discipleship was based on a call by Jesus. Mark 1:16-20. "As Jesus walked along the shore of Lake Galilee, he saw two fishermen, Simon and his brother Andrew catching fish with a net. Jesus said to them, "Come with me, and I will teach you to catch men".

Discipleship involved personal allegiance to Jesus, which is expressed in following him and giving him an exclusive loyalty. Mark 8:34-38 – "If anyone wants to come with me, he told them, he must forget self, carry his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his own life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it". Luke 14:26 "Whoever comes to me cannot be my disciple unless he loves me more than he loves his father and his mother, his wife and his children, his brothers and his sisters and himself as well."

Being a true disciple sometimes meant a literal abandonment of home, business and possession Mark 10:21, 28, but basically it means readiness to put the claims of Jesus first, whatever the cost was demanded. Faith in Jesus and allegiance to him are what determine the fate of men at the last judgement. Luke 12:8f "I assure you that whoever declares publicly that he belongs to me, the son of man will do the same for him before the angels of God, but whoever rejects me publicly, the Son of man will also reject him before the angels of God."

According to Luke the members of the Early Church were known as disciples Acts 6:1f and thereafter this name was used of all who accepted Christ as their Lord and Saviour. This makes it clear that the early disciples of Jesus formed the nucleus of the Church, and that the pattern of the relationship between Jesus and his earthly disciples was constitutive for the relationship between the risen Lord and the members of his church.

Today, we, as members of the church are the present day disciples of Jesus and as such it is expected of us that we commit our lives wholly to Jesus Christ alone as his true disciples. This is necessary because we live in an age when people tend to have other masters and lords, in an age when people look for security and protection from other powers apart from that of Christ. During the last Provincial Standing Committee at Awka, all the members of the Standing Committee including the Bishops were made to take an oath of allegiance to Christ and Christ alone.

This exercise became necessary because in recent times members of the church have been accused of belonging to secret societies. It is therefore clear that any Christian who belongs to any secret cult cannot claim to be a true disciple of Christ as his loyalty is already divided and total commitment becomes impossible.

For one therefore to be a true disciple, he ought to understand who Christ is and appropriate him to his life. He must accept him as his personal Lord and Saviour. He must be a new creature. In our modern parlance, "he must be born again". John 3:3 "I am telling you the truth: no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again". He must be controlled by the Holy Spirit for he, alone can guide the true children of God. Romans 8:14 "Those who are led by God's Spirit are God's children".

Only a true child of God can be a true disciple. We do not become true disciples by claiming to be one. It is not something that can be hidden. Jesus said "By their fruits you will

know them". True discipleship flows out or radiates just like the power of the Holy Spirit. William Temple writing about the power of the Holy Spirit said "Where there is the Holy Spirit, there is a flowing out: if there is no flowing out, he is not there."

True discipleship can only be lived out in our society as a worthy ambassador who knows that he is not representing himself or his own interest but his country and the interest of his country.

A true disciple should therefore represent the interest of Christ, starting from his home. Parents ought to make their homes a place of love, where the love of Christ is seen in every action. This can only be possible when they are in constant communion with God through prayer and Bible study. Prayer and Bible study leads to liberty in Christ and joyous rewarding service. There is no substitute for fellowship with the Lord. Freedom in his service comes through the inner resources of power supplied by the resurrected Christ indwelling us by his Holy Spirit. The way our neighbours see us go a long way to show whether we belong to Christ or not. Peter knew this fact hence in 1 Peter 2:12 he said: "Your conduct among the heathen should be so good that when they accuse you of being evil-doers, they will have to recognize your good deeds and so praise God on the day of his coming." True disciples of Christ should avoid having anything to do with heathen practices that militate against the growth of Christianity. Some of our involvements in what we call tradition raise doubts in the younger generations as to our true commitment to the course of Christ.

Children from Christian homes should also learn to be obedient to their parents taking their example from Christ himself who remained loyal and submissive to his parents, Luke 2:51 "So Jesus went back with them (i.e. his parents) to Nazareth, where he was obedient to them." Being a new creature in Christ or being born again does not make one abusive or arrogant, rather it makes you sober and humble. The Holy Spirit does not bring disunity, rather it promotes harmony. We are all aware of the fruit of the Holy Spirit as recorded in Galatians 5:22 which include: "Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, humility and self control." Anything that goes against the above is not from the Holy Spirit. Children through their obedience to their unconverted parents, purity of life and prayer for their parents to change will win them over, not through confrontation or disobedience. Christ appealed to the conscience of unbelievers and as his servants we have to do the same. 2 Cor. 5:17-18 "When anyone is in Christ, he is a new being: the old is gone, the new has come. All this is done by God, who through Christ changed us from enemies into his friends and gave us the task of making others his friends also."

One who is a true disciple right from his home and family circle will carry this along as he lives his life within his village or community. He will be seen as a peace-maker within his community. Matthew 5:9 "Blessed are the peace makers, for they shall be called sons of God". He will work for the progress of his town or community avoiding all envy, jealousy and hatred. He will always speak the truth in love and will not be party to any injustice against anyone. 1 Peter 3:10-12 "He that would love life and see good days, let him keep his tongue from evil, and his lips from speaking guile; let him turn away from evil and do right; let him seek peace and pursue it. For the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayer. But the face of the Lord is against those that do evil".

As a government worker he has to show true patriotism. In his office he will be doing his work as if it were his own personal work avoiding all eye-service, bribery, and corruption which is the bane of our present day Nigeria. A true disciple should not succumb to the evil pressures of the society where he lives. He ought to be prepared to suffer for the sake of righteousness. He should not follow the multitude to do evil, rather he should stand out as light to expose all the deeds of darkness. True disciples of Christ within the government whether at National, State or Local Government level will be sincere in fighting the WAIC (War Against Indiscipline and Corruption). War Against Indiscipline and Corruption should

not be limited to the masses while those in authority and corridors of power are the most corrupt and undisciplined people in the country.

Christians in politics should endeavour to erase the idea that politics is a dirty game. There is nothing dirty about politics. It is those who go into it with a view of amassing wealth or sharing from the national cake who make it dirty, because of their inordinate ambition to get rich and greed for gain. In countries like U.S. and Britain where people go into politics to serve their father-land, no one sees politics as a dirty game. Christians should not therefore run away from politics rather they should go into it with the view of correcting all the erroneous ideas that have been introduced into the Nigerian political system.

Those in the education sector should endeavour to eradicate all expo and examination malpractices. Any teacher whether at Primary, Secondary or University level who supports students by aiding or abetting them in cheating at examinations should be treated as an enemy of the nation, a saboteur and is no true patriot of the country. Such cannot claim to be a disciple of Christ talk less of being a true disciple.

In his Christian commitment a true disciple meets his Christian obligations. He understands what Christian stewardship is all about. He gives for the support of his church both his home church and the church where he works to earn his living. He builds up the church through constructive advice and criticisms where necessary. He does not indulge in writing damaging petitions either against the church worker, the committee or any of the arms of the church. In Jude verse 20 we are told “But you, beloved, build yourselves up on your most holy faith; pray in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God; wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life”.

To be truly committed to obeying the great commission we must sacrifice our time, our money, talent and all that we have for the propagation of the gospel. God first gave us his son Jesus Christ who through his death reconciled us to God. Romans 5:8 “But God shows his love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us”.

Throughout the Province, ‘tithing’ is now a common practice and anyone not doing it is cheating God and not being true to his Christian commitment. Our God is such a good God that the more you give to him the more you get his blessings. In Malachi 3:10, God says, “Bring the full tithes into the store house, that there may be food in my house: and thereby put me to the test, says the Lord of hosts, and see if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you an ever-flowing blessing.”

When you open your hands to give to God, there will be space for God’s blessing to come in, but when you close your hands you shut out God’s blessings. In our Christian giving the Macedonian example must always be at the back of our minds. II Cor. 8:3-5 “For they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means, of their own free-will, begging us earnestly for the favour of taking part in the relief of the saints – and this, not as we expected, but first they gave themselves to the Lord and to us by the will of God”. Are you a party to the building up of this our diocese? What is your contribution or are you sitting watching things happen? If Christ is truly in control of your life you won’t be just an observer but you will be deeply involved.

THE EFAC: EVANGELICAL FELLOWSHIP IN THE ANGLICAN COMMUNION

I want to speak briefly on one of the arms of the church the EFAC (The Evangelical Fellowship in the Anglican Communion). This organization was founded in 1961 and has affiliated groups in 18 countries throughout the Anglican Communion. It is governed by an international council and an executive committee.

Anglican Evangelicals are concerned to seek the renewal of the church in every dimension of its life – its faith, worship, holiness, fellowship and mission. The mission of the church springs from the Incarnation, namely God’s deep, personal involvement in the whole

of human life. It therefore demands both evangelism and the quest for social justice, that is, a committed witness by word and deed to the good news of God's kingdom. EFAC is a movement which, within the pluralism of human society, proclaims the uniqueness and finality of Jesus Christ.

In a nutshell the main focus of the EFAC is 'Evangelism', Proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ, showing that the Anglican Church is not a dead church, but a living and vibrant church, where all the Spiritual gifts to the apostles are still operative and can be used to God's glory and to the salvation of humanity.

Unfortunately this arm of the church is the most misunderstood and criticized in almost all the Dioceses in the Province. In some cases it has been banned from being operational. In the Niger Diocesan Synod report of 1993 the Archdeacon of Amichi Archdeaconry writing about the role of the EFAC said:

"The EFAC with numerous problems meets twice in the week. The EFAC has since stopped using the Anglican Prayer Book. They do not say the Lord's Prayer. They do not even read the Bible the way it is done. Pride and holier-than-thou attitude are their worst problems. Even when thieves and liars are there among them, yet non-members are seen as Gentiles among the Jews of the past. The EFAC is the most stubborn and unruly set of organization I have ever come across in the Church. They do not accept corrections. Instead they avoid meetings where the real Bible study is taught. They do not attend Church Bible Study/Class meeting. The EFAC of this Diocese better declares her stand now before Onibere and his group take us aback."

To my mind this is throwing away the child with the bathwater. While I am not exonerating the EFAC from the above accusations I still believe that there is something good in them.

- (i) They are thirsty for the word of God and that is why they fall out with either Pastors or Catechists who do not satisfy that spiritual hunger. Some of our Pastors/Catechists have nothing to offer them because they can't sit down to prepare their Bible Studies. If we are going to grow Spiritually in our knowledge of God we must study the Bible properly. 2 Timothy 2:2 "Take the teachings that you heard me proclaim in the presence of many witnesses, and entrust them to reliable people, who will be able to teach others also."

Acts 17:11 "The people there were more open-minded than the people in Thessalonica. They listened to the message with great eagerness, and every day they studied the scriptures to see if what Paul said was really true."

- (ii) They do not want to be associated with anything idolatrous. Their full commitment is to Christ and Christ alone. Some of us who come to church have not made a clear distinction between Christianity and paganism.
- (iii) They try to keep the ten commandments, while some other Christians live a very care-free life.
- (iv) They pursue holy living.
- (v) They want to carry out all biblical injunctions to the letter. Eg. In matters of giving, like tithing they are more open than other nominal Christians; especially with those who understand what they are doing.

These of course do not make them perfect because some of them tend to be arrogant and look down on all others. Some think that once you do not attend their fellowship then you are already condemned. Romans 14:2 “Who are you to judge the servant of someone else? It is his own master who will decide whether he succeeds or fails. And he will succeed, because the Lord is able to make him succeed.

They usually criticize the members of the Committee, the Pastors and Catechists some of whom they accuse of not being converted or born again. This is why the elders of the church in some places hate anything EFAC.

The problem in some places is that some of those who lead the EFAC groups in the rural areas are illiterate and uninformed and therefore cannot give what they do not have. “The blind cannot lead the blind”. What they need therefore is understanding and proper guidance. In some of the more enlightened areas the problem is leadership tussle. Some of them see some church workers as being on their way to being at the head and control of finances and therefore attack them.

In this Diocese therefore we should allow the EFAC to operate but it must be under the supervision of the Parish Priest and other church workers. No visiting speaker will be allowed to operate without proper clearance with the Diocese. Any teaching that runs counter to the doctrines of the Anglican church must be referred to the Diocesan for clearance. We are all members of EFAC as long as we contribute towards evangelism in this Diocese either financially or through being physically present in some or all the evangelical activities.

NEW BISHOPS:

Since our last Synod three new bishops have been consecrated and enthroned. The Rt. Rev. George Bako, bishop of Lokoja Diocese carved out of Kwara. He was consecrated on the 18th October, 1994 at Cathedral Church of Christ, Lagos and enthroned on the 20th of the same month at Lokoja.

On Sunday, 5th February, 1995, two bishops were consecrated at Our Saviour’s Cathedral, Ijebu-Ode. They are:

- (i) The Rt. Rev. J. Akin Omoyojawo for the Diocese of Ikale/Ilaje carved out of Ondo Diocese. Before his election and consecration he was the Provincial Secretary.
- (ii) The Rt. Rev. M. O. Owadayo, bishop of Egba Diocese. He replaced the retired bishop, The Rt. Rev. T. I. Akintayo. The Rt. Rev. Owadayo was formerly the Principal of Emmanuel College Ibadan.

Proposed Diocese: During the last Provincial Standing Committee at Awka, two new Dioceses were approved in principle. They are:

- (i) The diocese of Egbu from the present Owerri Diocese. As soon as the new Bishop’s court for Owerri Diocese is completed, the bishop of Owerri will move from his house at Egbu then arrangement will be made for the election of the bishop of Egbu.
- (ii) Kabba diocese from Kwara Diocese. There are still certain conditions to be met before a bishop is elected for the Diocese.

NEW ARCHDEACONRIES AND PARISHES:

At the last Diocesan Board Meeting held on Thursday, 23rd March, 1995, it was decided that:

- (i) The following Parishes will constitute the Ibagwa Archdeaconry – Ibagwa parish, Unadu Parish, Enugu-Ezike Parish and Amufie Parish. Arrangements will be made to appoint an Archdeacon and inaugurate the Archdeaconry before the end of this year.
- (ii) St. John's Onuiyi and St. Andrew's Church, Orba Road, Nsukka were constituted into a Parish. St. John's Parish Nsukka was inaugurated on Sunday 14th May, 1995.
- (iii) Alor-Uno Parish: This Parish when inaugurated will comprise: Emmanuel Church, Alor-Uno, St. Peter's Okpuje, St. Michael's Okutu, St. Andrew's Ibagwa-Ani, St. Stephen's Anuka, St. Augustine's Ogbogoro and Okpotokwu. It will soon be inaugurated.

APPOINTMENTS:

The Rev. Canon David O. Ogbonna was appointed the Archdeacon of Nsukka Archdeaconry following the retirement of the Ven. Simon O. Ugwuanyi. He was collated and inducted on Sunday, 5th March, 1995 at St. Paul's Cathedral, Nsukka.

RETIREMENTS:

The following Priests were retired last year but they were allowed to continue for about a year on post-retirement work. They are the Ven. S. O. Ugwuanyi and the Rev. David Nweze. They will be fully retired by the end of June 1995. We thank them for the number of years of meritorious service which they put for the Lord. It is our prayer that God will continue to guide them and give them many more years of rest after working in his vineyard.

The following bishops were also retired: The Rt. Rev. Herbert Haruna of Kwara Diocese retired on the 31st day of December, 1994. The Rt. Rev. J. K. George of Benin Diocese retired early this year. The two seats are still vacant.

ORDINATION:

God willing, we hope on Sunday 30th July, 1995 to make Samuel Ugwu a Deacon. Samuel Ugwu is doing his final year at Anglican College of Theology Okene in Kwara Diocese. The Revds. Ephraim Asogwa and Hyginus Ugwu will also be ordained Priests the same day.

We have conducted an interview for a number of candidates who are interested to work as non-stipendiary priests. Their training will soon begin.

My appeal last year for TAP (Train A Priest) is still on and I am yet to see someone who has indicated his willingness to accept the challenge. Training a Priest now for one year will cost about N12,000.00 (Twelve Thousand Naira) only.

OBITUARY:

It is sad to report that one of our young priests the Rev. Emmanuel C. Onyiaene, the Superintendent of Opi Parish died last year in November. He died on Saturday 5th November, 1994 on the day that the diocesan Girls' Guild Conference was being held in his church. (A Minute's Silence). May the Lord grant his soul eternal rest. **Amen**

CONSTITUTIONAL CONFERENCE

The nation has followed with keen interest the far-reaching decisions taken at the constitutional Conference especially the decision to make the office of the Presidency rotatory. It is worth mentioning that some of the reactions that have come after this decision are diversionary and delaying tactics to keep the military in office. The earlier the Constitutional Conference is ended the better for the country so that arrangements will be made for a return to civilian rule.

The problem with Nigeria is not the Constitution or the type of government, rather it is with those who implement the constitution or operate whatever type of government whether Parliamentary or Presidential. The masses of this nation have suffered a lot under a number of military dictators, innocent citizens have been incarcerated and human rights violated with impunity. The continued stay of the military means suffering for the nation. The best thing any person who loves this country will do now is to release political detainees and make arrangements for a return to true democracy.

CONFIRMATION AND ADMISSIONS:

From the inception of the diocese, to the time of my writing this address, a total of 2,484 Candidates have been confirmed - 786 males and 1,698 females; 243 Girls admitted to Girls' Guild, while 320 women were admitted to the Women's Guild and 78 to Mothers' Union.

The statistics from each church is as follows:

CHURCH AND DATE

| Date | Church | Confirmation | | Girls' Guild | W.G. | M.U. |
|-------------|------------------------------|---------------------|---------------|---------------------|-------------|-------------|
| | | Male | Female | | | |
| 24/4/94 | St. James' Orba | 26 | 45 | 11 | 3 | 1 |
| 1/5/94 | St. Matthew's Parish, Mgbuji | 31 | 112 | - | 20 | 2 |
| 8/5/94 | St. Andrew's Parish, Adani | 35 | 32 | 13 | 17 | 14 |
| 22/5/94 | Eha-Alumona Parish | 15 | 39 | 5 | 8 | 1 |
| 12/6/94 | U.N.N. | 25 | 49 | - | 6 | 5 |
| 18/6/94 | St. Mary's Mbu Parish | 25 | 36 | - | 15 | - |
| 19/6/94 | St. Stephen's Ogrute | 6 | 54 | - | 4 | - |
| 3/7/94 | Emmanuel Church, Unadu | 15 | 55 | - | 15 | 1 |
| 21/7/94 | St. John's Edem-Ani | 49 | 101 | 9 | 18 | 2 |
| 28/7/94 | Ibagwa Parish | 63 | 157 | 14 | 16 | 3 |
| 4/9/94 | St. Thomas Aku | 25 | 49 | - | 9 | 5 |
| 18/9/94 | St. Peter's Ovoko | 24 | 53 | - | 29 | 8 |
| 25/9/94 | St. Mary's Opi | 70 | 113 | 19 | 43 | 10 |

| | | | | | | |
|----------|---------------------------------|-----|-----|----|----|----|
| 2/10/94 | St. Luke's Parish Amufie | 53 | 139 | 23 | 16 | - |
| 30/10/94 | St. Paul's Pro-Cathedral | 162 | 295 | 26 | 43 | 15 |
| 6/11/94 | St. Stephen's Umulokpa | 10 | 19 | 2 | 3 | 1 |
| 13/11/94 | All Saints' Church, Obollo-Afor | 18 | 71 | - | 16 | 8 |
| 20/11/94 | Eha-Amufu Parish | 91 | 201 | 65 | 27 | - |
| 27/11/94 | St. Andrew's Church, Ikem | 19 | 32 | 55 | 7 | 2 |
| 29/1/95 | St. James' Orba | 24 | 56 | - | 5 | - |

CONCLUSION:

My Lord Bishop, the Hon. Chancellor, my learned Registrar, Ven. Archdeacons, Canons of the Cathedral, the Clergy, Igwes and Chiefs, distinguished members of the Synod, Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for your patience and attention during this address. Thank you also for the support you have given to this our diocese during its first year of existence. In this our first year we have proved beyond all reasonable doubt that we are equal to the task of standing as a Diocese. We thank God for his support and spiritual upliftment. We need now to tighten our belts for still more sacrifices for the work of evangelism in this diocese. With true commitment to Christ, our work will be light and God's blessings will abound for all of us. Thank you and God bless you.

The Rt. Rev. J. C. Ilonuba
Bishop of Nsukka
 19th June, 1995