

**PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS/BISHOP'S CHARGE DELIVERED AT THE SECOND
SESSION OF THE FOURTH SYNOD – DIOCESE OF NSUKKA, ON MONDAY 8TH
NOVEMBER, 2004 AT ST. LUKE'S CHURCH, AMUFIE BY HIS LORDSHIP THE
RT. REV. DR. JONAH CHUKWUEMEKA ILONUBA M.A. (OXON) Dip. Th. (LON.)**

*My Lord Bishops,
The Hon. Chancellor
The Registrar, and Hon. Justice of the High Court
The Legal Secretary
Venerable Archdeacons
The Clergy of the diocese and other Clergy here present
The President Mothers' Union and Women's Guild (Nnediugwu)
The Knights and Ladies of St. Paul
Synod Delegates and All invited guests
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen.*

Dearly beloved in Christ Jesus, it is my joy and delight once more to stand before you by the grace and power of God to address this holy assembly.

I thank the Almighty and ever-living God who has continued to keep his covenant of love with all who love him and obey his commands. Our God who is ever faithful had made it possible for us to come together in his name. To him be all the honour and glory in Jesus' name.

I welcome all of you to this Synod at Amufie coming at a time we have completed the celebration of the 10th Year Anniversary of our dear Diocese. To God be the glory for that.

We thank God for journeying mercies granted to all of us to be here and it is our prayer that we should all be blessed in this Synod.

We thank the Amufie Archdeaconry and their Synod Planning Committee for making the necessary arrangements for this Synod to hold in the Archdeaconry. We thank all those who have opened their homes to host the Synod delegates. Our prayer is that God's blessings will ever remain in your homes.

We must also thank those who responded and accepted to be Chief Launchers and Co-launchers yesterday during the launching for development in the Diocese. The benevolent God whom we serve and who gives us from his inexhaustible resources will reward you all a thousand fold in Jesus' name.

We are equally appreciative of the reception accorded us during the courtesy call on the day of our arrival.

We thank God for the recovery of the Archdeacon the Ven. John C. Onah who fell sick during the rainy season due to much cold. We thank those who took care of him while in hospital and those who consistently continued to pray for his quick recovery.

We appreciate the extent of work that has been done in the Vicarage making it possible for the down floor to be occupied. However, efforts must be intensified to see that the house is roofed before the next rainy season in order to avert the cold condition that result from water draining through the decking.

OUR GUEST PREACHER

I welcome our guest preacher the Rt. Rev. Joseph O. I. Nnonah and wife Chinwe C. Nnonah who has been here with us since Saturday. Bishop Nnonah is from Aniafor Agbani in Nkanu Local Government Area of Enugu State and he is the Methodist Bishop of Ngoro in Ikwuano Umuahia – Abia State. He attended the Methodist Theological Institute Umuahia, Mindole Ecumenical Foundation Kitve Zambia, Kingsmead College Selly Oak Birmingham, England and the University of Guyana South America.

He was the Methodist Bishop of Okigwe from 1996 – 2001 from where he was translated to Ngoro. Bishop Nnonah and I came very close when in 2001 we led the Enugu State Christian Pilgrimage to the Holy Land. I thank God for that opportunity and for the experiences we shared together.

We thank God for using him to speak to us yesterday in that powerful, inspiring and soul-searching sermon. It is my hope and belief that the message will take a very deep root in our hearts and help us to re-examine our lives as Christians who are called to be the light of the world. It is my prayer that God will help us to digest his message and use the lessons from it for our spiritual growth. My Lord Bishop once more I say to you and your amiable wife thank you and welcome, Ala, Deje. May God continue to bless your ministry in Jesus' name.

THE HOST ARCHDEACONRY

God's ways are not our ways and his thoughts not our thoughts. God can use any instrument in fulfilling His purpose. By 1927 Christianity has been established in Nsukka; and Nsukka area was then being supervised by the Rev. Andrew N. Asiekwu who was the first resident Priest in Nsukka.

Nsukka area was then under a Divisional Officer who was also a Christian. By 1930 the Rev. A. N. Asiekwu sent two teachers to Amufie to open up a Church and a School. The teachers were Mr. Ebede from Nanka and Mr. Igboeli from Abagana. Amufie was then under a very popular Warrant Chief and Moslem, Mallam (Chief) Suleman Adukwu. When the teachers were sent to Amufie the Divisional Officer Mr. Albert and the Rev. A. N. Asiekwu instructed Mallam Suleman Adukwu to bring forty children to enroll in the School, failing which his Chieftaincy warrant would be withdrawn.

Because of this instruction from Mr. Albert and Rev. A. N. Asiekwu, Mallam (Chief) Suleman Adukwu selected a small Hill Top in Olido for the site of the Church Building where it will be possible for villages around Amufie, Olido, Ogbodu, Amube and Umachi to attend. Through the influence of another paramount Chief by name Chief Ayogu Ede from Amube, the first Bell rang for the opening of both Church and School on 1st April, 1930 in Olido. The enrolment was five members all from Amufie. The five members were Azegba Eya Urama, Ugwuanyi Onoja ossai, Ogbonna Obute, Odo Nwa Abanyi and Odo Nwa Iyida Eje. There were no members from Olido, Ogbodu, Amube and Umachi.

Mallam (Chief) Suleman Adukwu transferred the Church from Olido to his Palace. So the Church, started formally in the frontage of his Palace under the two Church Teachers – Ebede and Igboeli.

To increase the number of enrolment, Chief Adukwu added his own three sons by name; Momo Adukwu, Abu Adukwu and Awudu Adukwu. Later Alphonsus Onoja, Peter Okoro, Thomas Obute and few other youths joined the Church. From that moment the Church started to grow.

As the Church grew the Chief met Elders of Amufie for a piece of land for Church Building and the Elders gave Chief Adukwu the present site to build a church. A Church was erected. It was a mud wall and thatched roof with mud seats.

The two pioneer teachers were transferred and replaced by Francis Okwuadi from Igbodo in Asaba and Mr. Nwosa and the Church was named St. Luke's Church not C.M.S. Church again by the Rev. A. N. Asiekwu.

On July 27th 1933 (C.M.S. Anniversary Day), a popular Heathen, a soothsayer and a bad Herbalist by name Ome Nwa Eya Urama was converted and baptized and given the name Abraham Eya. This man Abraham, like St. Paul became a zealot and through his zeal and enthusiasm he helped to propagate the gospel which then extended to other villages around Amufie.

1. St. Paul's Church, Uda (now Parish Headquarter) through Zephaniah Ugwu Agbo (Late).
2. St. Bartholomew's Church, Amachalla (now a Parish Headquarter) through Chief Emmanuel Onoja Ugwu.
3. St. Andrew's Church, Igbelle and Uroshi, through Mr. John Ossai Idu and Mr. Stephen Idoko Eze Nwonyene Idoko.
4. St. Mary's Church Ikpaiga through Mr. Edward Ogbonna Eya.
5. St. Peter's Church, Olido, through Mr. Abraham Agbo and Chief Onoja Ome who gave his piece of land for Church building in Olido.
6. St. John's Church, Umachi through Mr. Fidelis Ugwuja.

Again in the year 2000, a church was opened in Umuogbo Ekposhi named Christ Church, by the Rev. Canon E. I. Asogwa when he was the Vicar of Amufie Parish.

Amufie Archdeaconry was inaugurated on 25th November 2001 with Ven. J. C. Onah as the first Archdeacon of the Archdeaconry. The Ven. J. C. Onah is now being assisted by Rev. Daniel Odezue. Archdeacon's house had been decked and furnished and the Archdeacon has packed in while the work is in progress on first floor.

1. ST. STEPHEN'S CHURCH, OGRUTE

A group of Traders (Strangers) from Nnewi, Oraukwu, Adani and Umuchu founded or planted St. Stephen's Church in the year 1932.

The first Church building (thatched house) was sited at Japan Road, Ogrute near Eya Iyida's house by the efforts of these strangers by name; James Agba, Nathan Onyekaonwu, Johnson Ibekwe, Isaiah Ikeme and a host of others.

The following indigenes through the inspiration of the said strangers helped in the erection of church building – Mr. Samuel Eze, Daniel Onogwu and Daniel Oyiga.

The Church building at Japan road Ogrute, was later relocated to Aji Road Ogrute, (the present site) a building of mud walls and Akanya roof was built.

The population of St. Stephen's Church right from inception was unsteady. This is because majority of her worshippers were strangers and workers in Igbo-Eze Local Government Council. That is to say that the number of strangers and Local Government Workers at a give time or period determines the church population till today.

During the Nigeria Civil War, the Nigeria Soldiers destroyed the church building. But by the grace of God the UNICEF rebuilt the church.

There are other churches in the Parish –

1. ST. MARK'S CHURCH, IGOGORO ENUGU-EZIKE

The Church was planted by the Ven. S. O. Ugwuanyi (late) in his village. This church unfortunately had not been growing from inception as it is expected.

2. ST. MARK'S CHURCH, UMUOPU ENUGU-EZIKE

This Church is growing very well. The Church has a resident Priest by name the Rev. Fidelis Obeta and a very big church building, a standard Parsonage and a Car for the Priest.

3. ST. PHILIP'S CHURCH, UMUIDA ENUGU-EZIKE

The Church has a standard Church Building which was recently plastered and the ceiling completed. The Catechist's house is at the final stage of completion. Their Catechist by name Mr. Godwin Idoko is very hard working.

AMACHALLA PARISH:

1. ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S CHURCH, AMACHALLA

By 1932 Rev. Andrew N. Asiekwu the first resident Priest posted to Nsukka District visited Amachalla through Mr. Enoch Okoro from Amachalla. Mr. Enoch Okoro was treated in Rev. Jackson's Dispensary there at Nsukka and he lived in Rev. A. N. Asiekwu's house attending the Dispensary. The Rev. A. N. Asiekwu saw Enoch Okoro's relations and people of Amachalla when he visited them living in ignorance and crude customs and preached the gospel to them. He asked them to send their children to school and accept the word of God. Some elders of Amachalla received the message and sent their children to school at St. Luke's Church, Amufie. The only surviving pioneer pupil among those sent to school at Amufie is Chief Emmanuel Onoja Ugwu (Onyishi Amachalla now). So, all the converts were attending both church services and school at Amufie.

By 1935 the pupils from Amachalla were sent back from Amufie to form a class at Amachalla as they were enough for a full class and that was how St. Bartholomew's Church, Amachalla was established in 1935. But this was not by accident but through the instrumentality of the pioneer pupil, (Chief Emmanuel Onoja Ugwu) and Abraham Eya.

The Church building was mud walls and thatched roof till 1970 when Mr. Michael Nwokenagu came as a Headmaster/Catechist who started moulding cement blocks to build the present Church which Mr. Godwin Idoko a Catechist from Aguibeje started in 1982. Our Lord Bishop of Enugu diocese, the Rt. Rev. G. N. Otubelu (rtd) came the same 1982 to lay the foundation stone of the church. After the foundation ceremony, the Lord Bishop prophesied about Amachalla being a Parish and we thank God that his prophesy came to pass in the year 2000 when Amachalla became the seat of Amachalla Parish under the leadership of the Rev. Canon Dan. Omeje who was the pioneer Priest and the first Parish Priest of Amachalla Parish. The Rev. Canon Dan. Omeje also built a befitting parsonage. He also established All Saints' Church, Ikpamodo.

The second Priest in Amachalla Parish is the Rev. Samuel Ezeema who within two years of his stay at Amachalla had planted two Churches –

- (i) Anglican Church, Ogbiko Amachalla
- (ii) Anglican Church, Umuagbedo-Agu

2. ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH, IGBELLE/UROSHI:

The gospel came here through Mr. John Ossai Idu and Mr. Stephen Idoko Eze Nwonyene Idoko (both late) who were attending church services with their families in St. Luke's Church, Amufie where they were pioneer members since 1938.

It was in 1952 that the said two persons with the efforts of Late Abraham Eya established a church for Igbelle/Uroshi. They had built a standard church now and had got a Priest by July 2004. The Priest is in the person of the Rev. David M. Nwede.

3. ST. MARY'S CHURCH, IKPUIGA

By 1948 Late Edward Ogbonna Eya was an apprentice to a Bicycle Repairer at Amufie. He lived in Abu Adukwu's house there at Amufie. He heard the gospel and was converted and became a member of St. Luke's Church, Amufie. By May, 1952 Late Edward O. Eya sent home the Good News he got from Amufie and thereby planted a church at Ikpuiga. Their first teacher was Chief Emmanuel Odo of Ihenyi-Eha Amufu and other teachers were: Mr. Felix Okoro from Adani, Mr. Samuel Ugwu from Ikem, Mr. Clement Ofobueze from Amawbia, Mr. Christopher Ezeja from Ibagwa (now a Priest) Mr. Fidelis

Ugwuoke from Obukpa and Mr. Adolphus O. C. Ebune is the present Church Teacher. They built church.

UDA PARISH:

1. ST. PAUL'S CHURCH, UDA

St. Paul's Church, Uda was established in 1946 at a place called "Afor Uda" (a market place). Later in 1947 the Church was shifted to this present site along the main road. It was a thatched building of mud walls and mud seats.

The first teacher was Mr. Gilbert Onoja from Amufie. But before the establishment of the church at Uda there had been some converts already who were some of the pioneers of St. Luke's Church, Amufie. They were by names: Mr. Zephaniah Ugwu Agbo, Pius Ugwuanyi, Lawrence Abugu, Isaac Onyeke, Joseph Agbedo, Michael Ugwuanyi and Godwin Agbo (all were now late). These people mentioned had been regular members of St. Luke's Church, Amufie many years before the establishment of their own church at Uda. It was the growth of converts from Uda that necessitated their coming home from Amufie to establish their own church instead of trekking along such a distance to and from Amufie for Church services and attending school.

The planting or establishment of church and school at Uda was made easy by the efforts of the first convert Mr. Zephaniah Ugwu Agbo and with the help of Mr. Abraham O. Eya – the two lived and died in good old age as Lay-Readers.

Other teachers who taught at St. Paul's Church, Uda after the pioneer teacher Mr. Gilbert Onoja from Amufie were:- Mr. Jonathan Edoga (OJ) from Mgbuji Eha-Amufu, Mr. Patrick Mba from Mgbuji Eha-Amufu, Mr. Lawrence Ogbu from Mgbuji Eha-Amufu, Mr. Anthony Idoko from Aguikeje, Enugu-Ezike, and B. Agu from Udi.

The Church and School were growing till after the civil war when the schools were taken over by the Government and the Church stood alone.

Then by 1973, a Church Teacher by name Jonah Abu from Unadu was posted to St. Paul's Church, Uda and after him the following Church Teachers and Priest followed thus: Mr. S. S. Ayogu (now a Priest, Mr. Apollos Eze and Mr. Michael Ossai, Mr. Michael Ossai came in 1981. This young man was very hard working. He cleared our debts in Enugu Diocese. He started the foundation of our present church building and finished the building. He bought our present Pulpit. He did all these things between 1981 to 1987 before he died in our church on October 4th 1987 after a brief illness. May his soul rest in peace. Amen.

In 1988 Mr. Charles Ugwu (now a Rev. Canon) from Amufie came and left the same year to Trinity College, Umuahia. The next teacher who came was Mr. Festus Ezema who served from October, 1988 to 1989. He was replaced by Mr. Paul Onwu Eze (now a Priest) who started the Parsonage project (1990 to 1996). Then Rev. Lawrence N. Eze came and became the pioneer Priest of the Church. The Rev. Lawrence N. Eze was replaced by the Rev. B. C. Okwor, who became the first Superintendent of Uda Parish. He planted a church at Inyi, Enugu-Ezike. The Rev. B. C. Okwor was replaced by the Rev. Canon G. C. Asadu who was replaced by the Rev. Canon C. C. Eze, the present Superintendent of the Parish. The Rev. Canon C.C. Eze being assisted by a Catechist, Mr. Kenneth Eze is very hard working. The Rev. Canon C. C. Eze is already erecting a new standard modern befitting church building.

Uda Parish has two other small churches:

1. ST. JOHN'S CHURCH, UMACHI

This Church was established at the instance of Late Fidelis Ugwuja who was converted when he was living in Amufie and became a member of St. Luke's Church,

Amufie. He was learning a trade under Late Eze Nwa Iyida and after many years he went back to his village Umachi to establish a Church and that is St. John's Church, Umachi, Enugu-Ezike. The Catechist's house project is nearing completion.

2. ST. JAMES' CHURCH, UGBAIKE

The Church at Ugbaïke was planted by St. Paul's Church Uda. It was a wonderful and marvelous break through into a Roman Catholic strong hold. Mr. Fidelis Ugwoke is the Catechist incharge. Meanwhile the Church Building is in progress while they hold their Church Services in the School.

EVENTS OF THE DIOCESE

10TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

We thank the Almighty God who remained faithful to His promises and led us peacefully through the first ten years of our existence as a Diocese. This peace has led to whatever achievements or progress we have made in the diocese within these years. The Planning Committee under the Chairmanship of Sir Barrister Obiora Nzewi – the Chancellor of the diocese did a lot of enlightenment and sensitization of the people and we thank God for the result of that exercise. The mobilization of the people was excellent and the participation wonderful. We thank Lady Nkechi Ikpeze who organized and mobilized the young wives of the diocese. Their performance was fantastic and young wives organization has now become a force in the Diocese for outreach and evangelism.

The 10th Anniversary Celebration galvanized people and moved them to embark on one kind of project or the other to have something to show for our first ten years. Some built vicarages, others built Churches while some others bought generators or processing plants. There are those that established either poultry or piggery projects. While these are laudable and good ventures as we encourage grassroot development we must not forget or neglect our responsibility to the Diocese, Archdeaconry or the Parish to which we belong.

I have to emphasize once more that no church is allowed to engage in any project until it has fulfilled its obligation to the Diocese.

We should not however relent or think that we have arrived. Much still needs to be done especially in the area of our stewardship or giving. Many of us have not yet learnt how to give in support of the work of the Church. We expect blessings from God but do not want to give to support the progress of work in the Diocese and the Church of Nigeria in general. It can never be over-emphasized that the more we give the more blessings we get from God. Luke 6:38 says; *"Give and it will be given you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over will be poured into your lap... For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."* God challenges us in Malachi 3:10 where He says; *"Bring the whole tithe into the store house, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this, says the Lord Almighty, and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessings that you will not have room enough for it."* I urge that we once more intensify our teaching on Christian Stewardship. Let us also reject the spirit that makes us always claim that we do not have.

NEW CHAPLAIN FOR CHRIST CHURCH CHAPEL – U.N.N

The Ven. Dr. Ab. C. Okorie of Okigwe South Diocese was elected as the Chaplain for the Christ Church Chapel U.N.N.

His institution and induction took place on Sunday 1st February 2004 in a Service attended by representatives from the three Co-operating churches of the Chapel – the

Anglicans, Methodists and Presbyterians. The Archbishop of the Ecclesiastical Province of the Niger, Bishop of Awka and Dean Church of Nigeria the Most Rev. Maxwell S.C. Anikwenwa presided at service. The Chaplain has identified with the activities in the Diocese. We should continue to pray for him as he shepherds the flock at the Christ Church Chapel, U.N.N.

NEW VICE CHANCELLOR FOR U.N.N.

We thank God for the appointment of the Ven. Prof. Chinedu Ositadinma Nebo, as the new Vice Chancellor for the University of Nigeria Nsukka. To God be the glory for his intervention. We equally thank all those who fasted and prayed at that time for this appointment. We are all aware of the decadence that has engulfed this premier University whose founding fathers has as its motto – *“To Restore the Dignity of Man”* and its objectives were To Seek Truth, To Teach Truth and To Preserve Truth.

You will agree with me that for more than ten years now this University was only a shadow of its past glory. This citadel of learning was devastated by incessant strikes both domestic and national, cultism, intimidation and other vices.

On June 10th 2004 the Vice Chancellor was presented to the Senate and the University Community.

The applause and the overwhelming support given to him on entry into the hall was an eloquent testimony that the people had been expecting and looking for a messiah to salvage what was left of this institution. His speech and vision for the University convinced everyone that at last a Daniel has come to judgement He said *“I must state that I am here on a mission. I am a Missionary to the University of Nigeria Nsukka, by divine purpose and intervention. I have been commissioned by God to rebuild the broken walls and psyche of this university, bring healing to the wounded, reconcile those who hate other, inject sanity and discipline into the system and transform this University from being simply chronologically the first to becoming functionally and technologically the first and the best. My mission is to get the wounded lion to roar again and roar so loudly that its voice would reverberate from Nsukka – Enugu, Egypt to Pretoria and across the Atlantic Ocean and the Pacific Ocean.”*

He needs our prayers and support to achieve this vision and I have no doubt that God who has called him to this noble assignment will equip, direct and give him the needed wisdom to accomplish this task. God has opened the way and no one can shut it.

INITIATION AND INVESTITURE OF KNIGHTS OF ST. PAUL

On Sunday 30th November 2003 the third batch of the Knights of St. Paul were initiated and invested at St. Thomas’ Church, Aku. We thank God for their zeal and commitment. It is our hope that they will identify themselves fully with the good work which the Knights have been doing in the Diocese. We pray that the Knights will not relent in their service to God since they are not serving man but God who rewards everyone according to his work.

We know that there are those who are enemies of progress and who do not appreciate the good qualities in other people and they themselves cannot even do any good work. The holy writ enjoins us in Eph. 4:1 *“I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.”*

INAUGURATION OF NEW PARISHES

Six new Parishes have been inaugurated within this year alone and the 7th one will be inaugurated before the end of the year.

They are:

1. St. Luke's Parish Nsukka – inaugurated 25th January 2004
2. Itchi Parish - inaugurated 15th May 2004
3. Ekwegbe Parish - inaugurated 16th May 2004
4. Okpuje Parish - inaugurated 5th June 2004
5. Obimo Parish - inaugurated 13th June 2004
6. Abbi Parish - inaugurated 11th July 2004
7. Iheakpu-Awka Parish to be inaugurated on 5th December 2004

In Eha-Amufu Archdeaconry arrangements should be made to see that the following areas are carved out as Parishes for an effective grass-root evangelism –

St. Peter's Umuju
 St. John's Aguamede
 St. Paul's Ihenyi

The Archdeaconry Board will know the group of Churches in these areas and make them work towards their inauguration before June 2005. Other Archdeaconries will equally do the same and recommend possible new Parishes before I do it myself.

TRINITY ORDINATION

On Sunday 4th July 2004 at St. Paul's Cathedral – 3 Deacons and 6 Priests were ordained.

They are:

Deacons: The Revd. Nnamdi Ezema
 The Revd. Daniel Odezue and
 The Revd. William S. Okoye

The Priests: The Revd. Emmanuel Ali
 The Revd. Ikechukwu Ezeja
 The Revd. Frank Ilo
 The Revd. David M. Nwede
 The Revd. Ambrose Uchendu
 The Revd. Livinus Ugwuanyi

Continue to pray for them in their ministry in their different churches and the Diocese at large.

EVANGELISTIC OUTREACH:

We are all aware that evangelism is the primary assignment of the Church. Christ commissioned his disciples; *“Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you ... to the very end of the age.”* Matthew 28:19-20.

The Church of Nigeria is poised to double its number by the year 2006 and every Anglican is expected to win at least one convert in a year. We have not relented in our Diocese. We thank all the arms that are engaged in evangelistic outreach – The EFAC, ASF and the Evangelism Committee under the able leadership of the Rev. Canon E. I. Asogwa who has been co-ordinating the activities.

On Friday 21st May an evangelistic outreach was organized for Ukpata area and we thank God for what happened. I was there on Friday 22nd and many other clergymen were in attendance. We thank God for the response and for the provision of a parcel of land for our Church building. The Diocese has been doing everything possible to see that the land is secured. Detailed report will come during report on Evangelism.

We have also reached out to Odolu – in Igala Mainland Local Government of Kogi State, Amalla and other areas at the border towns. We thank the ASF who were in this area from 3rd – 6th June 2004, and all others who assisted them the Rev. Canon E. I. Asogwa, Rev. Canon Engr. Dr. T. C. Madueme and others. May God bless you in Jesus' name. The Church of Nigeria has already included Igala as one of the areas for the creation of a Missionary Diocese.

CHRISTIAN FATHERS' FELLOWSHIP

Our response for admission to this Christian Organization has not been encouraging. Many fathers still drag their feet and do not want to be involved in active church work. Fathers have not been able to organize themselves as women and therefore they have not really assumed the leadership role that God gave them in the family, the Church and the society.

The Christian Father's Fellowship is meant to bring fathers together to educate them on their role as leaders both spiritually, and other areas of life.

I thank St. Paul's Cathedral who produced the highest number of Fathers that were admitted in one service.

They were 50. Some Churches do not produce even one candidate. We should intensify our effort in teaching and educating the members on their Christian involvement.

OBITUARY

We lost by death Dr. Larry Amuka of Aku and Dame Sussy Onyeisi. We thank God for their lives and pray that God will continue to sustain their families.

Other obituaries will be made known in Archdeaconry reports.

CHURCH OF NIGERIA NEWS:

Silver Jubilee Celebration:

The Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) celebrated her Silver Jubilee on Tuesday 24th February 2004 being St. Matthias' Day. We thank God for the Primate and for his visionary leadership, for the achievements the church has made so far. His leadership in the Churches of the global South has enabled us to stand firmly against homosexuality which is against the biblical faith of the Church. He said during one of the African Archbishops' Conference ***"We will not on the altar of money mortgage our conscience ... faith or salvation."***

ENDOWMENT FUND

During the last Standing Committee at Enugu, the Primate lamented that some Dioceses have not responded to this move to make Church of Nigeria self – reliant by having a strong financial base. Our Diocese has not responded positively to this call inspite of all the plans we have put in place to raise the fund. It is unfortunate that we always drag our feet when it comes to contributing money to support Church programmes.

The idea is that when this money is raised our Provincial Assessments will be reduced and we can then use whatever money we raise for our internal development. Dioceses are expected to pay up their quota when the Bishops meet in their annual retreat at Badagry in

January. Already Churches have been told what we expect from them by the end of December this year. I therefore appeal that we shall work hard to raise this fund.

CHURCH OF NIGERIA 1-1-3 PROGRAMME

At the Standing Committee of September last year it was agreed that the Church of Nigeria would double its membership in three years. The idea is that every member will commit himself/herself to help one person become a member of the Anglican Church within the next three years. If this is done, each church will be able to double itself and plant another Church by the year 2006. Our Diocesan Evangelism Committee has been working hard in soul-winning and church planting. To support their effort the Parishes and Archdeaconries will equally have Committee on Mission and Evangelism where they are not yet in existence.

RETIREMENTS

The following Bishops have retired after many years of fruitful service in the Lord's vineyard.

The Rt. Rev. G. C. Echefu	-	Ideato
The Rt. Rev. Uju Obinya	-	Ukwa
The Rt. Rev. J. A. Omoyajowo-		Ijebu
The Rt. Rev. George Bako	-	Lokoja

We thank God for their faithful service and ministry in the Lord's vineyard. We pray that God will grant them good health in their retirement.

NEW DIOCESES CREATED

The following new Dioceses have been created.

Diocese of Okrika from Niger Delta Diocese. Diocese of Oyo from Diocese of Ibadan. Diocese of Ahoada from Niger Delta West. Diocese of Ekiti-Oke from Diocese of Ekiti

CONSECRATIONS AND ENTHRONEMENTS

Since our last Synod Ten Bishops have been consecrated and enthroned.

⇒ The Rt. Rev. Samuel Olayanju	-	Kabba
⇒ The Rt. Rev. Peter Lmasuen	-	Benin
⇒ The Rt. Rev. Michael Fepe	-	Remo
⇒ The Rt. Rev. David Bello	-	Otukpo
⇒ The Rt. Rev. Tubokosemie Abere	-	Okrika
⇒ The Rt. Rev. Jacob Fasipe	-	Oyo
⇒ The Rt. Rev. Clement Ekpeye	-	Ahoada
⇒ The Rt. Rev. Isaac Olubowale	-	Ekiti-Oko
⇒ The Rt. Rev. Samuel K. Eze	-	Ukwa
⇒ The Rt. Rev. David Onuoha	-	Okigwe-South
⇒ The Rt. Rev. Dr. Caleb Maduoma		was translated to Ideato.

We pray for these Bishops as they minister in their different Dioceses asking that God will grant them long and fruitful episcopacy.

CONFERENCE OF ALL AFRICAN BISHOPS

This Conference was held in Lagos from October 26th – November 1st 2004. Church of Nigeria accepted to play host to this Conference and we thank Lagos, Lagos West and Abuja for the major roles they played for its success. The theme of the Conference was ***“Africa has come of age, Self Evaluation.”*** We thank God for journeying mercies granted to all Bishops and wives who attended the Conference.

We thank God for the leadership role the Church of Nigeria has continued to play and pray that this Conference will strengthen the bond of unity of the Churches in Africa.

MISSIONARY DIOCESE

At the last Provincial Standing Committee in Enugu a proposal was put forward for the inauguration of the following Missionary Dioceses. Igala, Arochukwu, Badagry, Ogoni, Kubwa, Isuikwuato, Zonkwa, Ikwuano and Ogbomosho. This is in pursuance of the target of the Church to double its size by the year 2006.

OBITUARY:

A few days after the Provincial Standing Committee at Ilesa the Provincial Registrar and Chancellor of Sabongidda-Ora Diocese Sir Steven Giwa – Amu died.

The wife of the retired Bishop of Kaduna Rt. Rev. T. Ogboyomi also died just before the last Provincial Standing Committee at Enugu. Let us always remember their families in our prayers.

THE STATE OF THE NATION

We thank God that his grace and mercy continues to abound for us as a nation inspite of the injustice, godlessness and selfishness that have characterized our society. Since our last Synod the corporate existence of our nation has been shaken to its foundations. We are all aware that the government has been promising that all their plans and programmes are aimed at improving the living conditions of the people and enhancing the economic development of the nation. Unfortunately, majority of Nigerians continue to live below poverty level while a few privileged people squander the wealth of the nation without qualms. Just recently it was announced that the way some Nigerian politicians spend money over-seas has become worrisome and is an embarrassment to other nationals who see them troop to overseas on weekly basis. Concerned Nigerians abroad have said that their names are being collated and would be made public before the end of the year. Many Governors are fingered in this criminal act.

The religious riot in Kano and Plateau States in which thousands of lives were lost and property estimated at Millions of Naira destroyed for no just cause shows that all is not well with our nation. It has been estimated that about 52,000 lives were lost in Plateau State alone, and a state of emergency imposed on the state.

Reports from Kano show that the killings and maiming of people in that state was equally alarming and there have been questions why the same measure applied to Plateau was not applied to Kano.

From different parts of the country we see resistance of restive youths and disenchanted groups who feel that the Federal Government is partial in its distribution of amenities and the handling of the resources of the nation. These include the OPC, APLC, MASSOB, Niger Delta Peoples Volunteer Force and others. Just recently the Federal Government invited the Niger Delta Peoples Volunteer Force led by Asari Dokubo for a dialogue. In doing this the government is showing that there are some sacred cows. The protest by these groups show that we are yet to work out an acceptable system of government that will take into consideration the feelings of all the ethnic groups in our country. The call

for a National Conference continues to gather momentum from very many well-meaning Nigerians and to ignore it will only mean that we continue to drift like a rudderless ship.

The recent increase in fuel price raises the question whether the government is sensitive to the suffering of the masses. The government ought to do all within its power to see that industrial actions in the country are minimized since it does no good to any nation.

We thank the State governments that recently employed some workers and plead that the Federal Government will equally initiate plans that will reduce unemployment in the country.

The Security agents have to some extent reduced the crime rate mostly on the highways, life however continues to be insecure for those in the rural areas, the authorities will see to it that attention is equally paid to these areas and the Police made to do their duty instead of collecting tolls from drivers and harassing the motor-cyclists.

It is our prayer that our leaders will focus on the general interest of the people they serve and the Nigerian nation in general and forget about their selfish interests which work against the corporate existence of the nation.

2004 – SYNOD THEME

“A Call to Spiritual Reformation, A Imperative for the 21st Century Church.”

During our last Synod, our theme was ***“Christian Witness at a Time Like this.”***

From the sermons preached, the Bishop’s Address, Bible Studies and discussions, we were left in no doubt that we are living at a time when true worship of God has eluded majority of those who call themselves Christians. To many people worship has become a mere formality and a fulfillment of religious duty with no commitment or understanding of the God we worship through Jesus Christ. It has become for many a social gathering. There is no doubt that church activities go on with every enthusiasm and zeal, activities like evangelism, crusade, prayer and fasting, Bible Study, fellowship meetings etc. There is no doubt that the number of converts are increasing, new churches are planted and the Church of Nigeria for instance has been described as the fastest growing Church World – Wide. The church may be growing numerically, that is getting fatter and fatter but is the Church fulfilling the role which it has been called upon to fulfill? Our Church of today can be described as having a lopsided growth. While the physical aspect of the church is growing, we have lost sight of the spiritual side of its growth which is very crucial if the church will stand the test of time.

The Church of Nigeria was aware of this hence in its vision statement it stated ***“THE CHURCH OF NIGERIA (Anglican Communion) shall be SPIRITUALLY DYNAMIC.”***

One’s spirituality relates to his level of awareness of God’s sovereignty, and one’s level of God’s consciousness underscores one’s attitude and relationship with God and man.

If we are asked today, ***“What is the most urgent need of the Church in today’s world?”*** We are bound to give different answers ranging from purity of life, intensified evangelism, bible study and belief in the authority, of the Bible as having been inspired by God and its relevance for our salvation. People may speak of better human relations based on love for one another, social justice, righteousness and so on.

While all these things are very important and will not be neglected, there is a sense in which those needs are merely symptomatic of a far more serious lack. One believes that for today’s church to be relevant we need a deeper knowledge of God. We need to know God

better in order to worship him in spirit and truth. Much of our today's religion is merely to address our felt needs. We are merely pursuing our own happiness and fulfillment. People now simply see God as the great Being that potentially meets our needs and fulfils our aspirations. Today we think little of what God is like, what he expects of us and what he seeks in us. People are no longer captured by God's holiness as Isaiah was, his love as Hosea was or his righteousness and justice as Amos was.

God's words and thoughts capture too little of our imagination, too little of our discourse and too few of our priorities. We are simply spiritually stunted. As Christians we need a reform in our spirituality. We need to rediscover the spirituality of the early fathers, those prophets of old and the Christians of the early centuries that led them to make great impact on the lives of those around them and the society to which they belonged.

When we speak of Christian Spirituality, we are thinking of the state of deep relationship to God. Christian spirituality should be centred on Christ. Paul frequently describes the life of the believer ***"In Christ"*** to emphasize the union Christians enjoy with Jesus Christ; 2 Corinthians 5:17. ***"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation, the old has gone, the new has come."*** It is a dynamic union which the synoptic writers describe as following Jesus, the Johannine writings speak of it as union in love and Hebrews and 1 Peter see it as pilgrimage. Hebrews 11:13.

"They admitted that they were pilgrims and strangers on earth." 1 Peter 2:11 ***"Dear friends, I urge you as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires which war against your soul."*** These and other metaphors imply the growth and dynamism of the life of Christ in the believer.

God's original purpose to create man in the image and likeness of God Genesis 1:26-28 is re-interpreted by redemption as being conformed to the image of his Son. Romans 8:29 ***"For those he fore knew, he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the first born among many brothers."***

Christian spirituality is life in the Trinity. The Christian lives in acceptance of sonship, knowing God as Father. He realizes this in the sonship of Jesus Christ, his saving work of forgiveness and his gift of eternal life. This is actualized by the gift of the Holy Spirit who enables the believer to cry ***"Abba Father"*** Romans 8:15, Gal. 4:6. ***"Because you are sons, God sent the spirit of his son into our hearts the spirit who calls out "Abba Father."***

It is the out-working of the grace which begins with conversion and concludes in death or Christ's second coming. It is marked by growth and maturity in a Christ like life. It implies community and fellowship. Eph. 4:15-16 ***"Instead speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the head, that is Christ. From him the whole body joined and held together by every supporting ligament grows and builds itself up in love as each part does its work."*** It is a life of prayer Matthew 6:5-15, 1 Thess. 5:17, ***"Pray continually or without ceasing."*** It means a sense of eternal dimension in all one's existence. Gen. 50:19-20.

But Joseph said to them, ***"Don't be afraid. Am I in the place of God? You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives."*** Rom. 8:28. ***"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose."*** It means an intense awareness of life lived in the present before God. Matthew 6:34.

"Therefore do not worry about tomorrow for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own." The spirit – filled life is one that manifests practically the spirit of Jesus, with the fruit of love that is joyful, peaceful, patient, kind, good, faithful, gentle and self-controlled. (Gal. 5:22-23). This is true spiritually. It is a continuous command according to Ephes. 5: 18 ***"Do not get drunk on wine which leads to debauchery. Instead be filled with the spirit."*** This spirit will neither be quenched nor grieved.

1Thess. 5:19, Eph. 4:30 – ***“Do not put out the spirit fire.”*** “And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.”

Our Christian spirituality engenders fellowship and the communion of Saints deepens its character. As social beings, the reality of our spirituality is tested by the quality of our public worship. Acts 2:42 – ***“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.”*** Godliness and spiritual friendship reinforce each other, as a horizontal and a vertical way respectively, to inspire and to embody the love of God in human hearts. For Christian worship is not primarily a matter of special practices but of our life style.

Rom. 12:1; 14:6; 1 Cor. 10:31. ***“Therefore, I urge you brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship.”***

We may then ask, what are the factors that have led to the loss of spirituality in today’s Church?

NOMINAL CHRISTIANS: Many people who fill our churches today are merely nominal Christians who have not had any true conversion experience. They have not genuinely repented of their sins or done away with their past life. Jesus said in John 3:3 ***“No one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born again.”*** This conversion experience is an act initiated by God in the hearer of the word of God in response to preaching the word of God. The hearer is convicted of his sins, leading to remorse, repentance or forsaking of his sins. He then accepts Christ as his personal Lord and Saviour. The person then invites Christ into his life. He now has the power to live a new life. John 1:12 – says ***“Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name he gave the right to become children of God.”***

This nominalism has led to lack of deep commitment in the things of God. Many so called Christians attend services during major Christian events like Easter, Harvest or Ordination and they hardly read the Bible or attend Bible Studies or Christian fellowships where the Bible is taught to deepen the faith of believers. They may not even pray in their homes. This group of people do not take any interest in whatever happens in the church.

They are in the church for merely selfish and social reasons. On Sundays this group of people go to church and the next day they go to one kind of deity or another. Their faith does not stand the test of time. Some of these people oppose the authority of the church and can make it difficult if not impossible for Church Workers in their areas to make any meaningful progress.

DENIAL OF THE AUTHORITY OF THE BIBLE

We today live in a world where the authority of the Bible has been challenged and questioned by even some clergymen or Bishops. The recent development in the Church in America leaves no one in doubt that some people may be thinking of re-writing the Bible or expunging from it those aspects that do not agree with their teaching. We think for instance about homosexuality which is clearly condemned in the Bible and for which the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed. Rom. 1:26-27 – ***“Because of this God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the one penalty for their perversion.”***

In America they have equally gone ahead to ordain and even wed homosexuals in the church of God.

One may ask where in the Bible they have the authority for doing what they have done. It is stated clearly in 2 Timothy 3:16-17 ‘ ***“All Scripture is God breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”***

This development has led the Church of Nigeria to sever relationship with the Church in America (ECUSA).

Paul writing to Timothy in 2Tim. 4:3-4 – ***“For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead to suit their own desires, they will gather round them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.”***

Some Bishops and renowned theologians in the name of scholarship have even questioned the cardinal doctrines on which the faith of the church had been built for these past centuries, the Virgin Birth, the death and resurrection and the physical ascension of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. This shows the level to which the spiritual understanding of some church fathers have degenerated. According to Peter Moore ***“Today there is a new spin on these old heresies, arising from our culture’s fascination with religious pluralism. Along with a widespread loss of belief in absolutes, we see a loss of faith in objective truth. People now hesitate to say that any religious convictions represent literal facts. They prefer to think that all beliefs are subjective. This allows them the benefit holding on to beliefs that offend no one. Thus, these people can appear religious but tolerant.”***

CLERGY BEHAVIOUR

Many people today doubt the calling of some of our clergymen who are supposed to be the leaders of different congregations and feed the sheep of Christ that have been committed to their care. Many clergymen today are more concerned with material acquisition than with spiritual matters and the spiritual growth of their members. Prosperity gospel has taken the centre stage in the lives of many men of God. Prayers and blessings now depend on how much one has given as if that is dependent on their power.

Little or no time is given for personal devotion and study of the scripture and this has led to ineffectiveness. Clergy relationship is characterized by unhealthy rivalry and jealousy, which leads even to out-right hatred. Those who work hard and make impact on their congregations are castigated and black-mailed instead of praising God for what he is using them to do and even being ready to learn from them.

In other cases some of our clergy have shown signs of gross indiscipline and insubordination even to their Bishops. A clergyman for instance left his duty post and was running a church in another Diocese simply because he was given money and a car. He went ahead to ignore his Bishop’s letter to withdraw from the place.

The problems we face today in the Church of Nigeria when Bishops are elected and rejected are mostly instigated by clergymen, who have been going around campaigning for the office.

Clergymen who are preferred because of their hard-work, discipline and true spirit of service are branded Bishop’s favoured ones by those who are Senior and yet unproductive. We are equally aware of situations where a clergyman has no hope of rising to certain positions in the church when he is working in a place away from his own area no matter how good he may be.

Worse still is that today clergymen take their fellow-clergy to court in order to settle their differences. In 1Cor. 6:1-6 – Paul says ***“If any of you has a dispute with another, dare he take it before the ungodly for judgement instead of before the Saints. Do you not know that the Saints will judge the world? And if you are to judge the world, are you not competent to judge trivial cases? Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much***

more the things of this life! Therefore, if you have disputes about such matters, appoint as judges even men of little account in the church. I say this to shame you. Is it possible that there is nobody among you wise enough to judge a dispute between believers? But instead one brother goes to law against another and this in front of unbelievers?"

ATTITUDE TOWARDS PUBLIC WORSHIP

It is my belief that every Christian has a fundamental calling and one primary duty – a duty that is also a delight. We are called by the way we live and in all we do, to worship God. Worshipping is a full-time activity not only here on earth, but also in heaven. God created us to worship him and enjoy him forever. In our worship we are coming before the Almighty God, standing before his throne of grace to seek his favour and guidance. How do many people today approach worship? Do we come to God prepared, with sense of great expectations or do we come to fulfill all righteousness? Do we have any sense of reverence and awe, seeing our puniness in the presence of the Omnipotent and Omniscient God. The casual manner in which many people today attend services show that we have lost that sense of awe and reverence. We no longer realize that before God we are standing on a holy ground. So many people now come to Church services without the Holy Bible, Hymn Book and Prayer Book. This results in non-participation and lack of concentration in a service that is supposed to be participatory. People move in and out when they like and some engage in conversations when a service is going on. The result is that people go through a service without thinking or meditating on the passages read, hymns sung to know the message that is being conveyed. This is because people do not prepare themselves for worship. Some people get up late, rush to church and arrive just before or after the service has started, some even arrive when the sermon has gone half-way or even after the sermon. This group of people cannot be said to be in a state of worshipping the living God. Some even answer their hand-sets while in service. To this group of people the service will seem cold and dead. Those who come in time and prepared will come out of the church inspired and renewed, challenged and uplifted because they took time to prepare themselves. They arrive in time to pray, to meditate, to look through the hymns set for the service and the bible passages so that they will make them their own in worship. According to Michael Baughen – *“They came not, to attend church or “to go to a service” but to meet with the Lord of heaven and earth and to worship him. Their anticipation and expectancy influenced their whole participation.”*

WHAT THEN IS THE IMPLICATION OF ALL THESE?

We need a renewal of our faith in God as God Almighty. We have to re-examine our faith and commitment to God. What do we actually believe? For right faith and doctrine will lead to right conduct.

‘Faith’ may mean religion, which in our own case is Christianity. We have to ask ourselves a searching question: Which other beliefs and practices do we join to our Christian faith? Do I believe in and worship other gods in addition to the One God in Trinity of the Christian Faith? As church members are we in the right tradition that can bring salvation, when we mix up the pagan, the esoteric and the occult practices with our profession and practice of Christian Faith?

Faith mean\s our Creed, as contained in the Apostles Creed, the Nicene Creed and the Athanasian Creed. Here it means a dogma or teachings that must be believed.

What do these Creeds mean to us when we recite them? Do we faithfully hold the Catholic Faith as preserved in these Credal definitions?

Romans 1:17 – “Speaks of faith that makes one ‘righteous’ or faith that saves. This faith means ‘obedience’ absolute trust and surrender’ to the will of God. It is the faith that

makes God declare a sinner discharged and acquitted.” We find this faith in Abraham. Abraham obeyed God and left his country not knowing where he was going.

He was ready to offer his only son and believed that he would be father of many nations even at an extreme old age. God never disappointed him as these promises were fulfilled through his descendants. This kind of faith is patient and obedient, full of trust and confidence. It was this faith in God that led Daniel to continue his prayers to God even at the risk of his life. The same faith led Shedrack, Meshack and Abednego to refuse to worship the golden image set up by Nerbuchadnezer believing that the God they serve can save them hence they said – Daniel 3:17-18.

“The God we serve is able to save us from it, and he will rescue us from your hand, O King. But even if he does not, we want you to know O king that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up.” We need to have the faith that transforms a person’s inner being – the saving faith that transforms a person’s inner being – the saving faith that can say as Paul did – Gal. 2:20 ***“I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”***

We need the faith that can move mountains, the faith that will continue to trust even when it is difficult. We need this faith in order to over-come difficulties. Sometimes we feel that God is far away from us. Habakkuk had the same experience and questioned God. Hebrews 1:3,13 – ***“Why do you make me look at injustice, why do you tolerate wrong ...”*** 13 – ***“Your eyes are too pure to look on evil, you cannot tolerate wrong. Why then do you tolerate the treacherous. Why are you silent while the wicked swallow up those more righteous than themselves.”*** And Isaiah could say ***“Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself O God of Israel, the Saviour”*** Isaiah 45:15.

The night before Martin Luther was due to stand before the authorities of Rome, who had charged him for heresy, when everybody had turned their backs on him, he walked the floor of his room and cries out. ***“O my God, art thou dead?”*** One would have thought that God would have been especially real to Martin Luther at that moment. You would have thought that since God had chosen Luther to be the man who would turn the world upside down, on that particular night he would have given Luther an extra measure of his Spirit. But Luther felt utterly deserted. The following day he said the famous words. ***“Here I stand”*** It sounds triumphant but Luther was scared to death. They asked him, Dr. Luther, are these your tracts? Yes they are. He replied. Will you recant what you have said? He replied, ***“Yes, I will if you can show that they are contrary to the word of God, but if you can’t, here I stand. I can do no other, God help me.”*** Amen. Luther was scared to death. He had no sense of God’s presence but he was faithful. We easily give up in the face of distress and adversity. We give up our courage and trust too soon because we lack this type of faith; faith that can move mountains, change situations, the faith that makes the impossible possible.

We need the faith that works. James spoke of this faith in James 2:14-17 – ***“What good is it my brothers if a man claims to have faith, but has no deeds – Can such a faith save him ... in the same way faith by itself if it is not accompanied by action is dead.”*** It is easy for us to claim that we have faith as believers. James make it clear that faith without good works is dead. It is not enough to boast that we are important members of our churches, opinion leaders, power brokers, the enlightened members of our congregations, if we cannot at the same time point at the good things we are doing to prove our Christian commitment. Nothing sorts out our Christian faith and integrity so quickly as giving. How do we give on Sundays? Are we like Cain – giving something but without much thought or sacrifice, giving because we can hardly pass the offering plate by. Or are we like Abel – loving God, longing to see His work go forward, expressing this in thought, through proportionate giving and often in overflowing love – gifts as well. God demands that we give according to the blessings we

have received, and he loves a cheerful giver. Deut. 16:17 – ***“Each of you must bring a gift in proportion to the way the Lord your God has blessed him.”***

What is our idea about Church work? We need to reconsider the idea we hold about church work and the church worker. Some of us, both the clergy and the lay pitch the church too low in our imagination.

Some people today want church work whether they are qualified, suited for it or not; whether they are morally, spiritually and intellectually qualified or not. We need the vocation and the equipment of the Holy Spirit for all church offices.

Some of our members have neither the respect for the church and its owner nor for the Church worker. In the Anglican church some have degenerated to the stage where in some places we have neither love nor respect for the Church Teacher, Catechist or Pastor. In some places workers are not properly quartered nor looked after. We are being reminded that disrespect and neglect of our Church workers is a disservice to the Church of God.

HOLINESS

The need for moral regeneration cannot be over-emphasized both in the clergy and the laity, the young and the old. Ministers of God as true ambassadors for Christ must be clothed with righteousness and with holiness. This means that they should be full of the power of the Holy Spirit which will produce in them the fruit already mentioned earlier in this address – “Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.” These are fruit of the spirit and signs of holiness against which there is no law.

Parents should show good moral examples to their children. We should all rise and work against examination – malpractices, drug addiction and alcoholism in the youth. Any true child of God will not be involved in 419, armed robbery.

Public servants who are Christians ought not be associated with those who divert the public funds to their private pockets. Christ’s question is still relevant. ***“What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul?”*** Matthew 16:26

Related to holiness is New Life in Christ which is the answer to all our moral problems. Many of us have not changed from their bad old life which is contrary to the will of Christ. When we sincerely accept Christ as Lord and Saviour, when we see him as all sufficient to us, as the very God to be obeyed and revered, something new happens in our lives. The indwelling Christ has the power to alter our nature, and transform our being so that we become new Creatures in Christ; the old pass away and the new behaviour comes in. Some of us speak of being born again as contained in John 3 but their lives deny their claim. The fact remains that we all need both spiritual, religious and moral renewal. Many of us still live in the flesh and cannot control our passions. It is a wonderful thing to experience a life that is controlled and directed by the Holy Spirit. That is the new life we need, the spiritual renewal that is needed for our time.

I want to conclude with some hints on Our Prayer Life: We need to put more zeal in our prayer lives. For more things are wrought by prayer than this world can dream of.” Both as members and as a church we do not pray enough. We take God for granted. In our private lives, we need to form strong prayer habits of communicating with God both formally and informally. We need personal and private devotions. Many people have lost the sense of having a quiet time with God. In our churches today we need to have the two services of morning and evening instead of turning the evening time to family or town meetings. The Wednesday Prayer and fasting ought to be taken seriously as we see the result in places where it is done properly. Paul says in 1 Thess. 5:17 – “Pray without ceasing” or “pray continually.” In our diocese we have a cycle of prayer and how many of us use this cycle of prayer religiously? The only hope we have for a change in our country is for Christians to rise up to their responsibility in praying fervently to God. 1 Timothy 2:1 – “I urge, then, first of all, that

requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone – for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness.”

PRAYER

Almighty God, we thank you for your church which you have set as light to the nations. We ask for your blessing, for the power of the spirit that we may know you better and grow in our grasp of your incalculable love for us, so that we can serve you better. Bless us Lord God, not with ease or endless triumph, but with faithfulness. Bless us with profound hunger and thirst for righteousness, a zeal for truth, a love of people. Bless us with the perspective that weighs all things from the vantage point of eternity. Bless us with a transparent love of holiness. Grant us strength in weakness, joy in sorrow, calmness in conflict, patience when opposed or attacked, trustworthiness under temptation and love when we are hated. We ask Holy and Merciful God that we may be used to extend your kingdom here on earth and bring many to know and love you truly, through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

ADMISSIONS AND CONFIRMATION

During the period in review 232 girls were admitted to Girls’ Guild, 457 women to Women’s Guild, 123 to Mothers’ Union, while 122 fathers to Christian Fathers’ Fellowship. A total of 2537 Candidates were confirmed.

See the table below:

Admission and confirmation: 5th October, 2003 – 10th October 2004

Date	Church	Confirmation		Girls’ Guild	W.G.	M.U.	C.F.F
		Male	Female				
5/10/03	St. Paul’s Uda	26	106	12	13	8	7
12/10/03	All Saints’ Obollo-Afor	34	74	2	15	7	2
23/11/03	St. Stephen’s Ogrute	13	55	-	20	2	-
7/12/03	St. Stephen’s Neke	21	53	5	29	8	4
14/12/03	St. James’ Orba	24	44	4	4	-	6
20/12/03	St. Paul’s Ihenyi	51	144	28	47	5	-
21/12/03	St. Andrew’s Ibagwa	48	155	21	46	6	5
7/2/04	St. James’ Alor-Agu	10	37	7	4	5	6
15/2/04	St. Andrew’s Adani	11	10	-	1	3	-
22/2/04	St. Stephen’s Umulokpa	9	19	1	4	2	-
7/3/04	St. Matthew’s Mgbuji	24	70	1	24	3	-
28/3/04	St. Cyprian’s Chapel	36	51	7	-	-	-
4/4/04	St. John’s Onuiyi	17	9	9	6	5	-
18/4/04	St. Mary’s Opi	47	111	12	10	2	1
9/5/04	St. Barth’s Amachalla	10	57	1	5	-	-
23/5/04	Emmanuel Church Alor-Uno	18	34	2	15	3	-
30/5/04	Cathedral Chr. of St. Paul’s	42	57	11	24	10	50
6/6/04	St. Andrew’s Ikem	23	35	15	27	6	5
27/6/04	Christ Church Chapel, UNN	27	22	-	3	4	-
18/7/04	St. Peter’s Ovoko	66	99	8	40	14	3
1/8/04	St. Mark’s Obukpa	32	64	8	13	7	10
8/8/04	St. Stephen’s Eha-Alumona	43	115	2	11	3	1
15/8/04	St. Thomas’ Aku	19	80	29	10	2	5

29/8/04	St. John's Edem-Ani	23	44	9	7	5	6
12/9/04	St. John's Lejja	22	72	9	20	4	2
22/9/04	St. Mark's Ohodo	14	43	13	16	3	2
3/10/04	St. Paul's Udah	28	53	9	15	-	1
10/10/04	All Saints Obollo-Afor	37	49	7	28	6	6
	TOTAL	775	1762	232	457	123	122

The Rt. Rev. Dr. J. C. Ikonuba
Bishop of Nsukka.