

**PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS DELIVERED AT THE SECOND SESSION OF THE  
SECOND SYNOD OF THE DIOCESE OF NSUKKA AT ST. PETER'S CHURCH,  
OVOKO ON MONDAY 19TH OCTOBER, 1998 BY THE RT. REVD. DR. J.C  
ILONUBA *Bishop of Nsukka.***

**SYNOD PRAYERS**

- 1. O God, whose Son Jesus Christ lived a sacrificial life leaving us an example. Let Christ be formed in us, and let us learn from him all humility of spirit, all lowliness of heart, all modesty of speech, and promptness in doing your will.*

*Cast down, O Lord, all forces of cruelty and wrong. Defeat all selfish and worldly-minded schemes, all hatred, corruption and injustice.*

*Prosper all that is conceived among us in the spirit of Christ; Through your Holy Spirit help us to grow daily more like him, In Christ's name we pray. Amen.*

- 2. Our Saviour Jesus Christ, in whose way of love lies the secret of all life, and the hope of all people, we pray for quiet courage to match this hour. We did not choose to be born or to live in such an age; but let its problems challenge us, its discoveries exhilarate us, its injustices anger us, its possibilities inspire us and its vigour renew us for your kingdom's sake. Amen.*

**GREETINGS:**

Beloved in Christ, it is with joy and an immense gratitude to God, who in his faithfulness and loving mercy has given us another opportunity to gather in this special assembly that I welcome all of you to Ovoko where we are now assembled for this year's Synod; the Second Session of the Second Synod of the Diocese of Nsukka.

This Synod is a special one coming after the 1998 Lambeth Conference where all the Anglican Bishops world – wide meet every ten years to discuss issues of common interest to the Anglican Communion.,

We thank God for this special privilege given to us as a Diocese to be part of this worldwide conference. We thank him for his travelling mercies granted to all the Bishops of the Anglican World and for his enabling grace that sustained us throughout the Conference. We thank him for guiding the Conference in the right path and for far – reaching decisions taken to preserve the sanctity of his church and the authority of the scriptures.

News about the Lambeth will be released as time goes on for us to know what we are supposed to do in our own part of the world.

I thank the people of Ovoko for accepting to host this year's Synod and for all the necessary preparations and arrangements that were made towards this year's Synod.

I want to thank them especially for embarking on the building of a church hall for the Synod. This is the first time in the history of this Diocese that such a move has been made. You will remember that Ovoko is the only church in the Diocese where you have a modern parsonage in the Diocese. We thank them for being pace – setters.

In January 1999 our Diocese will be five years old and we shall be getting ready for the celebration of our 5th Anniversary of inauguration.

## THE HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY IN OVOKO

The coming of Anglican Church to Ovoko goes back to 1929 through the help of a Muslim traditional ruler in Ovoko Chief Momo Nwa Oshaba, who was of Nupe origin. For about two years, Christians met and worshipped in his compound with Hausa scholars learning in the Arabic School. The church was then being nursed by Mrs. Stephen Uzor, a Church teacher from Umuabi Udi. In 1931 the church was moved from Chief Momo's compound to Obechara, a parcel of land given to the CMS by Ovoko and Obukpa Communities.

Mr. Ugwu Ikpotoakpa of Umuashi Ovoko at this time surrendered his thatched building at Obechara to be used as the church, the school as well as the residential building for the Church teacher Mr. Simon Eze from Nachi in Udi Local Government Area.

In 1933 the church building was blown down by a rainstorm. People of Ibeku – Ovoko assisted in erecting a more permanent building to serve as both church and school.

A number of people helped spiritually, morally and financially in the survival of the Church at Obechara, They include traders, artisans and civil servants based in Nsukka. They are Onyedu, Stephen Iloanyasi, Enoch Okpukpua, Augustine Ilo, Nathaniel Eze, Simon Ajabigwe, Enoch Ezechukwu, Hezekiah Onyia, Nelson Eze, Godwin Ene, Festus Nweke, Gabriel Chibuzo, etc.

Some of the early converts in Ovoko include Peter Ugwu Onah Ibe an ardent Christian in whose memory St. Peter's Ovoko was named. John Onah from Umushiri Ovoko. Others include Lazarus Eze, Jeremiah Aruah, Apollos Agbo, Andrew Nweke, Amos Ugwu etc. Within twenty – eight years of St. Peter's existence at Obechara it produced many Christian leader like late V.N. Ozor, Mr. G.A. Eze, E.C. Onah, Chief Igwebueze Ugwuoke, Mrs. S.O. Nwokolo, Mrs. Bernice Nnamani etc.

In 1957 St. Peter's Church Ovoko was moved from Obechara down to the centre of Ovoko town. This is the present site of Central School Ovoko, formerly St. Peter's School, Ovoko 1929-1971. Those who were instrumental to the acquisition of this site include John Onah, David Onah, Daniel Ugwu, Jonah Ugwu, Apollos Agbo etc. In 1960 Ovoko leaders in an assembly resolved to expand all existing Primary School lands in Ovoko. It was this time that the present school boundary as surveyed was established.

In the year 1974, the church was again move form Central School Ovoko to its present site. The former sites were left as schools for the church. In the same year 1974 St Peter's Church, Ovoko was made the Head of Eketekere group of Churches. On 6th December 1975, the foundation stone of the present St. Peter's Church, Ovoko was laid by the Rt. Rev. G.N Otubelu B.A., B.D. PAGE, OFR, the Bishop of Enugu. On 6th March 1988 St. Peter's Church, Ovoko became the headquarters of Ovoko Parish inaugurated on the same date.

On 8th December, 1996 Ovoko Archdeaconry was inaugurated.

St. Peter's Ovoko has produced two priests: The Rev. Canon J.C. Onah, and the Rev. Canon M.I. Eze serving in Enugu Diocese. It has also one deacon the Rev. Christian Ogbu and a student at Trinity College Umuahia, Mr. Timothy Ugwu. Ovoko parish is made up of 5 Churches:

- St Peter's Church, Ovoko 1929
- St. Luke's Church, Iheaka 1985
- All Saint's Church, Uhunowere 1989
- St Jame's Church Amube 1994
- St. John's Church, Ovoko – Agu 1994

## **OUR GUEST PREACHER:**

We now welcome formally our Guest Preacher the Rt. Revd. Dr. Josiah Idowu Fearon, B.A. M.A. D.Min., PGCE and the wife Mrs. Comfort Amina Idowu – Fearon who have been with us since Saturday. We thank them for sparing time to be with us.

I met Josiah first in England in 1978 / 79 when I was at Oxford and he was at Durtham. Since then we have been very close. Josiah is one of our dynamic bishops in the Province of Nigeria. His Islamic studies helped him a great deal in his evangelistic work among the Hausas in the North. When the missionary diocese of Sokoto was inaugurated he was consecrated as the first Bishop of that Diocese. Today he is the present Bishop of Kaduna following the retirement of the Rt. Revd. T. Ogboyomi. Josiah and Comfort are blessed with three children.

We thank him for his inspiring Sermon and we believe that the message will not only be heard but also will be applied in our daily life of evangelism in this our Diocese. Our prayer is that God will continue to use them in their ministry in the diocese of Kaduna.

## **EVENTS SINCE AFTER THE 1997 SYNOD:**

1. **ORDINATION:** On Sunday 6th July 1997 at St. Paul’s Cathedral, Nsukka, the following priests were ordained – The Revd. George U. Nnamani and the Revd. George Asadu while three deacons were also ordained viz – The Revds Ernest Omeje, Chinedu Onah and Linus Ugwu.

On December 7 the following were ordained Priests: the Revds Silvernus Chuma Anioke, Steve Dimelu, Lawrence N. Eze, Paul O Eze, Samuel Ezugwu, Dr. Emmanuel Idike, Engr. Dr. Theophilus C. Madueme, Simon C. Nnamani, Theophilus Onah, Chijioke Onyechi, Eugene Ossai, Eric E. Ugwu, Jonathan Urama, Theophilus Ugwuishiwu.

On Sunday July 5th 1998 the following persons were made deacons: They are Christian Ogbu, Collins Ugwu and Daniel Omeje, while the Revds Ernest Omeje, Linus Ugwu and Chinedu Onah were ordained Priests. We thank God for all these and pray that God will use them effectively for the work of evangelism.

## **2. DIOCESAN WOMEN CONFERENCE:**

The 1997 Women’s Conference was held at St. Mary’s Church Opi from Thursday 17th July – Sunday 20th July, 1997. We thank the women and the people of Opi for hosting the conference and for providing all that was necessary for a successful conference. We thank every member of the Diocese both men and women who gave their maximum support for a successful conference.

We must also thank the President of the Mothers’ Union and Women’s Guild Mrs. Roseline U. Ilonuba, for her organizational ability which is responsible for the progress of Women’s Work in the Diocese. You will remember that it was there in Opi last year that she was honoured with the title – ‘Nne-di-Ugwu’. We thank the women for that.

We noted from the President’s report that there were remarkable changes in the performance of women in their different churches. The introduction of home and abroad meeting for women during the month of August in places where they have not been started and the Diocesan supervision of the meeting has helped in no small measure in seeing that women are alive to their responsibility in the Diocese.

The women have pledged to supply us with 250 bags of cement for the decking of the Bishops court and I believe that the men will respond to this challenge. We thank them for this move and pray that God will continue to sustain their zeal in his work.

The women of the Diocese also bought a new van this year.

### **3. CONSECRATION OF NEW BISHOPS:**

On Sunday 30th November 1997, St. Andrew's Day, the following Bishops were consecrated at St. Stephen's Cathedral Ikare-Akoko.

The Rt. Revd. Samuel A. Abe for Ekiti Diocese.

The Rt. Revd. Zakka Lalle Nyam for Kano Diocese.

The Rt. Revd. Ali Barba Lamido for Wusasa Diocese.

The Rt. Revd. Benson C.B. Onyeibor for Abakaliki Diocese and on 6th January: Epiphany Day, 1998 at All Saints' Cathedral Wuse, Abuja the following were consecrated:

The Rt. Revd. Joseph O. Akinfenwa for Sokoto Diocese .

The Rt. Revd. Vincent O. Muoghereh for Ughelli Diocese.

### **4. THE STATE OF THE NATION:**

We thank God that he has continued in his steadfast love to sustain the nation. Since the last Synod we have as a nation suffered many set-backs. The transition to Civil – Rule was aborted in a dramatic twist of the turn of events, which can only be interpreted as the handiwork of God. The nation was actually heading for the rocks when in a sudden twist of fate the Head of State, General Sani Abacha died. This singular event brought to an end all his plans and visions about a hand-over to a civilian rule by 1st October, 1998. May his soul rest in peace.

We thank God for his successor General Abdulsalami Abubakar who has since his assumption of office given the nation a sense of direction. His release of political prisoners and commuting of the death sentence passed on coup plotters has brought happiness to many homes and his human rights record has earned him acceptance by International Communities. Already the British Airways has once more started to operate in Nigeria and Nigeria will also soon open normal flights of Britain and other parts of the world.

We as Christians and true patriots of our nation have a responsibility to pray for the present administration that good counsel will prevail in all that they do. Pray that all elections to political posts will be true democratic elections and not selections as we have witnessed in the past. Pray that men and women of integrity will aspire to leadership positions and not 419 fraudsters who high-jack political posts in order to perpetuate their selfish ambitions and desire to amass wealth at the expense of their fellow human beings.

Pray that all Nigerians irrespective of tribe or ethnic leaning will give the present administration the needed support for them to succeed. Pray that Nigeria will get leaders that will manage both our human and material resources well in order to develop our rightful position in the comity of nations.

### **5. PROVINCIAL NEWS:**

On Friday 3rd October, 1997 at CATOL (Cathedral of the Transfiguration of Our Lord) in Owerri the Inauguration of Province II took place in a colorful service attended by the Primate, a former Head of State Shonekan, the Imo State Military Administrator and a number of Bishops. The Archbishop of Province II the Most Revd. Dr. B.C. Nwankiti was presented on that day.

The inauguration of Province III took place on Sunday 5th October, 1997 and the Archbishop the Most Revd. Dr. Peter Jasper Akinola was also presented at All Saints' Cathedral Wuse-Abuja.

## **RETIREMENTS**

The Bishop of Enugu – The Rt. Rev. G.N. Otubelu retired in October last year and has been succeeded by the Rt. Revd. Dr. Emmanuel Chukwuma, former Bishop of the Diocese of Bauchi.

The Bishop of Owerri and the Archbishop of Province II the Most Revd. Dr. Benjamin Nwankiti retired in April this year. His successor is yet to be elected. Pray for spiritual guidance as Bishops think about a successor.

The Rt. Revd. Samuel O. Aderin of the Diocese of Ondo is supposed to have retired by last September. Our prayer is that God will give them good health in their retirement.

Pray for the Bishops of Niger Delta North, the Rt. Revd. Samuel O. Elenwo and Orlu the Revd. Samuel C.N. Eboh that God will touch them with his healing hands and heal them of their sicknesses. Bishop Elenwo has stroke while Bishop Eboh has sight problem.

## **OBITUARY:**

The province lost one of her Bishops in a road accident. The Rt. Rev. Abraham S. Olowoye the Bishop of Ijebu. He died on Saturday 9th May 1998 at the age of 65. He was buried on Friday 5th June, 1998 at Igangan in Ilesha.

The retired Bishop on the Niger, the Rt. Rev. L.M. Uzodike died and was buried on 29th May 1998.

The retired Bishop of Benin, the Rt. Revd. J.K. George died and was laid to rest in April 1998. The retired bishop of Akoko Diocese the Rt. Revd. J. Akeredolu died 16th July and was buried on 12th September. Please pray for these families.

## **6. THE 1998 LAMBETH CONFERENCE:**

We thank God that the 1998 Lambeth Conference has come and gone. We thank God for making it possible for our Diocese to be part of that conference of the Anglican Communion. We also thank all the churches in the Diocese for their contributions towards the success of the conference for financial contributions and for prayers and other supports given by groups and individuals.

We left Nsukka on Monday 6th July after the Trinity Ordination on Sunday 5th July, 1998. We arrived Lagos the same day in the evening. On Tuesday 7th July we collected our tickets from the Archbishop's Palace in Marina Lagos. On the same day there was the sad news about the sudden death of Chief. M.K.O. Abiola which threw Lagos into confusion. That night witnessed some demonstrations, looting and killings. The morning of Wednesday 8th July was a day that will always be remembered in Lagos because of the destructions and killings in reaction to the death of Chief Abiola. The residents of Lagos were afraid to move out of their houses. By the evening period when we left for the Lagos International Airport there was relative calm throughout the state even-though movements have not returned to normalcy.

We left Nigeria with other Bishops that night and arrived Amsterdam on Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> July at 6:05 a.m. We then left Amsterdam for London – Heathrow Airport at 8:05 a.m. and arrived at 9:15 a.m. We were then taken to our different places where we were to stay till the start of the Lambeth Conference proper. There were Pre-Lambeth events.

On Friday 10<sup>th</sup> July, we had IDWAL meeting (Inter-Diocesan West African Link) with the Diocese of Guildford, Portsmouth and Chichester. Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> July we went to Portsmouth to see the Historic Ship – The MaryRose – used by Lord Nelson at the battle of

Trafalgar. Lunch that day was given to us by the courtesy of the Mayor of Portsmouth. Tea was organized by members of the Mothers' Union in that Diocese. We had evening worship at Portsmouth Cathedral.

Tuesday, 14<sup>th</sup> July, Diocesan Presidents left for the University of York for the meeting.

Friday, 17<sup>th</sup> July, I left Tilford for King's School Canterbury for EFAC Bishops' Pre-Lambeth retreat. The day was spent in meditation and prayers for the Lambeth Conference and also a reflection on EFAC activities in the Anglican Communion.

Saturday, 18<sup>th</sup> July, The Lambeth Conference started with the arrival of delegates at University of Kent in Canterbury.

Sunday 19<sup>th</sup>, The opening service was held in Canterbury Cathedral at 10:30 a.m. The Archbishop of Canterbury His Grace The Most Rev. Dr. Rt. Hon. George Carey presided at the Eucharist. Prince Charles, the Prince of Wales was in attendance. The preacher was the Rt. Revd. Simon Elijah Chiwanga the Bishop of Npwapwa, Tanzania and the current chairman of ACC (Anglican Consultative Council).

Activities that occupied our time at the Conference included the Bible study based on 2 Corinthians with the Theme: "Leadership under Pressure." Section meetings and then the Plenary Sessions.

There were four themes and we had four major sections:

1. Called to Full Humanity
2. Called To Live and Proclaim the Good News
3. Called To be Faithful In A Plural World
4. Called To Be One.

During the 1988 Lambeth Conference the most prominent issues were the Ordination of Women and Polygamy. In this 1998 Conference the most prominent issue is the stand of the homosexuals and gay people in the church. It is a controversy over conservative and liberal interpretation of the Bible. Also very important was the issue of International Debt and Economic Justice. These four themes were fully discussed in the Sections and some matters arising from sections were discussed at the Plenary Sessions. Issues like Christian – Muslim relationships and International Debt. Speakers from different areas were called upon to speak on their experiences. On the issue of Christian – Muslim relationship – the Bishop of Kaduna – the Rt. Revd. Dr. Josiah Idowu Fearon spoke on the experience of Christians in Northern Nigeria in their relationship with the Muslims, the Bishop of Gambia the Rt. Revd. Solomon Johnson also spoke about their own experience in Gambia. While there is some kind of understanding between Christians and Muslims in the Gambia, the Nigerian experience is that of hostility. The President of the World Bank was also there and spoke about the problems of International Debt. Nigeria of course is not regarded as a poor country so that if debts of the poor nations are cancelled at anytime Nigeria should not be included. Nigerian problem is that of the management of the economy being the 6<sup>th</sup> richest oil-producing country in the world.

On the stand of the Anglican Church on homosexuality the Lambeth Conference approved a resolution that rejects home-sexual practice as "Incompatible with Scripture." More news about the Lambeth Conference will be made known in our retreats and seminars.

The Lambeth Conference was not all business. We had time for relaxation.

On Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> July we had a guided tour of the Canterbury Cathedral. Some parts of the Cathedral are 900 years old while some are 800 years. Some of you here must have read about the book – "Murder In The Cathedral." We were shown the spot where Thomas Beckett, the Archbishop was killed by four Knights of the king.

Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> July was known as London day. We visited Lambeth Palace in London and had lunch at the Archbishop's palace. We were addressed by the British Prime Minister –

Tony Blair. From there we went to Buckingham palace – the Queen’s residence. The Queen came out and had chat with the Bishops. We had tea in her house and later went on a guided tour to the River Thames.

Services at the Conference were conducted in different languages and each Province had a day to lead in the Service. The Lord’s Prayer was said in everyone’s own mother-tongue. We actually spoke in tongues. English was the Lingua – Franca and there were facilities for translation to other major languages.

The Lambeth Conference ended on Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> August and on Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> August Participants at the Conference left for their different destinations. We went down to London and stayed with my sister-in-law.

On Monday 10<sup>th</sup> August the Commonwealth Secretary General Chief and Mrs. Emeka Anyoku invited all Nigerian Bishops to Marlborough House Pall Mall-London.

We were able to meet with Revd. Canon John Godchild and wife Ann at St. Martins in the Field at Trafalgar Square. John is my Commissary in London.

Some of my colleagues at Wycliffe Hall Oxford invited us to their Parishes. We were not able to attend to all their invitations, but spoke in the telephone. We went to Stoke-on-Trent and visited many of our towns-people in London. We were able to eat Nigerian food when we were in London.

We made contacts for possible link with our Diocese with some other Dioceses overseas and we hope to get some positive results. One of my teachers at Oxford who is now a Bishop the Rt. Rev. Michael Gear said that he has since advertized for my link with some Diocese and he hopes to write me soon on the issue.

We met with the Rev. Canon Michael Weaver who has visited here once when Nsukka was still part of Enugu Diocese and the links then were renewed. The Deanery of Arundel and Bognor is still in link with the Dioceses of Enugu, Nsukka and Abakaliki. I have information for the Parishes that are affected.

On Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> August we left London for Nigeria via Amsterdam and arrived Lagos at 8.30p.m. On Friday 21<sup>st</sup> August we left Lagos for Nsukka by road and arrived Opi-junction at 6:00p.m. We were received by a happy congregation whose faces were beaming with smiles. It was a very warm welcome and a happy home-coming. We drove straight to the Cathedral and had a short prayer before retiring to my house.

A Service of welcome was organized the following day Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> at the Cathedral. Once more I want to thank everybody for your care and concern for our family when we were away.

We thank those who waited at the 9<sup>th</sup> Mile Corner on the day we left London. We thank all of you who have come as individuals and groups to say welcome to us.

Our prayer is that God will bless all of you in Jesus’ name.

## **KNIGHTHOOD IN THE ANGLICAN CHURCH:**

Knighthood in the Church is not a new institution. It developed in the European Middle Ages, and consisted of professional mounted soldiers or Calvary men who were used by the nobility (Kings, Princes, and Lords) for a variety of services in their kingdom or possessions. These knights were therefore high administrative officers under allegiance to their feudal lord, and manned all the important arms of the lords service, but more importantly the armed services. In those days governance was by kings and Princes who believed they derived their authority from God by birth. Their immediate subordinates who were made in charge of territories such as states and provinces were called lords. Lords included such people as Princes, Dukes, Earls, Barons, Counts, Bishops and Abbots.

In the Middle Ages in Europe, governance was very closely associated with Christian religion and therefore as knighthood developed a Christian ideal of a code of knightly behaviour evolved and became accepted.

This code involved:-

1. Respect for the church by all knights.
2. Full and unalloyed loyalty of the knights to their lords or superiors.
3. Preservation always of the knights personal honour by among other things very high standard of civilized behaviour, including gentlemanly devotion to women, children, the weak and helpless.
4. Exhibition of courage, nobility of character and honourable comportment.

The church in turn accorded honour and respect to knights in its scheme and had no difficulty in using them for one of the most important international undertakings of the church at the time. The Crusades, which were Christian holy wars that tried to liberate the Holy lands from the clutches of the Turkish Moslem Empire.

### **KNIGHTS OF THE CHURCH:**

During the Crusades, several Christian knighthood orders were formed. The first was the knight Hospitallers of St. John of Jerusalem (also called knights of Malta). Others were knight Templars (Knights of the Order of the Temple of Solomon), Knights of the Holy Sepulcher for knights dubbed at Christ's tomb and Knights of the Order of St. Lazarus for protecting the leper hospitals. These were international and truly religious knighthood orders practising celibacy and having heirachy similar to that in the church. Later still, national crusading orders developed in individual countries and many took on more and more political responsibilities. Among such national orders were Teutonic order in Germany, the Santiago, Calatrava and Alcantra in Spain, Avis, Montessa, and Order of Christ in Portugal.

Among the crusading orders of knighthood, the one which succeeded most and still surviving, through with much less influence now is the Knight Hospitallers of St. John of Jerusalem (Knights of Malta) which at one stage was a government with headquarters in (1). Jerusalem then (2). Cyprus (3). Rhode Island (4). Malta and so on.

It was able to wage wars, depose and install rulers, issue its passports and currency. Though today, it is resident in Rome, it is still able to issue its passports and appoint envoys to a number of countries. The most important fact about this knighthood is its ability to be involved in providing services in every aspect of life of the state civil, military, religious. National Knighthood orders which have survived today in Britain are mainly secular e.g. The Noble Order of Garter. The Most Distinguished Order of St. Michael and St. George, The Most Honourable Order of the Bath and of the British Empire. These Knighthood are today mainly honours conferred on people of highest distinction in national service and professions. They are no longer organizations as such.

### **ANGLICAN CHURCH AS PART OF THE CATHOLIC AND APOSTOLIC CHURCH:**

The Anglican Church is part of the Catholic Church which was originally part of the Apostolic Church founded by the Apostles of Christ. It was in 1054 that the first Schism in the church took place between the Eastern Church with headquarters at Constantinople and the Western church with headquarters in Rome.

The cause was a clash between Greek and Roman interests and influences in control of the apostolic church. It was not until 1965 December 7 that the mutual ex-communications between Rome and Constantinople were abolished by Pope Paul VI and Patriach Athenogoras



I. The second major schism of the church took place in the Western church during the Protestant Reformation of the 16<sup>th</sup> century and involved theology, ecclesiology (Ruler-ship of church), nationalism and politics. However after the 2<sup>nd</sup> Vatican Council 1962 -64 and the Papal Decree on Ecumenism (1964), dialogues have begun between the Roman Catholic Church, Anglican and Protestant Churches and Orthodox Churches on how to reconcile certain Christian practices such as Baptism, the Eucharist, Episcopacy, Papacy, mixed marriages and the authority of the church. While it is true that the Apostolic church and been divided by these schisms, the basic practices and beliefs and traditions have remained largely the same.

#### **PLACE OF KNIGHTS IN THE CHURCH:**

Knights in the undivided church were of great service to the church not only militarily but also generally. Organized nationally, or internationally they were a great asset to the church. Bishops who were lords in their own right also had their own knights who carried out assignment of various kinds for these Bishops in their bishoprics. They were part of the Bishops's unordained personal staff, who not only provided personal security but also helped to enforce the Bishop's authority and carry out his administrative functions.

#### **ANGLICAN CHURCH AND KNIGHTS:**

I have gone into historical details in order to show that the Anglican Church inherited the tradition of using knights in the service of the church. Knighthood was not one of the points of disagreement that led to the Reformation. I have also shown that Bishops as lords or rulers of their bishoprics appointed knights into their services. These services of knights can be of any type at all depending on what the bishop required.

It was because of the foregoing that in 1978 the Rt. Rev. Dr. J.A. Onyemelukwe introduced the Order of Knighthood in the Diocese on the Niger, and other dioceses have followed suit since then.

Some of you who belong to other Dioceses by birth are aware of what is happening in those Dioceses in the area of development and you are also aware that almost all the Dioceses in Province II have introduced the idea of Knighthood in the church as a means of alerting the laity of their involvement and commitment in the progress of evangelism in their respective dioceses and beyond.

Some of the Dioceses that were carved out in the same year with Nsukka inherited some Knights because their mother Dioceses already had knights in the Diocese. Here we were not fortunate enough to inherit such a legacy because Enugu Diocese never followed the example of others till very late, and that was after Nsukka has been carved out as a separate Diocese.

Knighthood has gone down well with many Dioceses of the Church of Nigeria, considering the alacrity and the stampede with which Knighthoods are instituted.

It is because of this that after prayerfully considering the Order of Knighthood, I have been moved by the Holy Spirit to associate our beloved Diocese with other Dioceses of the Church of Nigeria who have benefited from the contributions of their knights towards the development of their Dioceses.

I have carefully and prayerfully selected some of you from this Diocese and beyond and we have since started a training course for them.

Their selection is an evidence that their contributions towards the development of our Diocese has not gone unrecognized. The reward for good work is always more work.

I thank God for the zeal and the enthusiasm with which they responded to my invitation. I thank their leaders and the team of lecturers who have been instructing them since their inaugural meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> April, 1998.

As I said at that inaugural meeting, those invited were simply being considered for the honour. It is therefore very clear that not all those who were there on the first day will be knighted this year.

Some have because of one problem or the other opted to withdraw at least for this year while some who do not meet the needed requirements will be dropped.

Our prayer is that those who will be accorded this honour in December will be true ambassadors of Christ both in this Diocese and beyond. To do this you are expected.

- i. To show by a living example belief in the Christian faith.
- ii. To unite Anglican Church men and women to be loyally devoted to the whole church.
- iii. To attend church regularly and actively participate in its life and work.
- iv. To encourage and assist all youth and other organizations within the church to play their full part in lifting the church.
- v. To be committed to the growth of the church and bring the cross of Christ to unchurched hearts.
- vi. To commend the gospel of Christ by what you are by what you say and what you do for others.

Knights are part of the staff of the Bishop. Through their active involvement in church activities they are able to influence positively, the growth and development of the church. Knights have officers who hold offices at the pleasure of the Bishop for a specified period of time.

#### **THE THEME OF THE SYNOD: “CALLED TO FULL HUMANITY.”**

**TEXT:** Eph. 4:13 “Until we all attain to the unity of faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.”

The theme of our Synod is one of the four themes of the 1998 Lambeth Conference. The call to full humanity suggests that there is deficiency in human existence as originally intended by God.

The concern of the Church in choosing this theme at this time is about humanity both within and outside the Church. The Anglican Communion throughout the world has a broad and challenging social agenda. The concern of the church has always been both for people as individuals and for wider societies in which they live. In the Anglican tradition the pastoral care of individuals is bound up with action for social and economic justice. The needs of the poor, the oppressed and the marginalized require nothing less.

The story of the incarnation is that of God taking the human flesh and living among us. John 1:14 “The word became a human being and, full of grace and truth, lived among us. We saw his glory, the glory which he received as the Father’s only Son.”

In Christ we see humanity in its perfection and fullness. Our full humanity can only be expressed in terms of our relationship with Christ and as we live our lives as he lived. In our last year’s Synod, the theme was “Walking In The Steps of Christ.” It is as we walk in his steps and relate to God in him that we can be fully human. Life in Christ now offers us a vision of what human life in all its fullness will be later.

The call to us is to “Full humanity.” We do not claim that we have achieved full humanity. Our own sins, wickedness and frailties are only too evident to us. As Christians we are called by Christ as light of the world, to let that light so shine in our lives that people may see our good works and give glory to our Father in heaven (Matthew 5:16). Bishops and clergy as overseers are to guide the Christian church as those who have already experienced the first fruits of the kingdom but long for more. The church in its pilgrimage is called to follow Christ and to attempt to live more Christ – like lives in the world.

The question we may ask is “What does it mean to be truly human, as an individual, in a community of Faith and in the world?”

Professor Denise Ackermann in her plenary address to section 1 of the Lambeth Conference on this theme described it as “The search for an ethic of relationship in difference and otherness.” In other words, how can we live respectfully, lovingly and creatively across our differences, in communion with one another?

The “problem of difference” lies at the heart of our inability to live together in justice, freedom and peace. Otherness and difference are feared or ignored, or used as reasons for exercising unjust power in relationships, such as the apartheid policies implemented in South Africa. This difference or otherness is often a threat to our mutual co-existence and sometimes alienate us that we do not live easily or well with it. This is so in the Church, the Body of Christ made up of a great diversity of peoples attempting to live in communion with one another, and yet no longer having “one language and the same words.” (Gen. 11:1).

The question therefore is how do we live with this otherness or difference?

Professor Akermann suggested that the notion of mutuality in relationship should lie at the heart of our efforts to achieve our full humanity.

As Christians, to practice this relationship we have to begin with confessing and lamenting our unwillingness to deal lovingly with those who are different, either because of colour, ethnic or tribal difference, language, religion and so on. We hate, we gossip, envy and slander our fellow human beings. We hold secret meetings and criticize unjustly. Our entire life-style negates what we claim to be.

In his sermon at the Lambeth Conference Bishop Simon Chiwanga spoke of our need for ‘awareness’ of one another. This awareness should begin with our looking into the face of the other person, seeing the other as an authentic reflection of the image of God, while at the same time seeing oneself in the face of the other.

The other becomes the mirror of oneself. There is no relationship possible if, in the words of the poet R.S. Thomas quoted by Archbishop George Carey in his presidential address “our eyes don’t meet.”

It is only when we recognize the other person as a human being, worth loving, worth caring for, worth listening to and know that the other person has feelings as we do, that we can be moved to hear his story, no matter how much it may differ from our own story or evoke dangerous memories. This can be a preamble to ongoing conversation in which differences can be acknowledged and common ground sought.

God who knows our differences calls us to the table, asks us to make peace with one another when we come and he knows full well how difficult that can be.

According to Professor Ackermann the call to full humanity is nothing less than the call to grapple daily with the challenges, implications and surprises of seeking to be in relationship with each other in all our differences and otherness.

The call to full humanity is the call to be Christ like in all our dealings and relationships with others. Christ is a man for others. He lived and died for the benefit of all God’s children. Our call to full humanity is a call to responsibility, a call to address the social issues of our time. These issues include, HUMAN RIGHTS AND HUMAN DIGNITY, THE ENVIRONMENT, MODERN TECHNOLOGY, HUMAN SEXUALITY, EUTHANASIA, the gap between the rich and the poor, INTERNATIONAL debt and so on.

These are issues that stir us in the face as we try to live our lives as Christians in the world.

## **HUMAN RIGHTS AND HUMAN DIGNITY:**

Talking about human rights and human dignity we see how the past regime of General Abacha abused human rights in our country. People were arrested without charges and detained without trial for years. People were punished for speaking out their minds, assassins were sent to snuff out life out of their fellow human beings simply because they dared to condemn injustice and wrong.

As Christians how do we bring the teachings of Jesus Christ to the issues of human rights and the denial of human dignity in our Diocese and our Province?

What are the underlying causes of racism ethnicity or nationalism.

How do we as Anglicans assist in promoting peace and democracy in our places of work and existence?

December this year is the 50th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. How are we going to mark this occasion. At the Lambeth Conference the issue of dialogue and co-operation between neighbours of different faiths was seen as the only way to promote understanding, defuse tension and work together for community development and the elimination of injustice.

In our Diocese for instance the Roman Catholic apathy to the Anglican Church is a threat to mutual co-existence and brotherly love. Brothers have denied their fellow brothers the right to existence, ownership of land and freedom of worship in a denomination of their choice simply because they happen to be in the majority. Is this the teaching of Christ?

#### **HUMAN SEXUALITY:**

The 1998 Lambeth Conference deliberated fully on the issue of Human Sexuality. The acceptance or rejection of homosexual practice was discussed at length. The conference was guided by tradition and the teaching of the Bible in taking its decision.

The Bible as an authority is clear that sexuality is created by God and is an aspect of creation which God called “very good.” It is a pure gift of God and he intended human beings to enjoy sexual relationship only in marriage between man and woman for the purposes of fulfillment, partnership and procreation. (Gen. 1:27-28; Gen. 2:18f) The same Bible condemns homosexuality, Rom. 1:26f.

The destruction of Sodom was as a result of homosexual practice. Gen. 19:5. The scripture rules out all homosexual practice, including committed, faithful, consensual relationship. It was also aware of inverted homosexuals and therefore condemned their behaviour too. The Anglican Church cannot on any grounds liberate homosexuals by accepting homosexuals either for marriage or ordination.

The Conference in a session which the Archbishop of Canterbury described as “difficult and painful” condemned the practice, but assured the homosexuals that they are loved by God and that baptized and faithful believers no matter their orientation are regarded as members of the Church, and advised that the best option for them is abstinence from the practice.

#### **ADMISSIONS AND CONFIRMATION:**

Since the last Synod the following members have been either Confirmed or Admitted into the different organizations in the Church.

A total number of 3435 candidates have been confirmed, 1124 males and 2311 females. 211 were admitted into Girls’ Guild, 220 into Women’s Guild while 87 were admitted into Mothers’ Union. The statistics is there for your study.

DATE	PARISH	CONFIRMATION	G.G.	WG	MU
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		Male	Female			
18/5/97	Emmanuel Church Alor-Uno	51	88	17	9	-
25/5/97	St. Stephen's Ogrute	16	48	2	2	1
31/5/97	St. John's Onuiyi – Nsukka	34	44	5	9	11
29/6/97	Christ Church chapel, U.N.N	22	30	-	5	5
10/7/97	St. Cyprian's Chapel	16	28	-	-	-
13/7/97	All Saints' Obollo-Afor	15	34	9	1	2
3/8/97	Unadu Parish: St. John's Itchi	26	84	7	3	-
10/8/97	St Peter's Ovoko	62	146	16	9	1
17/8/97	St Mark's Ohodo	31	41	1	10	-
31/8/97	Ozalla Parish: St. Matthew's Ekwegbe	16	50	7	7	-
7/9/97	St Paul's Cathedral	93	103	17	17	7
14/9/97	Amufie Parish: St. Barths' Amachalla	22	91	-	3	-
28/9/97	St. James' Orba	34	52	5	4	2
5/10/97	St Andrew's Ikem	27	38	8	23	12
2/11/97	Eha-Amufu: St. Paul's Ihenyi	100	108	22	11	6
15/11/97	Ibagwa Parish: St. John's Ebulu-Mmiri	50	162	6	28	10
12/12/97	St. Barnabas' Eha-Alumona	27	62	8	-	3
14/12/97	St. Andrew's Adani	25	35	4	1	-
21/12/97	St. Matthew's Mgbuji	10	47	1	-	-
1/3/98	St. Stephen's Umulokpa	11	17	-	8	2
15/3/98	St. Stephen's Ogrute	23	93	8	1	-
29/3/98	St. John's Onuiyi	24	28	2	8	4
3/5/98	St. Saints Obollo-Afor	16	27	9	-	1
10/5/98	St. Peter's Ovoko	42	104	21	3	3
17/5/98	St. Mark's Ohodo	17	23	-	3	-
24/5/98	Federal Government Girls' Lejja	2	77	-	-	1
31/5/98	St. Paul's Cathedral	85	96	16	16	6
14/6/98	St. Mary's Opi	41	132	12	-	-
21/6/98	Christ Church Chapel, UNN	20	33	-	2	4
23/8/98	St. Luke's Amufie	80	195	4	16	-
30/8/98	St. Philip's Ozalla	25	46	-	-	-
6/9/98	St. Mark's Obukpa: Ibagwa Parish	46	125	4	21	6
13/9/98	St. Andrew's Ikem	15	24	-	-	-
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1124</b>	<b>2311</b>	<b>211</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>87</b>

## CONCLUSION:

I thank God once more for his enabling grace and for the privilege of sharing with you these views in this Synod.

I thank those of you who have remained loyal, committed, and dedicated in their work for the progress of this Diocese, My plea is that some of us who are constituting themselves as stumbling blocks to the peace and progress of this Diocese will desist and retrace their steps before it becomes too late.

We look forward to fruitful deliberations throughout this Synod.

Thank you for patient listening and may God bless all of you in Jesus name.

+ **Chukwuemeka**  
(Bishop of Nsukka).