

**PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS DELIVERED AT THE THIRD SESSION OF THE
SECOND SYNOD OF THE DIOCESE OF NSUKKA AT ST. PHILIP'S CHURCH
EHA-AMUFU ON MONDAY 25TH OCTOBER 1999 BY
THE RT. REVD. DR. J.C. ILONUBA, (*BISHOP OF NSUKKA*)**

GREETINGS:

My Lord Bishop(s)
The Hon. Chancellor
The Learned Registrar
Venerable Archdeacons
The Clergy
Knights of St. Paul and Ladies
The President, Mothers' Union and Women's Guild
Synod Delegates
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen.

Beloved people of God here present, I want to thank God for his continued love, guidance and sustenance to all of us and for yet another opportunity to come together in this Synod of our beloved Diocese. "The Lord's unfailing love and mercy still continue, fresh as the morning, as sure as sunrise" (Lamentation 3:22-23) G.N.B. "The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end, they are new every morning; great is thy faithfulness." R.S.V.

Since the last Synod many good things have happened within our Diocese for which we have to thank God. We have also had some sad experiences and we also thank God for seeing us through those difficult times.

This is the first Synod we are having under a democratic government and we thank God for the smooth hand – over to civilian rule on the 29th May, 1999.

This Synod brings to an end the Second Synod of our Diocese and we thank all the officers who served during this Second Synod. For those who may be re-appointed to serve, our prayer is that God will continue to use them, and for others who may be dropped we pray that God will use them to serve him in other areas within the Diocese and beyond.

I must at this point thank the Parishes of Eha-Amufu and Mgbuji for accepting to host this year's Synod. The two Parishes were asked to host the Synod so that the burden will be light for them and we thank God for how they have worked together in organizing the Synod. You will note that the Synod Service Yesterday was at St. Matthew's Church Mgbuji while the rest of Synod proceedings will be here at St. Philip's Church Eha-Amufu. We thank all those who contributed in one way or the other to the success of this arrangement.

HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY IN EHA-AMUFU:

The coming of Christianity to this area goes back to 1916 when the gospel was first preached at Ngwo and the Rev. Isaac Uzowulu Ejindu from obosi was in the same year appointed the first Pastor and Superintendent of Enugu District which then extended to Ilorin, Makurdi, Kaduna, Minna, Zaria, Funtua and Vom.

At this time Eha-Amufu was politically under Nsukka which was administered by one D.O. Herbert. Under the Native Administration he appointed warrant Chiefs in Eha-Amufu for easy governance of the area. At Umuhu was Chief Ugwuada Nweze, while that of Mgbuji was Chief Omeri Nnaji Alu, the father of Ven. F.I. Omeri, Principal of Crowther Theological College Okene in Lokoja Diocese. For Amede the Warrant Chief was Ede Nnamani and for Ihenyi, Chief Odo Oji a black – smith from Awka who settled there was appointed the

Warrant Chief. The government in its attempt to develop the hinterland and facilitate transportation has embarked on the construction of both roads and railway lines from Port-Harcourt to Enugu and beyond. The influence of the government through the roads and railway lines facilitated the spread of the gospel as it made the movement of the missionaries easy in their evangelistic outreach.

In 1922 the first church teachers set their feet in Eha-Amufu. The Warrant Chiefs already mentioned were made to sign an agreement to protect the lives of the church teachers then known as “church agents.” Mr. Stephen Ude was for Umuhu and he was to serve also at St. Philip’s Church which included the Camp David Nwanosike was sent to Mgbuji while Oseloka was sent to Amede.

History has it that Oseloka later suffered martyrdom.

These teachers lived in the premises of the chiefs and Church Services were also held in places provided by the Chiefs in their compounds. The growth of Christianity in these areas was slow because of some initial difficulties. St. Philip’s however had a rapid growth because of the presence of strangers who settled in the semi-township to trade. St Philip’s School therefore became the first school in Isi-Uzo Local Government area and people came from far and near to study.

As evangelical work progressed, churches were planted in other villages, these include: St. Peter’s Umuhu, St. Paul’s Ihenyi, St. John’s Agu-Amede and St. James Isu.

It is worth noting that Christianity came to Nsukka through Eha-Amufu. John Enyi from Mgbuji who was a Sawyer at Alor-Uno was the one who introduced Christianity to Alor-Uno and from there it spread to the main Nsukka town.

It is an irony of fate that while Christianity came to Nsukka from Eha-Amufu, Odo-cult came to Eha-Amufu from Nsukka. The Odo-cult was introduced by one native doctor from Nsukka, and it is a devastating cult to Eha-Amufu and its environs. The headquarters of Odo-cult is Ihenyi. People preferred Odo festivities to Christianity, because they say that Christian religion needs much education and reasoning.

We thank God that churches in this area have continued to grow and we now have Eha-Amufu Archdeaconry comprising Mgbuji, Eha-Amufu, Ikem and Mbu Parishes. These areas have equally produced important personalities. Some of them are Prof. B.A.C. Enyi, Sir Hon. S.O.C. Enyi, Late Mr. O.J. Edeoga, Mr. E. Ogbu and a host of others. It is our hope that very soon other parishes will be carved out of this Archdeaconry. Our prayer is that people will intensify their evangelistic effort in order to combat the menace and attraction of odo cult by establishing the supremacy of Christianity.

OUR GUEST PREACHER:

At this point I want to welcome formally our guest – preacher of this year’s Synod Sermon the Rt. Rev. George Bako OON, the Lord Bishop of Lokoja. Lokoja is usually referred to as the confluence town because it is there that the Rivers Niger and Benue kissed each other. The town Lokoja is strategically located between the Southern part of Nigeria and the North. During the Niger expedition of 1857 Adjai Crowther did much work there, with the result that today you can still see the structure of Crowther’s house standing as a reminder of his missionary activity there.

Bishop Bako is not alone, he is here with his amiable wife Adejumoke Omolade Bako. She and my wife call themselves “Shadow.” Bishop Bako was one time a broadcaster in the Federal Radio Service where he rose to the rank of the Director General of the Federal Radio Co-operation of Nigeria. We thank him for his articulate, thought provoking and inspiring sermon of yesterday which I believe has not fallen on deaf ears.

The Rt. Rev. George Bako is the son of late Rev. Bab who was at Awka College. Mrs. Bako was one time a director in the Federal Service, a very active and homely woman. She now directs the women in Lokoja Diocese.

We thank them for their presence among us since Saturday and we hope that they are not in a hurry to leave us.

We also thank them for looking after one of the sons of this Archdeaconry the Ven. F. Omeri who is the Principal of Crowther College of Theology Okene in Lokoja Diocese.

EVENTS SINCE AFTER THE LAST SYNOD

1. Consecration of New Bishops:

During the Episcopal Meeting at Archbishop Vining Memorial Church, Ikeja, Lagos on Friday 16th October, 1998 the following Bishops were elected – The Very Rev. Adebola Olusegun I Okubadejo for the Diocese of Ibadan North. The Very Rev. George Latunji Lasebikan Bishop of Ondo. The Ven. Gabriel A. Akinbiyi – Bishop of Offa. The Rev. Canon Dr. Cyril C. Okorochoa – Bishop of Owerri.

They were all consecrated on Sunday, 13th December, 1998 at the Cathedral of All Saints, Balogun, Osogbo and have since assumed duties in their different Dioceses.

On 25th January, 1999 the Ven. J.O. Arulefela who was elected at Osogbo was consecrated as the Bishop of Ikale/Ilaje.

On Wednesday 5th May, 1999 the following were elected Bishops during the Episcopal Meeting at Lokoja. The Very Rev. Godson Echefu for Ideato, The Ven. Michael Akinyemi for Igbomina, The Ven. Amos Madu for Oji – River, The Ven. Jacob Ajetunmobi for Ibadan South, The Ven. Bright Ogu for Mbaise, The Ven. Caleb A. Maduoma for Okigwe South.

These men of God were consecrated Bishop on Sunday 11th July, 1999 at Christ Church, Uwani Enugu in a colourful service presided over by the Primate and metropolitan of the Church of Nigeria – His Grace The Most Rev. Dr. Joseph Abiodun Adetiloye assisted by about 50 other bishops. The Enugu State Government was represented in the service by the deputy Governor – Chief Okechukwu Itanyi.

2. Initiation and Investiture of the Knights of St. Paul – 20th December, 1998.

On Sunday 20th December, 1998 history was made in the Diocese when the first batch of knights of St. Paul were initiated and invested. They were 72 in number – 68 men and 2 women. We thank God for their contributions towards the development of the Diocese. Knights as part of the Staff of the Bishop have a responsibility to see that they work hard in their different churches, Parishes and Archdeaconries to educate the people to understand the role they ought to play towards the development of the Diocese. A situation where some people feel that Knighthood is appearing in the uniform only will not be tolerated.

3. 5th Anniversary of the Inauguration of the Diocese:

On Sunday 10th January, 1999 we celebrated the 5th Anniversary of the Inauguration of the Diocese. During that service I went down memory lane reminding ourselves about how we started the Diocese and how far we have gone.

We started with 18 Parishes, today we have 23 Parishes. We started with 32 pastors today we have 46 Pastors. We would have been 59 but we lost 4 by death, 4 retired and 4 left for other Dioceses while one was elected Bishop of Egbu.

Our Diocese started with St. Paul's Church being used as the Pro-Cathedral and the Bishop living in a temporary accommodation.

After one year we embarked on building a Bishops court under the chairmanship of Engr. Aka Ogbobe, Chairman Diocesan Development Committee today Sir Engr. Aka Ogbobe. Just before the end of last year 1998 the house was decked with the full support of the women of the Diocese who provided the cement and rods. We thank the women for their contributions and concern for the work. We also thank Sir. Engr. Dr. Ugochukwu Nwoji the site Engineer who almost single – handedly supervised the progress of work.

The work has since progressed and is almost getting to the roofing stage. To get this far took us almost five years. Who knows whether the remaining work will take another four or five years?

On the spiritual development and understanding in the Diocese, we note with delight that in some churches, there is spiritual re-awakening and re-commitment to God. In such churches you see tremendous progress being made. We thank God for those dynamic and evangelical Pastors who move their congregations to action. In some churches however some members have given themselves as instruments to be used by Satan to destabilize the church and cause confusion. We shall continue to pray for such people. In some others we hear about the behaviour of some supposed leaders or members of the committee which is very shameful to narrate. Pray for such people that they will repent from their sins and be useful instruments in their churches.

Mention must be made of places that have made remarkable progress within these years.

- i. Ovoko – completed a parsonage which is a storied building.
- ii. St. John's Onuiyi is about to complete its parsonage. They have done a good re-construction work in their church giving it a new look.
- iii. St. Paul's Cathedral – Laid the foundation of a new parsonage.
- iv. St Luke's Amufie has started building a parsonage; St Bartholomew's Amachalla is also building a bungalow for the Priest, while St. Paul's Uda has completed their own parsonage.
- v. The following churches are working hard on the building of their churches – St. Andrew's Ibagwa, St. Thomas' Aku, St. Luke's Nsukka, St. Stephen's, Neke, St. Peter's Umuhu, St. Mark's Ohodo, St. Mark's Obukpa, etc.
- vi. The women of the Diocese has proved themselves a force to be reckoned with in the Development of the Diocese. It is a fact that today women are in the fore – front in the things of God and they move their husbands to action.

In the Diocese they have a functional Weaving Centre for producing Diocesan Uniform for Women's Guild and Mothers' Union.

They bought a Diocesan Van to the tune of over ₦ 600,000.00k (six-hundred Thousand naira) only

They re-organised the August Home and Abroad Meetings – Making it result oriented, instead of a social gathering where people meet to eat, drink and disperse.

They have different units set up to co-ordinate the work in the Diocese. The Girls' Guild of the Diocese has also been very effective.

Our attitude towards giving is gradually changing from what it was at the inception of the Diocese. The idea that we do not have is no longer attractive and we should remove that idea from our thinking. What we lack rather is the willingness to give, especially when it comes to giving on the Diocesan level. We know how to give in our local churches as has been proved by the developments noticed. If the head is not standing the body cannot exist. Let us learn to give in support of the Diocese. It is the Diocese of Nsukka and not that of the Bishop.

4. Presentation of the Archbishop of Province II:

On Sunday 24th January, 1999 His Grace – The Most Rev. Dr. J.A. Onyemelukwe was presented at All Saints' cathedral Onitsha as the Archbishop of Province II. He thus became the 2nd Archbishop of Province II following the retirement in April of His Grace, The Most Rev. Dr. Benjamin C. Nwankiti.

5. Diocesan Cycle of Prayer:

It is our firm belief that as one family of God, it is our responsibility to bear one another up to God in prayer. In order to achieve this objective a Committee was set up to produce a cycle of Prayer for our Diocese. This cycle of Prayer was launched on Saturday 6th March, 1999 and many people both within and outside the Diocese have been helped by that prayer cycle. I have received favourable comments from those for whom we have prayed and from those who have also prayed for us.

In my foreward in that booklet I said "I have no doubt that our sincere use of this prayer cycle will bring spiritual renewal and draw us closer to one another. Use this prayer Cycle Spiritually and see the difference it will make in our ministry and in our human relationships, and in building up our common life in Christ."

6. Hand-over of Schools to Voluntary Agencies:

We are all aware that public schools in our country are no longer what they used to be. The standard of education has fallen and there is no more discipline in the schools. Many Nigerians today who want qualitative education send their children to private schools, not minding the cost.

In many States of Nigeria, some state governors have been making the move to return schools to their original owners. During the Jim Nwobodo administration, St. Cyprian's T.T.C. Nsukka was returned to the Anglican Church while Holy Rosary Enugu was returned to the Roman Catholics in 1984.

St. Cyprian's College later metamorphosed to two schools, St. Cyprian's Girls' Secondary School and St. Cyprian's Special Science School. The Two Schools have been doing well especially the Special Science which is from SSI to SS3 only.

Sometime last year there was a threat to dismiss about 28 Principals in Enugu State as result of an alleged financial mismanagement. Our school was affected i.e. Special Science School.

I immediately sought for an audience with the Milad then, Navy Captain James Agbaje which he granted. I went with the Diocesan Registrar Sir Barrister Fide Ngwu and the Diocesan Education Adviser Sir Chief G.A. Ugwuegede.

After our discussion with him in which I pleaded that he should investigate the allegation properly and find out who was responsible for the fraud in these schools, the Bursars or the Principals, I also enumerated the achievements of St. Cyprian's Special Science School and the standard they have set in the state and in the whole nation. He said that it has been in his thought to return some schools to the missions because he has observed the good performance of those already returned. He there and then said that he has returned completely. St. Cyprian's Special Science Nsukka and Holy Rosary Enugu to their original owners.

He then instructed that arrangements be made to meet and consider the modalities for further returns.

On 14th April 1999, nine more schools were returned to the Voluntary Agencies which for the Anglicans included – Girls' Secondary School, Awkunanaw Enugu; Nsukka High School Nsukka, Union Secondary School Awkunanaw, and Girls' Secondary School, Ngwo. The effective take over according to the arrangement being 12th February, 1999.

7. Silver Jubilee of my Ordination and our Wedding:

While we were at Lambeth last year I mentioned to my wife that April 15th this year will be 25 years of our wedding and that I intend we have a quiet Silver Jubilee Celebration. I of course intended that we shall include that of my ordination which was 25 years on 16th December, 1998, having been ordained on 16th December, 1973 and wedded on 15th April, 1974. We did not mention it again till March this year when I reminded her about what I said at Lambeth. She never believed I meant what I said.

However we started thinking about how to get about it and it flickered into the ears of some people who then suggested that I have to select some people to do the planning for me.

I then asked Sir Bosah A.C. Onwurah, Sir Prof: Benjo Igwilo, Sir Chike Ngwu, Lady Elizabeth Mbelu, Lady Nene Onyekwelu and Sir Ken Ejeckam to plan for the event. They immediately swung into action, making contacts to raise fund for the ceremony. The ceremony which was originally scheduled for Saturday 17th April, was shifted to 24th April, 1999 because it coincided with the date scheduled for the 31st Convocation Ceremony of the University of Nigeria Nsukka. Because the ceremony included my ordination, it has to be official and the Diocesan Board was informed about my plan. The Diocesan Board gave its blessing and support and nominated the following Board Members to join those already working on the plan – Sir Barrister Fide Ngwu – Diocesan Registrar, the Ven. E. I. Onah, the Rev. Canon B. C. D. Diara, Mr. Jonathan C. Onuh – Diocesan Accountant, Sir Engr. Dr. Ugo Nwoji and Sir Nathan C. Uchendu. I do not intend to bore you with all the details of the planning, what I want to do is to express my gratitude and that of my entire family for the various ways you contributed towards the success of the ceremony.

I want to thank in a special way the first Committee of six for their initiative and contributions both in their time and financially and Sir Chike Ngwu for hosting their meetings. I also thank some of the members of the Diocesan Board who took it upon themselves to make necessary contacts which yielded good results.

The ceremony came as scheduled on Saturday 24th April, 1999 and there were four Bishops in attendance viz The Rt. Rev. M.S.C. Anikwenwa-Awka, The Rt. Rev. Dr. E.O. Chukwuma – Enugu, The Rt. Rev. Dr. B.C. Okoro – Orlu, The Rt. Rev. Dr. U.U. Ezuoke-Umuahia.

I thank the Knights and Ladies of the Diocese and Knights and Ladies from other Dioceses who were in attendance. I thank everyone of you and pray that God will bless all of you richly Amen.

8. Foundation Stone Laying Ceremonies:

We thank God that since after the Lambeth Conference the following foundation stone laying ceremonies have been performed.

- i. On Saturday, 12th September, 1998 the Foundation Stone of EFAC Hall and Guest House was laid and I thank all those who came to support the project. It is our prayer that the project will soon be completed as it will provide for our Diocese a retreat centre and help in alleviating some of our problems in planning for residential retreats.
- ii. On 5th April, 1999 – Easter Monday, the Foundation Stone Laying Ceremony for St. Luke’s Church, Nsukka was held in a colourful service attended by people from different parts of the Federation, especially Lagos. In that service over ₦ 1 million was raised. We thank the priest incharge the Rev. Canon Engr. Dr. Theophilus C. Madueme and the planning Committee for their effort. We thank all those who responded to the call and donated towards the building of the Church, especially the Okolo family and their in-laws, particularly Barrister Okonkwo from Lagos. When St. Luke’s Church is completed it will become the biggest church in the Nsukka Urban. Work is going on in that church and let us continue to pray for them.
- iii. On Sunday 25th April – St. Mark’s Day, the Foundation Stone of St. Mark’s Church Obukpa was laid. St. Mark’s Church Obukpa has been mentioned as one of the churches where there has been a remarkable progress of work in the last few years.

We also thank those who came to support their work. Our prayer is that very soon we shall be invited to dedicate St. Mark’s Church Obukpa. We also pray that they will soon become a Parish of their own.

9. Inauguration of Uda Parish:

On Saturday 26th June, Uda Parish was inaugurated with headquarters at St. Paul’s Church Uda. This brings to 23 the number of Parishes in the Diocese. We thank the congregation in Uda for the work they are doing. As I mentioned earlier they now have a good Parsonage for their Pastor. I must commend Amufie Parish generally for their evangelistic out-reach which has been yielding good results and I have no doubt that in no distant future that area will become an Archdeaconry.

I must say at this point that I am not at all impressed at our general response to Diocesan matters. Our indifference to things that concern other churches or parishes apart from our own shows that we have not left our old prejudice of living in isolation. No man is an island. We can only grow through inter-action with others. We must look outwards beyond our villages and beyond Nsukka and see what is happening. We can only move forward as all of us move together as a Diocese and not as individual Churches or Parishes. I however thank the Clergy for their presence on that day and for the role they played. I believe that future inaugurations will not be like that one in terms of poor laity attendance.

10. Ordination of Priests and Deacons:

On Sunday 4th July, 1999 the following deacons were ordained Priests:

The Rev. Collins IK Ugwu
The Rev. Daniel Omeje and
The Rev. Christian Ogbu:

While the following ordinands:

Rev. Christian C. Eze
Rev. Timothy Ugwu and
Rev. Ekene Eze

Were made Deacons.

They have since started work in their different stations. Please continue to pray for them, that God will use them mightily in evangelism in their different places of work and in the entire Diocese.

11. Inauguration of Oji – River Diocese:

On Monday 12th July, 1999, the Primate and Metropolitan His Grace The Most Rev. Joseph Abiodun Adetiloye assisted by about 20 Bishops inaugurated the Diocese of Oji-River. On the same day the Rt. Rev. Amos Madu was enthroned as the first Bishop of the Diocese at St. Paul's Pro-Cathedral Oji-River. With the inauguration of Oji-River Diocese we now have three Dioceses carved out of the original Enugu Diocese. Let us continue to pray for this Young Diocese which is our younger sister.

12. The Diocese of Benin:

The problem of Benin Diocese took a different turn on Monday 18th January '99 when the Ven. Michael E. Igbinosa was proclaimed the "Bishop of Benin", in contravention of the constitution of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion).

At the Standing Committee in Onitsha March 16th – 19th, 1999; the Church of Nigeria in reaction to the development passed the following resolution:-

1. (i) That the proclamation and presentation of Michael Efe Igbinosa as "Bishop of Benin" be regarded and treated as null and void and of no effect.
- (ii) That the suspension of Michael Efe Igbinosa from all priestly and administrative functions within the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) contained in a letter written by the Most Rev. Dr. Abiodun Adetiloye, the Primate, Archbishop and Metropolitan of the Church of Nigeria and dated January 22nd 1999 be confirmed and is hereby confirmed.
- (iii) That the disciplinary measures pursuant to the constitution of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) be taken against the said Michael Efe Igbinosa and any other Priests within the Diocese of Benin suspected to be loyal and or disobedient to the Church of Nigeria and her Constitution.
- (iv) That appropriate disciplinary action be taken against any member of the laity within the Diocese of Benin whose actions have led to the breach of the Constitution of the Church of Nigeria in relation to the proclamation and presentation of Michael Efe igbinosa as Bishop of Benin.
- (v) That every appropriate legal action be taken by the Church of Nigeria and any officers of the church authorized in writing by the Primate or General Secretary of the Church to assert the authority of the Church, and to protect the integrity and unity of the Church, and to protect the interest and properties of the Church.
- (vi) That members of the Laity of the Diocese of Benin (Anglican Communion) who are aggrieved by the said proclamation and presentation of Michael Efe Igbinosa are

hereby permitted at their own expense and without prejudice to the rights of the Church and her officers, to protect their rights in a court of Law.

Other Communique Passed during the Standing Committee include:-

2. The Polity:

The Standing Committee of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) hereby urges the political class of Nigeria to endeavour to the best of their ability to ensure that the transition to democratic rule becomes a reality on 29th May '99. Nothing should be allowed to lead to a deferment of this transition date which should be regarded as sacrosanct as the people of Nigeria are fed up with undemocratic rule.

We urge election Tribunal to observe strictly their oaths of office by adjudicating all matters before them without fear or favour, affection or ill – will. Similarly, we urge all parties to election disputes to seek fair settlements where possible or accept in good faith final decisions of election Tribunals, in order that this great Nation may move on to greater heights.

1. Lambeth Conference:

The Standing Committee received with thanks a report on the Lambeth Conference of 1998. We applaud the contribution made by our Nigerian Bishops during the Conference. Mostly do we approve the heroic stand of our Bishops against homo-sexuality and lesbianism. We consider these deviant behaviours as totally unacceptable and incompatible with Holy Scriptures. We urge not only Churches of the Anglican Communion but also all Christian Churches and other religious organizations not to recognize or celebrate same gender marriages but to continue to preach vigorously that homo-sexuality and lesbianism are sinful.

2. Prayer for Nigeria:

We pray that the Transition Programme may end successfully.

We pray that corruption which continues to be a canker – worm in Nigeria be eradicated from our body politic. Corruption continues to erode the confidence of foreign investors and to scare them away from Nigeria.

Mothers' Union Executive Committee Communique:

At the end of the Mothers' Union Executive of Church of Nigeria held at All Saints' Cathedral Onitsha, Diocese on the Niger, from 16th – 20th March, 1999 and chaired by Mrs. B.O. Onyemelukwe, the following communiqué was issued.

1. Mothers' Union enjoins Christian women to pray fervently for our country Nigeria for God Almighty to fulfill his good plans for us and for his presence to be felt always in our country.
2. The Home is the Yard-stick by which the Church or Society is assessed. We call on mothers to take the challenge of bringing up their children in the Christian faith in a way that they will influence the society positively.
3. We call on all Nigerians in general and Christians in particular, to ensure truthfulness and transparency in their diverse ways of living.
4. We enjoin everyone to abhor corruption in all its ramifications.
5. We call on the incoming leaders of Nigeria come May 29, 1999 to lead by good example for the progress of any country depends on its leadership.
6. As we move into the next millennium, we call on the States and Federal Governments to improve the quality of Education at all levels by:

- a. Providing adequate facilities in Schools.
 - b. Employment of qualified teachers/lecturers.
 - c. Prompt payment and adequate remunerations for those involved in the field of Education.
7. We enjoin the Government to create job opportunities for our youths to curb anti-social activities.
 8. As we look forward to the next millennium, we call on the Church to pursue a more aggressive evangelism for the proclamation of the Gospel.
 9. We call on the Church to continue in its struggle to liberate widows from inhuman treatment meted to them and to create avenues of improving their welfare generally.
 10. (a). We enjoin the government to create avenues that will promote longevity by providing adequate schemes for the elderly.
(b). We call on the Dioceses to launch the Year of the Elderly this year as declared by the United Nation.
 11. The Mothers' Union congratulates the Primate and the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) on the 20th Anniversary of its existence as a Province.

Signed:

Barrister Lady Ogugua Ikpeze	-	Diocese on the Niger
Mrs. R.O. Omoniyi	-	Akoko Diocese
Mrs. R.O. Akinbile	-	Oke-osun Diocese
Mrs. Mabel Agbaje	-	Diocese of sabongidda-Ora
Mrs. Roseline U. Ilonuba	-	Diocese of Nsukka
Dr. (Mrs.) M.O. Bolaji	-	Diocese of Yewa.

12. Retirements:

We thank God for the life and ministry of the following Bishops who have retired after attaining the age of 70 years.

- i. The Rt. Rev. S.C.N. Eboh – Diocese of Orlu retired at the end of 1998.
- ii. The Rt. Rev. Jacob O.K. Olowokure – Diocese of Akoko retired in September, 1999.
- iii. The Rt. Rev. W.G. Ekprikpo-Diocese of Calabar retired in July, 1999.
- iv. The Rt. Rev. Abraham O Awosan – Diocese of Oke – Osun is due to Retire by the end of October.
- v. The Primate, His Grace The Most Rev. Dr. J. A. Adetiloye will be retiring on the 25th December, 1999.

Please continue to pray for them in their retirements that God will gibe them good health and grant them more years of sojourn here on earth.

13. Obituary:

Within this year we lost one of our Bishops: The Rt. Rev. Dr. Cyril C. Anyanwu-Bishop of Mbaise. Cyril was once a chaplain at Christ Church Chapel, U.N.N. He died on 15th February, 1999 in a London Hospital after undergoing surgery. The Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) undertook to pay his Hospital Bill which was almost N 3 Million (Three Million Naira). The Church of Nigeria has advised that each Diocese should arrange for her Bishop to go for check up at least once a year.

- i. Lady Alice Eze, one of the Ladies of the Diocese died early this year and was buried on Friday 19th March, 1999.

- ii. Our Girls' Brigade Leader – Mrs. Ebere Onah died in November last year and was buried on Thursday 19th November, 1999.

May they rest in peace and rise in glory. Amen. Continue to pray for their families.

14. Appointments:

It is my pleasure to announce the following appointments:

- i. The Diocesan Chancellor – Sir Chief Barrister Obiora Nzewi – (KSP)
- ii. Assistant Registrar – Barrister Ify I. Obeta.

The following Clergymen have been appointed Canons of the Cathedral:

- The Rev. Ephraim I. Asogwa
- The Rev. George U. Nnamani
- The Rev. Engr. Dr. Theophilus C. Madueme
- The Rev. Godwin A. Ugorji.

They will be collated on Sunday 12th December, 1999 at St. Paul's Cathedral.

15. The State of the Nation:

On Saturday 29th May this year the army handed over the government of the nation to a democratically elected body under General Olusegun Obasanjo.

The smooth transition to civil rule was a prayer answered by God and he has once more given Nigeria a new dawn and a new hope to build a nation of our dream. It is our firm belief that God has prepared Obasanjo for this period in our national life. He wrote while in prison.: “My trials, unearned and unjust suffering did many positive things in my life for which I will be eternally grateful to God. The dulled razor-edge of my faith was sharpened. Spiritually I became re-invigorated and re-energized. If one opens ones' heart to God there is illumination in the darkness of the prison, there is comfort in its hardship, there is warmth in its chill, there is hope in its despair, there is power in its isolation and apparent weakness, there is company and companionship in its loneliness and there is salvation in its condemnation. To be called is to be chosen and the voice of God can be heard even in prison. We can gain something permanent out of something temporary and transient, it was to save life.” (The Animal Called Man. Page 382). This must have informed his inaugural address on 29th May, 1999 which can be described as a “riot – act” and judging from that address it was a step in the right direction. You will agree with me that his programmes so far are characterized by moves made by someone determined to salvage a nation that was heading for destruction. We must therefore as individuals, groups and states resolve to give him and his administration the needed support, to build the kind of country we have been dreaming of these past thirty – nine years.

As Anglicans we have a responsibility to support the new leaders by continuing to pray for them that God's will may be done in the Governments and the Legislative Houses of this land.

Our prayer is that Nigerian leaders both at Federal, State and Local Government levels will be men and women of honesty and truth, people with the ability and vision to bring about the much needed changes in all spheres of our life.

Change in our image in international relations, change in our battered economy, change in our educational system which has been marred by indiscipline, cultism, truancy, Expo, exploitation on the part of some unscrupulous lecturers and gangsterism by students who are not being university materials gain entrance through dubious means and money power. Change in our communication systems both road and telecommunication, change in the supply of basic amenities, water and electricity.

We need leaders who will give us a new sense of dignity and build a nation where we can see ourselves as brothers and sisters. A nation where one can live in any part of the country and do his business without fear of discrimination either on ethnic or religious grounds. Let us give to the government the needed support by playing our roles in the much needed re-construction of our beloved nation.

Let us pray for Enugu State that the government and the governed will live in harmonious relationship. That all the power tussle, bitterness and rancor that characterized past administrations will be a thing of the past. Let the government be concerned about the plight of teachers and pensioners who have suffered unduly under past administrations; that their salaries will be paid as and when due. It is also our prayer that contract award will be executed with all sincerity and truth and contracts awarded to worthy and deserving contractors. Our past experience where a particular project was known to have been awarded to several contractors and yet without completion is a sad commentary and shows an irresponsible people and an irresponsible government. Reference must be made to Opi – Nsukka Road which paints a very ugly picture of the University town and that of the state government.

16. Bishop's Car:

During the first week of August this year the president of the Knights of St. Paul – Sir Dr. A. E. Onwurah and two other Knights informed me that the Knights and Ladies of the Diocese will come to see us on Saturday 28th August at 12.00 noon. On that day the Knights and their ladies surprised us by presenting a brand new Mercedes Car to the Bishop for his pastoral duties both within and outside the Diocese. In his address during the presentation of the Car the President said; “We agreed that our first project in this order is to make sure that you have a befitting car to enhance your status and to make you comfortable in your numerous trips within the Diocese, the Province and beyond.” I want to use this opportunity to express our immense gratitude to the entire Council of Knights in particular and to the Diocese in general for this wonderful gesture.

We all know that Bishops travel a lot within the entire Province of Nigeria and that is why they need strong cars that are durable to enable them meet as much as possible all their responsibilities in the discharge of their pastoral work.

As I appealed to the Knights that day I want now to appeal to all Archdeaconries, Parishes and Churches through the Synod delegates here who represent them. Our clergymen ought to be mobile to enhance their productivity in their places of work. Any clergyman who has no motor – cycle or car is a cripple and you cannot blame him for not covering the ground he is expected to cover.

We thank God that some churches and communities have responded to this challenge. My plea is that you will also help in seeing that where pastors have these vehicles they should be maintained. I want to advise that when people want to buy these vehicles they must buy vehicles that are road – worthy not junks that will just consume your money and yet render no service.

Thank you and God bless.

17. TAP (Train a Priest)

For an effective evangelistic outreach we need well – trained and qualified clergymen. We thank God that a good number of the priests that were trained since our Diocese started have not disappointed us. Their zeal, commitment and spiritual life have manifested in their different places of work. I thank some of you who responded to our appeal to train a priest. The duration of some of these pledges have expired and those concerned have stopped.

We are making fresh appeal for any person or group of persons who may like to take up the challenge. The cost of training a priest now is between N 22,000.00k – N 25,000.00k per year. We shall be very delighted to receive indications to take up the challenge.

18. The Synod Theme: “A Church for all People”

The word “**Church**” embraces a variety of concepts. Most people hearing the word ‘**Church**’ at once think of a building – St. Paul’s Church, St. Luke’s Church. If we accept the church to be that then it means that the New Testament Christians never went to Church at all. Apart from the synagogues and the temple which were used by Christians before the rift came from Judaism, no buildings were set aside solely for the purpose of worship until the 4th Century AD. Today we have the proliferation of church buildings in many parts of the world and more and more are springing up everyday. This made a writer to comment – “While God waits for his temple to be built of love, men bring stones”

Another school of thought may think of the church in terms of denomination, Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian, Roman Catholic, Baptist etc.

Others speak of the church as the ordained ministry. John is studying theology; he is going into the church. According to this interpretation the church is seen very much like practicing law, or teaching: it is the domain of paid professionals. It is the vicar who preaches, visits, counsels, organizes and evangelizes. He is trained and paid to do it, while the faithful are expected primarily to occupy the pews. Although they may give a helping hand from time to time they are not required to do more than that, they are not ‘in the church’.

The Meaning of the word ‘Church’:

The English word ‘Church’ like the German ‘Kirche’, stems from the Byzantine Greek form Kurike meaning – ‘belonging to God’.

On the other hand several European languages derive their word for church from the Greek ‘ekklesia’. It is this word ‘ekklesia’ that Jesus used when he spoke of the church. This is found in the highly controversial passage in which Jesus said that he would build his church on this rock as well as in passage about discipline when he said that the sin of an unrepentant brother should be told to the church. Matthew 16:18. “And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hades will not over-come it”. Matthew 18:17 “if he refuses to listen to them tell it to the church, and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax-collector.

In the New Testament the word ‘ekklesia’ is used in four different ways.

- i. It is used of the universal church, the entire company of believers, both living and dead. God has made Christ “the head over all things for the church; it is through the church that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known; as God’s glory is to be ‘in the Church’ Eph. 1: 22, 3:10, 21.
- ii. It is often used of a particular local church, such as the church at Ephesus, Corinth, Thessalonica.

- iii. It can mean the actual assembly of believers in any place as they meet together for worship. 1 Cor. 11:18; 14:19.
- iv. It can be a small house church, the regular meeting place for a small group of believers in any one town or city. Roman 16:5, 1 Cor. 16:19.

We can see from the above definitions that whatever the size, the word ‘**Church**’ always speaks of the coming together of God’s people in answer to his call, in order to meet with God in the company of each other and to meet each other in the presence of God.

The Church therefore is the ‘called out’ people of God. Hence in the New testament we speak about the church of God. The church belongs to God, has come from God and owes every good gift that it enjoys to God. Without the love of God, the salvation of God, the revelation of God and the call of God, there would be no church.

When party spirit or factions crept into the church Paul warned the Corinthian Church in 1 Cor. 1: 11f. “My brothers, some from Chloe’s household have informed me that there are quarrels among you. What I mean is this: One of you says I follow Paul, another, I follow Apollos, still another I follow Christ – Is Christ divided?” If Paul were writing today he will say, “Some of you say I am Evangelical, I am Pentecostal, I am Orthodox, I am Conservative, I belong to A.Y.F., I belong to EFAC, I belong to Men’s Prayer Meeting etc. To know and understand that the church belongs to God and not to any individual or group will challenge us.

As God’s people we are called for relationship with him. This was the basis of the covenants established with Abraham and Moses. Abraham became the friend of God. Christ likewise called his disciples ‘My friends’. As Christians we are called by God into the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Our fellowship with Christ can only be meaningful as we relate to one another in love in our corporate existence. Christians ought to be seen as God’s new society. The root of all sin could be called independence; and that is why God has called us not only into a personal relationship with himself, but at the same time into a corporate relationship with the rest of the people of God. We all need one another, and together we all need the Lord’s grace. And that is what God has promised to his people.

Unfortunately the church of God has not lived up to this expectation. The work of reconciliation accomplished for us in Christ which we are called upon to be agents for achieving that purpose of God in humanity seem to elude us. 2 Cor. 5:17 – 20. “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation: the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ.... And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ’s ambassador, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf. Be reconciled to God.”

We are not reconciled either to God or to our neighbours. We create barriers based on either tribe, place of origin, colour or language and even in the church we create barriers based on which arm of the church one belongs to. We emphasize our groups instead of emphasizing the church of God, S.U., E.F.A.C., A.Y.F. A.S.A.N., A.S.F., Girls’ Guild, Men’s Prayer Meeting; Women’s Guild, M.U., the list is endless. The young ones will not have anything to do with the elders, while the elders see the mode of worship of the young ones as a deviation from the traditional way of worship, as they were used to.

A United Church:

Christ's purpose for his church is that they may be one. In his 'High – priestly Prayer' in John 17 he said, "And now I am coming to you; I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world. Holy Father! Keep them safe by the power of your name, the name you gave me so that they may be one just as you and I are one. I pray that they may all be one. Father! May they be in us, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they be one, so that the world will believe that you sent me." John 17: 11,21,.

The question one may ask is whether the church of God as it meets for worship, fellowship, conference, Synods or other meetings of the church sees itself as one family in Christ? Unfolding events show that the church is still far from what it is expected to be. The church is now divided on ethnic and tribal leanings, indigene and non – indigene syndrome. It has been much politicized that the Holy Spirit relegated to the back – ground in taking decisions related to ecclesiastical matters, including elections whether at the Episcopal or church level. Churches now seek justice from the state court instead of from the sanctuary of God. Is it not sad that a Bishop who was consecrated in 1995 has not been enthroned to work in his Diocese simply because he does not come from that area? Under such a circumstance can we speak of the church as having no Jew nor Gentile? Under the caption – "The ugly faces of Christianity" The Sunday Statesman of September 21, 1986 wrote; There is no doubt that the church is in a turmoil. The wave is high and the putrefying bacteria is skillfully and savagely eroding the root of Christianity. The root is being eaten by crisis and discord. Morality has given way to immorality, sacrilege taking the position of sanity and sagacity. And more, tribalism, nepotism and ethnicity are now devouring the rich marrow of the bones of the Christian churches. The church has become a forum for leadership tussle. It is now a tavern of hate and hatred. The clergy ordained to preach biblical sermons deviated from it and embarks on character assassination and political gospels, currying politician's favours instead of doing God's wish."

As we move into the third millennium we need a church that will demonstrate in its daily relationship one with the other what it means to be a Christ – centred community where every person is accepted, welcomed, loved and restored to wholeness, and encouraged to serve.

We need a church where members will see themselves as brothers and sisters in the true sense of the word; see themselves as sharing a common citizenship. Phil. 3:20. "We however are citizens of heaven, and we eagerly wait for our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ to come from heaven".

We need a church where people realize that they share one faith and one baptism. Eph. 4: 4-5. "There is one body and one spirit – just as you were called to one hope when you were called – one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all."

We need a church that reflects the light of Christ who told us "You are the light of the World" Matthew 5: 14. The church is the only hope the world has to restore the broken relationship between man and his creator, between nation and nation. Peter reminds us in 1 Peter 2:9. "But you are a chosen race, the king's priests, the holy nation, God's own people, chosen to proclaim the wonderful acts of God, who called you out of darkness into his own marvelous light." Our light should therefore so shine before men that they will see our good works and give glory to our Father who is in heaven.

ADMISSIONS AND CONFIRMATION:

DATE	PARISH/CHURCH	CONFIRMATION		G.G	W.G	M.U
		MALE	FEMALE			
27/9/98	St. Thomas' Aku	18	25	-	-	-
04/10/98	St. Stephen's Neke	14	55	4	9	2
11/10/98	St. Peter's Okpuje	28	63	1	3	-
01/11/98	St. Peter's Umuhu	100	128	7	8	2
15/11/98	St. Andrew's Adani	15	20	7	1	-
21/11/98	St. Matthew's Mgbuji	20	57	3	1	-
29/11/98	St. Mary's Mbu	8	45	-	1	1
10/12/98	Emmanuel Church Unadu	46	114	1	4	1
28/02/99	St. John's Edem	29	67	-	6	2
07/03/99	St. Stephen's Ogrute	20	64	8	-	-
11/04/99	St. Peter's Ovoko	45	120	8	7	2
09/05/99	St. Mary's Opi	31	57	7	1	-
14/05/99	St. Mark's Ohodo	15	45	-	-	-
23/05/99	St. John's Onuiyi	19	31	4	3	3
06/06/99	St. Jsmes Orba	21	88	7	-	1
13/06/99	St. Luke's Amufie	56	202	21	10	1
27/06/99	Christ Church Chapel, U.N.N	36	32	3	1	-
18/07/99	St. Andrew's Ibagwa	58	150	9	15	-
25/07/99	St. Paul's Cathedral	60	113	14	19	3
01/08/99	Emmanuel Church Obollo-					
15/08/99	Etit	17	63	10	3	4
29/08/9	St. Thomas' Aka	16	85	1	-	1
05,09,99	St. Stephen's Eha-Alumona	62	91	2	1	1
	St. Philip's Ozalla	29	79	6	1	1
	Total	763	1,794	123	94	25

Within the period in review a total of 2557 members were confirmed, 763 Males and 1794 Females, 123 girls were admitted to Girls' Guild, 94 women to Women's Guild and 25 women to Mothers' Union.

20. Conclusion:

Once more I want to thank God for his sustaining grace which has been with us all these years. I thank the people of Eha-Amufu in general for hosting this year's Synod.

I will not forget to thank all those who have continued to be faithful and dedicated in their commitment to the progress of this Diocese. God will bless all of you in Jesus' name. Amen. Thank you for patient listening and God bless.

+ CHUKWUEMEKA
Bishop of Nsukka.