

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS PRESENTED TO THE SECOND SESSION OF THE EIGHT SYNOD OF THE DIOCESE OF NSUKKA AT THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF ST. PAUL, NSUKKA, CATHEDRAL DEANERY IN NSUKKA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF ENUGU STATE.

ON FRIDAY 28TH OCTOBER, 2016

**BY HIS LORDSHIP,
THE RT. REVD. ALOYSIUS EZE AGBO, *Bishop of Nsukka***

PROTOCOL

The Archbishop of the Ecclesiastical Province of Enugu, and Bishop of Enugu, Your Grace,
The Most Rev'd Dr Emmanuel Olisa Chukwuma *oON*,
The Executive Governor of Enugu State, Your Excellency, Rt. Hon. Lawrence Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi (Gburugburu),
My Lord Bishops,
The President of the Women's Ministries, Diocese of Nsukka, Mrs. Ifeoma A. Agbo *Mama Nsukka* (JP),
The Chancellor of our Diocese, Sir Hon. Justice FIN Ngwu,
The Registrar, Sir Barr Onyinyechi E. Ugwulor,
Other Legal Luminaries here present,
The Senator of Enugu North Senatorial Zone, Senator Chukwuka Utazi,
The Representative of Nsukka/Igbo-Eze South Federal Constituency, Rt. Hon. Sir Dr. Pat. Asadu,
The Representative of Udenu/Igbo-Eze North Federal Constituency, Rt. Hon. Sir Dennis Agbo,
The Member representing Nsukka West in the Enugu State House of Assembly, Hon. Dame Nkechi Omeje Ogbu,
The Vice Presidents of the Synod,
Respected Members of the Clergy,
All the Traditional Rulers here present,
The Gallant Knights and Ladies of St. Paul,
My Wonderful Nominees,
Distinguished Synod Delegates,
All the invited Guests,
Gentlemen and Ladies of the Press,
Ladies & Gentlemen,

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

OUR GRATEFULNESS

In the congregation of the righteous, we see an opportunity to appreciate the immense goodness of God to Aloysius and his family, our Clergymen and their families, the laity and their families, all our Churches, Parishes, Archdeaconries, and our lovely and revered Diocese. We have seen the fulfillment of God's Promise of New Thing and we see the continuity of the New Thing in greater light. Thus we say, in the words of the Psalmist in Psalm 111:1-3

Praise the LORD!

I will thank the LORD with all my heart

As I meet with his godly people

How amazing are the deeds of the LORD!

*All who delight in him should ponder them.
Everything he does reveals his glory and majesty.
His righteousness never fails.*

Brethren, your presence in this year's Synod gladdens our heart so much that we lack words to express it. With this joyful heart, we welcome you to the seat of the Diocese, the Cathedral Church of St. Paul, Nsukka. This is the first Synod to be held in this new Cathedral. May God bless you for coming in Jesus name! Amen.

My beloved, your love, care and support to our ministry are without guile. Your zeal for the Lord's house is worthy of commendation. These godly attitudes are the secrets of our success as a Diocese. We therefore appreciate you all and pray God's blessings on every one of you.

We acknowledge you as the greatest "Gift of God" to our greatly loved Diocese. We had wished to mention you all by name in this Address, but for want of space and time, we could not. However, we acknowledge specially the Pioneer Bishop of the Diocese and wife, Rt. Rev. Dr. Jonah C. Ilonuba (JP) and Mrs. Roseline U. Ilonuba (Nnediugwu), the Chancellor of the Diocese, Sir Hon. Justice F.I.N. Ngwu, the Deputy Chancellor, Lady Prof. Ifeoma Enemuo, the Registrar, Sir Bar. E. O. Ugwulor, the Deputy Registrar I, Barr. Mrs. Amaka Ukwueze, the Deputy Registrar II, Bar. Chinedu Ogbonna, the Legal Secretary, Sir Barr. Nnaemeka Ogbonna and the Deputy Legal Secretary, Barr. Oliver Onyechi. My Vice Presidents- the Archdeacons;

1. Ven. Emmanuel I. Onah
2. Ven. Andrew N. C. Ogbochie
3. Ven. Dr. Ab. C. Okorie
4. Ven. George U. Nnamani
5. Ven. Ephraim Ik. Asogwa
6. Ven. Chuma S. Anioke
7. Ven. Engr. Prof. Theophilus C. Madueme
8. Ven. Daniel Omeje
9. Ven. George C. Asadu
10. Ven. Steve Dimelu
11. Ven. Chijioke Onyechi
12. Ven. Christian C. Eze
13. Ven. Clifford Micheal Ugwuanyi
14. Ven. Theophilus Ugwuishiwu
15. Ven. Chinedu Geoffrey Onah
16. Ven. Jonathan C. Urama
17. Ven. Godson Ekpunobi
18. Ven. Eric E. Ugwu
19. Ven. Dr. Collins Ik Ugwu
20. Ven. Samuel O. Obeta
21. Ven. Godwin Emeka Eze
22. Ven. Pharm. Dr. Emeka Samson Ezea
23. Ven. Nnamdi Ugochukwu Ijeudo
24. Ven. Rex Ukonu;

and their amiable wives who are here with us, all the Clergy and their wives, the Lay Pastors and their wives, the gallant Knights of St. Paul led by Dame Dr. Sally Adukwu, the Diocesan Officials, my nominees, chairmen and members of different Boards and Committees, the secretariat staff, my personal staff, Directors, Chaplains of organizations and the

Bishop's Court family. We cannot quantify your selfless contributions to the growth and expansion of our ministry and the Diocese. May God reward your labour of love!

It is worth doing to appreciate the ingenuity of the Diocesan Synod Planning Committee led by Sir Dr. Emenike A. Onwurah, Ven. Chinedu G. and Mrs. Gladys Onah, the Archdeacon of Cathedral Deanery and wife, all the Clergy and Lay pastors with their wives and the Local Organizing Committee, ably led by Sir Engr. Dozie Eze. We see the fruitfulness of their labour in this Synod. You will not miss your reward in Jesus name. Amen.

This appreciation will be incomplete without mentioning my humble, quiet, resourceful, lovely, amiable and caring friend, sister, mother, confidant and wife, Mrs. Ifeoma A. Agbo, JP (Mama Nsukka) who is a costly gift to my life and ministry. My twin soul, God will continue to bless you for me and preserve you for the Diocese. Remain blessed.

FELICITATIONS

We crave your indulgence to be brief here. We felicitate among others with:

Those who got Appointments/Promotions

1. Dame Dr. Sally Adukwu, *Member 2, Enugu State Universal Basic Education Board (ESBEB).*
2. Hon. Justice H. O. Eya, *as a High Court Judge*
3. Prof. Ejike Ozioko,
4. Prof. Daniel Ugwu, *for their Professorial attainment.*
5. Prof. Emmanuel Ibezim, *who ended his tenure as the Dean of the Faculty of Pharmacy with the Best Dean Award, in University of Nigeria Nsukka.*
6. Prof. Mrs. Stella Ifeoma Madueme, *for emerging the most innovative HOD in the University of Nigeria Nsukka.*
7. My brother, Hon. Augustine Nnamani, *for emerging the Enugu State Chairman of PDP.*

We congratulate the Vice Chancellor of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN), Sir Prof. Benjamin C. Ozumba for taking UNN that was regarded as dysfunctional in 2014 to 1st in Nigeria, 14th in Africa and 1389th best university in the world, by the Webometrics University ranking.

We praise God for the gift and blessings of new babies to us via several families, both clergy and lay. We also appreciate Him for weddings and other blessings on every one of us. May his name be praised! Amen.

OUR SORROWS

We commiserate with those who lost their dear ones within the year under review. We pray that God will give them the fortitude to bear the loss. Some of these dear ones that have been called to glory include:

- ✓ Rt. Rev. Owen Azubuikwe, *Bishop of Isiala Ngwa Diocese*
- ✓ Ven. Ernest E. Odo
- ✓ Rev. Canon Prof. N. N. Osadebe
- ✓ Rev. Oku, a priest of Eha-Amufu Diocese.
- ✓ Mr. Elias Ogbuede Olinya, brother to Rt. Rev Daniel Olinya.
- ✓ Late Mama Janet Elobelu Madu, mother of Most Rev. A. A. Madu
- ✓ Agnes Okike Ugwuishiwu, mother of Ven. Theophilus Ugwuishiwu.
- ✓ Ezimama Mrs Felicia Ogbuabor Mbah, mother of Rev. Can. Prof. Benjamin Mba
- ✓ Late Mrs Catherine Nzute Eze, mother of Rev. Stanley Eze.
- ✓ Sir Ephraim U. Iloefe, the first Accountant of the Diocese.

- ✓ Sir. Dr. Emeka Enejere, chairman of the Cathedral building committee till his death.
- ✓ Miss Juliana Nkechi Ugwoke, a staff at the Diocesan Secretariat.
- ✓ Ezinne Nwogo, mother-in-law of Sir Hon. Justice FIN Ngwu
- ✓ Royal Mother Bernice Ogugua Ikeoha
- ✓ Chief Sir Steve Okeke Okwor
- ✓ Madam Chikodili Winifred Onyedika, mother-in-law of Sir Hon Justice Anigbogu
- ✓ Mrs. Adeline Nwadi Okoye-Agulu.
- ✓ Ezinne Salome Enuteaku Udedibor
- ✓ Mrs. Julianah Chinelo Onah
- ✓ Mr. Samuel Ezugwu, formal PRO of UNN.
- ✓ Hon. Alex Ike Eze (stone)

We remind all those that are in griever of death the revelation of God that said; *"And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them"* (Rev.14:13).

OUR RESOURCE PERSONS

PREACHER: Rt. Rev. Engr. Sosthenes Ikechukwu Eze (Justice of Peace)

Rt. Rev. Sosthenes Ikechukwu Eze is our main speaker in this Synod. He is our son and well known to us, but for those of us that do not know him; we wish to say few things about this faithful servant of God.

Birth and Parentage:

The Rt. Rev Sosthenes Ikechukwu Eze was born in February 27, 1961 to late Mr. Francis Chukwuma Eze and Mrs. Caroline Makata Eze all of Ovoko, in Enugu State. He is the fourth child from his mother out of seven children.

Education

His primary education, though delayed by the Nigerian Biafran Civil War, started in January 1970 at Central School Ovoko and was completed in Community Primary School, Owerre Obukpa in 1975. His secondary education was started in Igbo-Eze Secondary School Enugu Ezike in 1975 but was completed in Anglican Grammar School, Nsukka in 1980 all in Enugu State. Thereafter, he proceeded to the Federal Polytechnic Idah, Kogi State where he obtained National Diploma in Electrical Engineering in 1982. From there he attended the then Anambra State University of Science and Technology Enugu now Enugu State University of Science and Technology, Enugu, where he obtained a Bachelor of Engineering degree in Electrical/Electronic Engineering in 1986. In 1992 he attended Haggai Institute, Singapore South East Asia for Advanced Leadership Course. In 2000 he attended St. Paul's University College, Awka from where he obtained a Diploma in Theology in 2002. He obtained Master's Degree in Divinity from Crowther Graduate Theological Seminary, Abeokuta in 2012 where he is also currently pursuing Doctor of Philosophy Degree. His wife, Mrs. Faith Chukwunyenye Eze, has B.Sc. Degree in Chemistry from University of Lagos. She also has Master's Degree in Divinity from Crowther Graduate Theological Seminary, Abeokuta in 2013 and also currently pursuing Doctor of Philosophy Degree from the same Institution.

Working Experience:

After graduation, he was sent to Cross Rivers State for his National Youth Service Corp programme in 1986 at the Nigerian Ports Authority, Calabar which was completed in 1987.

In 1988 he got employed with Trident Steel Nigeria limited, Port Harcourt as Trainee Maintenance Engineer. He left Trident Steel for Andisen Nigeria Limited, Port Harcourt as Project Engineer in 1989 and in 1990; he joined the Shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria Limited as Contract Project Inspector through the services of Rigom Nigeria Limited, Port Harcourt and Allied Inspection Company Nigeria Limited, Port Harcourt. In 1998 he was absorbed as a Contract Project Engineer with SPDC, Port Harcourt, a position he occupied and rose to Senior Contract Project Engineer until December 2005 when he voluntarily left their services for full time ministry.

Ministry Training:

He came to know the Lord personally in May 1978 through the ministry of Scripture Union at Nsukka High School, Nsukka from where he joined the Christian Union in all the Higher Institutions he attended. He was made Assistant Organizing Secretary of Nigerian Christian Corpers Fellowship, Cross Rivers State Chapter in 1986/1987 service year. In 1989 he was appointed the first Evangelism Coordinator of St. Mathew's Anglican Church, Nkpogu, Trans-Amadi, Port-Harcourt from where he was sent with others to start the new Covenant Anglican Church, Oroabali Parish in 1995 and there he was also appointed Evangelism Coordinator.

In 1993, through a word of prophecy, he was appointed the leader of the Great Anglican Revival Team; alongside eleven others. From 1993 to 1995 he was the Chairman of Niger Delta Diocesan Revival Conference Planning Committee that ran the Diocesan revival Conferences. In 1990 he attended one week course organized by AD 2000 Consultation on World evangelization at Institute of Church and Society, Ibadan. He was the Chairman Haggai Institute Alumni Association, Rivers State Chapter from 2005 to 2007. He is a member of the National Faculty Haggai institute; Nigeria since 2005. These leadership positions have been God's instruments used in shaping him for ministry.

Ordinations

In July 1997, he was made a Deacon and Priested in July 1998 by Late Rt. Rev. S. O. Elenwo. In 2000 he was appointed Administrative Assistant to the Bishop, Diocese of Niger Delta North a position he held till 2002. In July 2002 he was preferred a Canon and November 2002 he was preferred an Archdeacon by Rt. Rev. I. C.O. Kattey (JP) now Archbishop. He was also appointed Diocesan Prayer Chaplain from 2002 to 2004, Diocesan Sunday School Chaplain from 2004 to February 2007. In 2004 he was appointed Spirituality Coordinator for Clergy Association of Diocese of Niger Delta North. In December 2006 he was appointed Diocesan Missioner in charge of Foreign Missions for the Diocese. On March 4, 2007 he was consecrated Pioneer Bishop, Missionary Diocese of Enugu North.

Ministry Projects

By his calling and ministry he has three ministry projects "Daniel Institute for Intercessors" for training intercessors; Pastors Leadership Seminars for training pastors and others in ministry in the art of modern skill of ministry and church growth and Joseph Leadership Seminars for training Top Civil Servants and other public Servants in the area of Leadership and Governance.

Family Life

He is married to Mrs. Faith Chukwunenye Eze (Nee Okorie Mba) a Chemistry graduate from the University of Lagos who is called of God as a teacher and counselor. Some of her Books are "The Righteous shall not make haste, The Avenger, I am Ready to Go, Biblical Approach to Widowhood, and many others. They are blessed with four miracle children after six years

of marriage, three sons and one daughter; Isaac Ikechukwudiebube, Daniel Chukwunenye, Samuel Chukwuemerie and Pearl Adaeze Chukwuekezie.

Dear brother thanks so much for allowing God to use you and thanks for all your support to us in this Diocese. May God reward you!

BIBLE STUDY LEADER: *Ven. Prof. Pic Charles Onwochei*

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

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

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

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

Ven. Pic is taking our Bible Study in this Synod. He is a friend and we appreciate him for accepting to be used of God in this way.

THE HOST ARCHDEACONRY

The Cathedral is the seat of the Bishop, so it is the tradition in some churches, to hold Synod only in the Cathedral. But to us, for evangelical reasons, we move our Synods round the Diocese and to be hosted by Archdeaconries. The Cathedral Deanery hosted their last Synod in 2008. But this Synod is historical, being the first Synod to be held inside this new Cathedral.

We appreciate the entire members of the Cathedral Deanery for whole heartedly accepting the challenge of hosting this Synod. Obviously, they have really labored and prepared for a successful Synod despite the difficulties of our time.

We thank the pastoral staff of the Deanery for providing the necessary leadership – Ven. Chinedu Onah and Mrs. Gladys Onah, Rev. Canon Dr. Ebuka Omeke and Dr. Mrs. Chidinma Omeke, Rev. Chinedu Odo and Mrs. Ogochukwu Odo, Rev. Emmanuel Isiwu and Mrs. Chika Isiwu, Rev. Samuel Onyeidu and Mrs. Blessing Onyeidu, Rev. Christian Orji and Mrs. Ebele Orji, Rev. Sunday Dike and Mrs. Precious Dike, Rev. Barnabas Onyema and Mrs.

Favour Onyema, Rev. Maxwell Odoabuchi and Mrs. Sarah Ukazu, Rev. Joshua Ngwoke and Mrs. Ifeoma Ngwoke and our beloved Lay Pastors – Pst. Eugene Ezema, Pst. Sunday Ossai, Pst. Tobechei Odonu and Pst. Obinna Uzuagu.

The Chairman of the local Organising Committee, Sir Engr. Dozie Eze and your able lieutenants and all those that laboured to ensure a successful Synod, we appreciate you. We pray that God will remember your labour of love and reward you.

The Cathedral Deanery at present is made up of three parishes namely: Cathedral Parish, Church of Transfiguration Parish and Church of Pentecost Parish. Cathedral Parish is presently made up of only St. Paul's Cathedral Church, Nsukka, the Youth Church (Potter's House). Church of Transfiguration Parish consists of four churches namely: Church of Transfiguration, Enugu Road – Nsukka, Christ Church, Ugwuoye – Nsukka, Victory Church, Umuoyo, Nru-Nsukka and St. Peter's Church Iheagu-Nru while Church of Pentecost Parish consists of three churches namely: Church of Pentecost, Barracks-Nsukka, Ebenezer Church, Anglican City, Nsukka and Cornerstone Anglican church Odoru, Nsukka.

I crave your indulgence, to give an abridged version of the history of the churches within the Deanery and give a more detailed account of the Cathedral Church of St. Paul.

Church of Transfiguration Parish

The Church of Transfiguration Parish is made up of the following churches:

S/NO	CHURCH	DATE OF ESTABLISHMENT	WORKERS
1	Church of Transfiguration, Enugu Road, Nsukka	Jan. 4, 2009	Rev. Sunday Dike Pst. Eugene Ezema
2	Christ Church, Ugwuoye	2009	Rev. I. G. Ugwuoke
3	Victory Church, Umuoyo	2011	Pst. Sunday Ossai
4	St. Peter's Iheagu-Nru	2014	Pst. Obinna Uzuagu

Church of Pentecost Parish:

Church of Pentecost Parish is made up of the following churches:

S/NO	CHURCH	DATE OF ESTABLISHMENT	WORKERS
1	Church of Pentecost, Army Barracks, Nsukka	Jan. 4, 2009	Rev. Christian Orji Rev. Joshua Ngwoke
2	Ebenezer Church, Anglican City, Nsukka	2011	Rev. Barnabas Onyema
3	Corner Stone Church, Odoru	2012	Pst. Tobechei Odonu

The History of St. Paul's Cathedral Church, Nsukka

In 1927, Omeje Ugwuanyi Idike, The Eze of Alor-Uno resolved to build an edifice in his domain. He employed the services of some sawyers to get the necessary wood for a storey building. Among the sawyers and workmen were John Enyi and Emmanuel Enyi from Eha-Amufu, who were new converts to Anglicanism and were full of zeal for their new found faith. The Eze took interest in their activities. They observed the Sunday as a day of rest, prayer and worship of God. The Eze then desired to have and support this new religion in his kingdom. After a discussion with the Enyi brothers, a delegation from the Eze of Alor-Uno was sent to Rev. Isaac U. Ejindu, the Pastor in-charge of Ngwo District, requesting him to send a church Teacher to Alor-Uno. They were assured of a church Teacher to be sent within

one year on the condition that the Teacher would be paid by the Eze. He was also required to provide a place for the church and school. On 6th January 1928 (Epiphany) Mr. Joseph Eze from Nachi was sent.

Prior to the arrival of the church Teacher, the group of converts from Alor-Uno moved to Nsukka in 1927 when they heard that Christians were working in various government establishments. Expectedly, the government officials, who were strangers, welcomed the idea of the Anglican Church having a base in Nsukka which was a divisional headquarters in 1928. Mr. J. P. Okeke was sent as the first church Teacher. By this time, Nsukka and its environs were full of idol worship.

Owerre-Ani community gave the temporary site, while Ameze Owerre gave the land for the permanent site of St. Paul's Church, School and Rest House, which is now housing the new Cathedral, the Anglican Grammar school, Central School and old Cathedral and the parsonage. Echara community provided the land for the Women Training Centre (Amanwanyi). This is where we now have our Hospital, Faith Foundation Mission Hospital Nsukka. These land owners played a vital role in the establishment of the church and the attendant development that went with it. The church used the colonial officers to reach the warrant chiefs and traditional title holders who could influence their communities. Among the leaders of thought reached were Ozioko Ugwokeja Nwangwu and Ozioko Ugwoke Ugwu Nwangwu. This contact was later consummated through the effort of Mr. Mathew Ani Ngwu, the father of our Chancellor, Hon. Justice F. I. N. Ngwu, who lived near the government quarters.

Pioneers of Faith

Rev. Andrew N. Asiekwu from Asaba was the first resident Priest in Nsukka in 1930. He was noted for his vibrant campaign against idolatrous life and zeal in planting new churches. He also followed the missionary policy of establishing churches that would be self-supporting, self-propagating and self-governing. He was assisted by the Catechist, Mr. J. W. U. Jackson. After Rev. Asiekwu came other Priests as follows:

- Rev. C. O. Meme (1938)
- Rev. Bernard (1939 -1944)
- Rev. Eleazer I. Ene (1945 – 1950)
- Rev. Williet (1950 – 1956)
- Rev. H. O. Nwigwe (1956 – 1960)
- Rev. N. Emeligo (1960 – 1964)
- Rev. D. N. Ezirim (1965 – 1967)
- Ven. S. A. Eze (1970 – 1974)
- Ven. H. O. Ude (1974)
- Rev. D. M. C. Umeh (1974)
- Ven. S. O. Ugwuanyi (1975 – 1994)
- Ven. C. N. Ozoko (1975 – 1976)
- Rev. L. O. Akunna (1977 – 1979)
- Rev. A. Nwokedi (1979)
- Rev. A. Abba (1980)
- Rev. E. E. Odo (1980)
- Rev. B. O. Nnaji (1986)
- Rev. W. Nwankwo (1987)
- Rev. E. Ejike (1987)
- Rev. E. C. Odezue (1989)

- Rev. O. Agbogu ()
- Rev. A. Ajaero ()
- Rev. E. O. Chinwuko (1995)
- Rev. Obi Nwanne Chukwu (1992)
- Rev. T. Chigbo (1993)
- Rev. F. Nwani (1993)
- Rev. E. I. Asogwa (1994)
- Rev. A. N. C. Ogbochie, (1994)
- Rev. Canon D. O. Ogbonna 1994,
- Rev. Canon L. I. Eze (1995)
- Rev. S. A. Ugwu (1995)
- Rev. Canon B. C. D. Diara (1996)
- Rev. Engr. Dr. T. C. Madueme (1996)
- Rev. E. E. Ugwu (1996)
- Rev. C. A. Onyechi (1996)
- Rev. Canon G. U. Uvuka (1997)
- Rev. Canon Dr. N. S. Nwigwe (1997)
- Rev. M. O. Nwobodo (1998)
- Rev. Canon (now Ven.) A. N. C. Ogbochie (1999)
- Rev. I. I. Amaliri (1999)
- Rev. G. U. Nnamani (1999)
- Rev. Engr. P. C. Okoye (2002)
- Rev. A. E. Agbo (July 2000- Dec. 2004)
- Rev. J. N. Chukwuma (2001-2004)
- Rev. Kenneth Ugodu (2001)
- Rev. U. P. Ofoezie (2002)
- Rev. C. I. Ezeja (2003)
- Ven. G. U. Nnamani (2004)
- Rev. V. I. C. Akunna (2004)
- Rev. W. S. Okoye (2004)
- Rev. L. U. Ugwuanyi (2005)
- Rev. J. O. Oga (2005)
- Rev. K. A. Onah (2007)
- Ven. E. I. Asogwa (January 2008)
- Rev. M. Nnamuonu (Jan. to August 2008)
- Ven. Engr. Prof. T. C. Madueme (Aug.2008)
- Ven. J. C. Onah (2008)
- Rev. Canon Chinedu Onah (2008)
- Rev. T. O. Ugwuishiwu (2008)
- Rev. L. C. Ukwueze (August 2008)
- Rev. G. Ekene. Eze (2012)
- Rev. Dr. E. M. Omeke (2008)
- Rev. E. S. Ezea (December 2008)
- Rev. Goddy Eze (December 2008)
- Rev. J. C. Ugwuoke (2010)
- Rev. I. C. Okoh (2010)
- Rev. S. O. Obeta (2011)
- Rev D. M. Abah (2011)

In 2013 Ven. Chinedu Onah took over from Ven. Prof. Madueme as the Archdeacon of the Cathedral. Other priests that served with him include:

- Rev. Canon Ekene Eze (July 2012 – July 2013)
- Rev. Canon K.S.E. Obeta (July 2013 – Jan. 2015)
- Rev. Chukwukadibia Eze (July 2012)
- Rev. Canon Chris Obileke (Jan. 2015)
- Rev. Christian Ajibo (July 2013 – July 2014)
- Rev. Dr. Okey Agbo (July 2014)
- Rev. Caleb Ugwuobute (2014)
- Ven. Rex Ukonu (January – July, 2016).

It is noteworthy that many catechists and church Teachers have worked in this church. The present workers include:

- Ven. Chinedu Onah,
- Rev. Canon Dr. Ebuka Omeke,
- Rev. Emma Isiwu,
- Rev. Chinedu Odo and
- Rev. Samuel Onyeidu.

The church has produced many prominent sons and daughters in various fields of endeavour. They include:

- ❖ Late Ven. Samuel A. Eze- the first Anglican Priest in Nsukka zone.
- ❖ Late Mr. Jonathan Ngwu – a long time member of PCC
- ❖ Sir and Lady A. C. Ezema,
- ❖ Late Sir Chike J. Ngwu-an Educationist,
- ❖ Sir Hon. Justice F. I. N. Ngwu, the Chancellor of the Diocese,
- ❖ Sir Arc. C. S. Eze and
- ❖ Prof. Ngozi Nnam (Adaoma),
- ❖ Sir Dr. C. O. B. Eze, formal Medical Director, National Orthopedic Hospital, Enugu,
- ❖ Sir. Engr. Dozie Eze, present manager, Enugu State Water Cooperation,
- ❖ Barr. Chukwuemeka Chukwudi, Registrar Kubwa Diocese just to mention but a few.

In addition, so many great men and women have worshipped and been nurtured, and become great instrument in the development of this Church. It will take a book of great volume to inscribe them. But we need to mention just a few:

- ✓ Mr. Gabriel and Mrs. Bernice Esmal
- ✓ Mrs. Erinne
- ✓ Sir Samson Ogbunamiri
- ✓ Sir Nathan C. Uchendu
- ✓ Ichie Okenwa
- ✓ Mrs. Ngozi Esther Ezeonu
- ✓ Late Madam Victoria Onwuteaka – One time PCC Secretary
- ✓ Mr. Daniel Abada
- ✓ Mr. Ilukwe
- ✓ H.O. Jim Wariko – One time PCC Secretary
- ✓ Dennis Alozie
- ✓ M.U. Eluwa – Children teacher
- ✓ Mr. Gabriel Udensi – One time PCC Secretary, Lay-Reader and Choir Master
- ✓ Mr. G. N. Okeke
- ✓ B. O. Echeta

- ✓ J. N. Obidiegwu – Pastor's Warden
- ✓ Mr. Emmanuel Odo – Choir Master
- ✓ Felix Okoli
- ✓ John Nwachukwu
- ✓ Reuben Onyeka – Lay-Reader and father of Dr. Mrs. Mabel Dimelu
- ✓ Mrs. Benneth Okeke
- ✓ O. J. Edeoga
- ✓ Samuel Eze
- ✓ Mr. Reuben Mogor
- ✓ Mr. A. E. Mgbemena (later Venerable)
- ✓ Mr. Vincent Ozor
- ✓ Mrs. Obiekwe (Osisi-Iwu)
- ✓ Sir Ephraim Iloefe
- ✓ Late Mr. Eweh
- ✓ Rt. Rev. Prof. Nkwoka
- ✓ Sir Beniah Nwosu – Pioneer AYP Leader 1962 and his wife, Late Lady Margaret Nwuso, the Cathedral Organist for years.
- ✓ Sir Luke Nwobodo
- ✓ Late Sir Andrew Okide
- ✓ Late Sir Foster Onyemaechi
- ✓ Sir Walter Atufunwa
- ✓ Sir Reuben Nnamani
- ✓ Sir Dan Nweke Ogbodo
- ✓ Lady Njideka Okolo
- ✓ Late Sir Nnanna Ukegbu
- ✓ Lady Fortune Anyanwu
- ✓ Lady Maria Nwangwu
- ✓ Late Mr. Omali
- ✓ Sir Simeon and Lady Promise Okonkwo
- ✓ Mrs. Nnakwuzie
- ✓ Osisikankwu
- ✓ Sir and Lady Edwin Ugwu
- ✓ Mr. and Mrs. Micheal Nwambaekwe
- ✓ Dame Esther Ilukwe

The Shared Faith

St. Paul's Church Nsukka became the centre of evangelistic outreaches to various areas for church planting. For instance; through Rev. Asioku churches were planted at Edem-Ani, Ibagwa-Aka, Ovoko, Amufie, Obukpa, etc between 1930 and 1940, and in 1942 an extension of St. Paul's Church at Isiakpu became the offshoot of St. Luke's church Nsukka through the ministry of Late Ven. S. A. Eze and others, among whom is Sir A. C. Ezema who is still alive today. In 1976 Ven. C. N. Ozoko defied all odds to plant a new church at Onuiyi. Today that church is the present St. John's church Onuiyi, Nsukka which is the headquarters of Nsukka Archdeaconry. In 1994, St. Andrew's church, Orba Road was planted and Rev. Obiora Agbogu (now Venerable) was given the oversight of the baby church. Since then, efforts of the Cathedral EFAC have been giving birth to new churches at Agbani, Ede-Oballa, Nguru and Akpugo-Ezedike.

In 1994 when the Diocese of Nsukka (Anglican Communion) was inaugurated, St. Paul's Cathedral Church, Nsukka became the seat of its first Bishop, the Rt. Rev. Dr. J. C. Ilonuba

(JP) and hence assumed the Cathedral status. Bishop Ikonuba's ministry laid a solid foundation both for the Cathedral and the Diocese. Under his tutelage, the Cathedral grew structurally and spiritually through the instrumentality of his wisdom in teaching and godly character. By the grace of God we succeeded him as the second Bishop of the Diocese of Nsukka in 2008. After assuming office of Bishop of Nsukka, we were led to announce during a service at the Cathedral that the congregation will be divided into three to take care of the overpopulation experienced during Sunday Services. We then said that two new churches would be carved out of St. Paul's cathedral. One was to be sited along Enugu Road while the other was to be sited at Army Barracks. We gave the date for the take-off of the new churches to be on Sunday 4th January 2009. We also informed the congregation that Rev. G. E. Eze (now Venerable) would be the Priest in-charge of the Anglican Church at Enugu Road, Nsukka while Rev. E. S. Ezea (now Venerable) would be in-charge of the Anglican Church, Army Barracks, Nsukka. The Archdeacon of the Cathedral, Ven. Prof. Theo Madueme quickly mobilized the congregation to see that the Bishops directives were carried out. With the departure of Zone 4 at that time to be members of the Enugu Road church and Zone 2 to Army Barracks church, the Cathedral population fell down to about 50% of its previous number leaving only Zones 1 and 3.

Again, during the 2011 ordination at St. Paul's Cathedral church, Nsukka, we were led to publicly declare that a youth church be carved out of St. Paul's Cathedral Church, Nsukka. The new Youth Chapel was inaugurated on 2nd October 2011 with the Rev. Dr. E. M. Omeke (now Canon) and Rev. I. C. Okoh as the Chapel Priests.

Infrastructural Developments

St. Paul's Cathedral Church Nsukka has come a long way in the area of infrastructural development. The small and modest church building in the 1930s was later pulled down and the old Cathedral building erected in the 1970s. The parsonage consisting of four modern flats for Priests was started in 1998 completed in 2009. The AYF hall which was started in 1994 by the Anglican Youth Fellowship members was completed 2012 to host the 2012 Diocesan Women's Conference. The posting of Ven. Prof. T. C. Madueme as the Cathedral Archdeacon led to the building of a Deanery house (the Archdeacon's lodge). The building was dedicated by us on 10th August 2011.

The New Cathedral Building

This New Cathedral building was started on 2nd February 2009 as a Diocesan project. We thank God that by the zeal and doggedness of all of us, the Cathedral Building has come to the stage it is today. The members of St. Paul's Cathedral moved into this building on 25th May, 2014 after the 20th Anniversary Celebration of the Diocese.

The Lady Chapel of this Cathedral is almost completed by the effort of the members of the Cathedral Church. We thank God for His mercies.

EVENTS IN THE DIOCESE

January Fasting and Prayer

This spiritual exercise has come to stay. We have continued to witness increased involvement of churches, organizations and individuals. What is more interesting is the right heart we have for it. This year's own was soul refreshing and life transforming. We expect greater participation and impact come January 2017.

Admission and Induction

On the 14th February, 2016, a Diocesan service was held at the Cathedral Church of St. Paul, Nsukka in which the Honourable Chancellor of our Diocese was admitted and other legal officers were inducted. Also in that service, the President of the Council of KNIGHTS - Dame Dr. Sally Adukwu was presented and the new Executive inaugurated. A vibrant and effective Laity remains the driving force for Church growth. We thank God for the gift of these great men and women in our Diocese. Their sacrifices and services are unquantifiable. We pray God to continue to bless their endeavours.

Sonship Manifestation Youth Conference (SOMAYCO)

As a major fulfillment of the promise of doing a new thing, that God made in our last Synod, He gave us a vision of organizing an annual youth conference tagged, Sonship Manifestation Youth Conference (SOMAYCO). SOMAYCO is meant to raise Disciples and Leaders, Devoted to God and Distinct in Social Actions. This is to be achieved by Teaching, Equipping, Networking and Commissioning emerging Leaders and Disciples for every Good Work.

When we received the vision, an instruction to make the conference free for the participants followed it. It was indeed a challenge to host an International Non-Denomination Conference of an envisaged seven (7) thousand participants without any financial commitment from the conferees. However, we trusted God and got started. The conference was for the very first time held at the Cathedral Church of St. Paul, Nsukka from 28th March to 2nd April, 2016 with the Theme: Manifestation of the Sons of God.

The conference recorded ten thousand, one hundred and ninety seven registered participants across different denominations, languages and nations. They were fed twice daily with good quantity and quality meals. It was a huge success and we appreciate all who contributed to its success, especially the over 500 Team Leaders and members, who laboured under Ven. Dr. Emeka Ezea, the Director of Youth Directorate of the Diocese. We equally appreciate the women of the Diocese, who did not just contribute the food items but also organized themselves in a wonderful way to prepare the food, cooking sixteen bags of rice per meal. In addition to this they have already gone far in procuring cooking utensils for future SOMAYCO. God bless all of you!

The second edition will be held next year from Easter Monday, 17th to Saturday 22nd April 2017. We covet your prayers and support.

Entrance into the Seminary

In conjunction with our examining chaplains, we conducted a screening for Theological and Priestly Training for interested candidates early this year. One person was chosen for direct entry while five (5) were to sit for the Church of Nigeria Joint Entrance Examination (CONJEE). We had intention of selecting the best two, but after due consultations, we sent all of them because of the obvious need for ordained ministers in our Diocese and their excellent performance in the Exam. They are:

1. Daniel Omunkwu (Direct entry)
2. Theophilus Eze
3. Victor Eze
4. Cornelius Omeke
5. Romanus Odoabuchi

6. Friday Nnamani

Trinity Ordination

The owner of the vineyard has continued to send more labourers for more output. **Those made Deacons on July 3, 2016 at St. Paul's Cathedral, Nsukka were:**

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

Those ordained priests were:

1. Rev. Izuchukwu Ewulu
2. Rev. Samuel Onyeidu
3. Rev. Maxwell Odoabuchi
4. Rev. Isaac Ugwuanyi
5. Rev. Emmanuel Chukwuma
6. Rev. Oliver Ajibo
7. Rev. Stephen Ugwu
8. Rev. Christian Agbara
9. Rev. Sunday Akubue
10. Rev. Ignatius Ugwuoke
11. Rev. George Michael
12. Rev. Innocent Nnamani

We congratulate them and pray that they will be useful to God, the Church and the society.

Foundation Stone Laying

Within the year under review, we have laid the foundation of the following buildings in the Diocese:

1. St. Faith's Church, Amula on Sunday April 24, 2016.
2. St. John's Eburumiri Secondary School Block and new Church Building on Sunday June 12, 2016.
3. St. Matthew's Ohemuje Church Building on Saturday August 20, 2016
4. St. Andrew's Parsonage, Orba Road, Nsukka on Sunday August 28, 2016
5. St. Michael and All Angels' Parsonage, Owerre-Obukpa on Sunday September 11, 2016

We appreciate our churches for the rate of infrastructural development all over the Diocese. Your efforts are worthwhile and we pray that the zeal and commitment you have demonstrated in this area will continue. However, you will agree with me that it is better not to finish building on time yet achieve a solid structure that will stand the test of time, than finishing fast but erecting a faulty building. The problem of reconstructing and restructuring has become alarming and we frown at it, especially with the economic situation of the country. On this, we advise all churches to pass through the process of receiving approval for

their building plans, involving Diocesan Engineers and builders for periodic supervision and using certified, tested and proven engineers and builders for every building project. We won't take again any of such cases of building outside design or without proper supervision, so that we don't give room for any case of collapse building.

Furthermore, foundation stone laying is an age long tradition of our church. It is expected to take place when the building is at the foundation stage. We therefore instruct that henceforth, before any church lays the foundation of a building project, we have to be officially informed by writing which must have the signature of the worker, the Secretary of the PCC, the Vicar and the Archdeacon. We will give further instructions at the receipt of the letter and fix a date for the foundation stone ceremony.

Dedications/Commissioning

We thank God for His supply that has made the completion of the following buildings possible, which have been dedicated as follows:

1. New Laboratory for Faith Foundation Mission Hospital, Nsukka on Saturday February 13, 2016
2. St. Mary's Parsonage, Iheakpu-Awka on Sunday March 13, 2016.
3. St. Thomas' Parsonage, Aku on Saturday June 4, 2016
4. St. Barnabas' Parsonage, Iogoro on Saturday October 15, 2016.

We commend the effort of our churches in working hard towards the completion of ongoing building projects. We congratulate all who have already completed theirs. However, we want to reiterate that Dedication of buildings before usage is an age long tradition of our church. We thus insist that all completed buildings must be dedicated but the church will have to write to us on time, informing us of the completion of the building and requesting for a date for the Dedication. The worker and the secretary of the PCC must sign. The Vicar and the Archdeacon must confirm that the building has been completed (not nearing completion), and countersign the letter that will be sent to us for scheduling a convenient date for dedication.

We want church members to note that foundation stone laying and Dedication exercises are not to showcase the effort of workers but traditions of the church to the glory of God. They are not actually optional as we think.

Confirmations and Admissions

We have been abiding by our three (3) years plan to cover all the Parishes. The visits have been wonderful and we thank God for the release of His gracious Holy Spirit on His children. We appreciate the workers for their commitment in preparing the candidates. However, in some places, we noticed unpreparedness. We therefore plead with all workers to see this event as very important and that due preparations should always be made in all ramifications.

Moreover, we should see the manifestation of God's grace during these confirmations as an ample opportunity for discipleship, mentoring and building the church. So there should be a deliberate effort to ensure sustainability of the gains of our confirmation and admissions services. This can be done through Bible study, leading them into Church organizations, discovering, building up and using their gifts and talents.

The table below shows the Confirmation and Admission data for the Parishes visited between November 2015 and September 2016:

S/NO	DATE	PARISH	CONFIRMATION			GG	WG	MU	CMF	Grand Total
			Male	Female	Total					
1.	8/11/2015	All Saints' Parish Obollo-Afor	19	36	55	15	17	6	8	101
2.	15/11/2015	St. John's Parish, Lejja	13	20	33	3	1			37
3.	22/11/2015	St. Mary's Parish, Ikpuiga	14	36	50				5	55
4.	28/11/2015	St. Stephen's Parish, Ugbene-Ajima	14	49	63	3	8	3		77
5.	29/11/2015	St. Matthew's Parish, Ejuona Obukpa	10	21	31	8	12	7		58
6.	6/12/2015	Emma Church Parish, Umujioha	17	20	47	13	10	6	8	84
7.	13/12/2015	St. Mark's Parish, Umuopu	13	38	51	4	5	1		61
8.	20/12/2015	St. Matthew's Parish, Akpa-Edem	14	20	34		19	3		56
9.	28/12/2015	Emma Church Parish, Ogurugu	28	32	60	7	6	1		74
10.	13/03/2016	St. Mary's Parish, Iheakpu-Awka	31	40	71	25	22	1	11	130
11.	20/03/2016	St. John's Parish, Onuiyi	19	24	11	13	8			32
12.	17/04/2016	Church of Transf. Parish, Enugu Rd, Nsukka	45	82	127	25	15	14	2	183
13.	8/05/2016	Cathedral Parish	25	68	93					93
14.	4/06/2016	St. Thomas' Parish, Aku	48	56	104	14	27	1		146
15.	5/06/2016	St. John's Parish, Eburumiri	42	46	88	10	17		4	119
16.	12/06/2016	Christ Church Chapel, UNN	12	40	52	8	3	7		70
17.	7/08/2016	St. Luke's Parish, Umabor	12	20	32		3	1		36
18.	14/08/2016	Christ Church Parish, Unyasu	29	60	89	2	16	1	1	109
19.	20/08/2016	St. Matthew's Parish, Ohemuje	13	26	39	2	7	3		51
20.	21/08/2016	St. Stephen's Parish, Ogrute	44	83	127	4	22			153
21.	28/08/2016	St. Andrew's Parish, Orba Road	21	54	75	12	10	1	9	107
22.	11/09/2016	St. Michael & All Angels' Parish, Owerre Obukpa	23	62	85	13	13	5	4	120
23.	17/09/2016	Christ Church Parish, Igbelle	8	24	32	5	1	1	7	46
24.	18/09/2016	St. John's Parish, Nrobo	18	25	43	33	16	4	2	98
TOTAL									2,096	

Diocesan Health Insurance Scheme (DHIS)

The Anglican Diocese of Nsukka has floated Chikadibia Mutual Health Association. The Board of Trustees drawn from Representatives of all the Archdeaconries of the Diocese and other appointed members was inaugurated on 29th June, 2016 at the Diocesan Secretariat by a team of Representatives of National Health Insurance Scheme, Enugu State ministry of Health and our partnering NGO - PATHS.

The Executive Committee is made up of the following:

- 1) Rt. Rev. A. E. Agbo – Chairman
- 2) Prof. Emmanuel Ibezim – Co-ordinator
- 3) Barr. Sunday Onyike – Secretary
- 4) Lady Nkechi Ikpeze – Treasurer
- 5) Dr. Emmanuel Idoko – PRO

The Board has also appointed the technical team made up of Mr. Christopher Eya as the Manager and Miss Chidera Ifeabunike Ofor as the Secretary.

This vision is intended to give our people the privilege of enjoying good Health through quality medical services. You register with ₦200 only and enroll with ₦6, 000 only, for individual membership, while family membership register with ₦200.00 each, and ₦20,000.00 for a family made up of Father, mother, and a maximum of four children below 18 years. With this, you will enjoy one year of good medical attention without any other kobo except for terminal diseases. Registration has started, and you can register at any Anglican Church throughout the Diocese. Avail yourself the opportunity and encourage others also to do same. Workers should become promoters of this scheme in our various churches and communities. It is open to all people not minding their denomination or religion.

The Diocesan Board has approved that Churches should sponsor their workers in this scheme and equally directed that every Church in the Diocese must enroll their priests or Lay Pastors and their families annually into this scheme.

Uniform Signpost

There is testimony on all lips of how easy it has become to locate our churches in this Diocese. We thank God for such a wonderful idea and appreciate you for responding positively to it. However, we noticed with disappointment that some churches have not complied to this, while some did, but did not get the exact colour combination and design. We appeal to the conscience of the workers and members of such churches to respond to this directive before this year ends – obedience is better than sacrifice.

St. Mathias' Sunday

This was observed on Sunday 28th February, 2016. Our Diocese realized the sum of Two million, two hundred and seventy six thousand, nine hundred and seventy naira (₦2,276,970) only. We commend your sincerity and faithfulness to this exercise. We are expectant of your upgraded effort in the coming year.

Trainings

Workshops were organized at the beginning of the year for Church committee members. Workshop was also held for the clerks. Training was held for Bible Study Leaders, ACM teachers, Guild of Stewards, etc. They were all successful. We thank the directorate of Training and Manpower Development and other Directorates and Chaplaincies that made these trainings possible. We also commend the quality of the post ordination training organized for those made Deacons. We pray God to reward all the resource persons.

Mission and Evangelism

This year's clergy mission was successful. One hundred and twenty-eight clergy participated. Over one hundred and thirty-seven converts were recorded within the seven (7) days exercise. Many backslidden members were revived and the churches experienced great revival and growth. We appreciate the financial support of some of the clergy to the churches they served.

For the August mission, ninety-four (94) youths were sent out to different mission areas within the Diocese. Ten others were sent to Cameroon, making a total of one hundred and four missionaries. We thank God for the testimonies that accompanied the exercise which include planting of two new churches. It was very fruitful.

It is necessary to inform you that finance has remained the greatest challenge for our missionary explorations. We appreciate those individuals who supported us this year and solicit for more. Your financial support, no matter how small, will be greatly appreciated.

Be reminded of the church adoption policy. It is still on. Workers in the big churches should endeavour to make this exercise to work more effectively. If only we can deal with the problem of self, this idea will go a long way in repositioning our baby churches. We therefore appreciate St. John's Church, Onuiyi for the material support given to Church of Advent, Ette-Centre so they can have a roof over them.

Our Foreign Partnership

Our partnership with the Diocese of Cameroon is getting stronger. We sent two (2) of our clergy men (Rev. Kenneth Eze and Rev. Innocent E. Oko) to Cameroon in July this year. They are now residents there with their families. They were sent for missions and to help in growing the churches in that Diocese. We pray God to grant them all that are required for their effectiveness. We must therefore appreciate the Bishop of Cameroon, Rt. Rev. Dibo Thomas Babyngton Elango and his wife for their effort that has sustained this partnership.

The Bishop of the Diocese of Asante Mampong, Ghana, Rt. Rev. Cyril Ben Smith has extended his hand of fellowship to us. He requested that we enter into partnership with his Diocese for more fruitful services unto the Lord. We have accepted his request. He is here today with his wife, Christiana and another representative from his Diocese for what we may call "a familiarization visit". We will also visit his Diocese in no distant time. We pray that God will give this relationship His blessing.

In July this year, we released Rev. Canon Matthew E. Ezema to join his family in USA. We wrote the Bishop of CANA to accept him. To the glory of God, he has been accepted and posted to a church. By this, relationship is being developed with Diocese of CANA. We pray for God's continued grace upon his life.

Our relationship with the Diocese of Uganda has continued. Some of them were with us during SOMAYCO. We were there last month to minister at the 6th Convention of the Diocese of Soronti. We will also be going back this December to speak at the Church of Uganda Provincial Annual Youth and Students Conference. It has been a wonderful relationship.

ORGANIZATIONS

(i) Christian Men's Fellowship (CMF)

God is doing something new and great among the fathers. We have continued to witness a growing zeal and commitment on their part. We pray that this zeal or wave will not die but continue to increase and to spread to all churches in the Diocese. This year's conference at Eziani was wonderful – our hearts were agitated to upholding the right culture and saying no to obnoxious cultural practices. We appreciate Edem Archdeaconry for wonderful hosting.

The name of the fellowship has changed from Christian Fathers' Fellowship (CFF) to Christian Men's Fellowship (CMF) for national uniformity. Note that all particulars bearing the former name are still valid. The project of Benedictus Petroleum Filling Station is still on. The Mini-mart building has been roofed. Plan to erect the Service Point Canopy is at

advanced stage, and this will be followed by the flooring of the entire compound and laying of conduit electrical, and plumbing pipes. We pray for the completion of the project soon.

(ii) The Women's Ministries

We appreciate the giant strides of this section of the Diocese. Their push for missions and church growth is worthy of commendation. We commend their love and care for the widows and less privileged. May God continue to renew their strength! Note that they have completed the window project at the Cathedral at the cost of Fifteen million, one hundred thousand naira (₦15,100,000.00) only.

They held their conference at St. Luke's, Amufie on 30th August to 4th September, 2016. The theme was "The Lord is my Shepherd." It was a wonderful time with the Lord. We thank Amufie Archdeaconry for hosting the conference and thank the Igwe and people of Amufie for their warm reception. May the Lord bless them! Amen.

(iii) Council of Knights

We thank God for the gift of this organization to our Diocese. We cannot overemphasize their impact. We congratulate the new executive under the chairmanship of Dame Dr. Sally Adukwu. We have high expectation for a renewed commitment on the side of the Knights and ladies. Rededication of all the Knights and Ladies will hold on Sunday during the Thanksgiving service.

(iv) Evangelical Fellowship in the Anglican Communion (EFAC)

God in his mercy and grace has continued to sustain His people. We will not cease to commend the involvement of this group in missions, church planting and church growth. Their impact in the Diocese is great. May God continue to give them renewed commitment and zeal! Amen. Remember the end of the year Convention being organized for us by the EFAC for both Clergy and the general convention will be holding in December as it is in our itinerary. It is compulsory for all the Clergy and their wives, and Churches should sponsor them. Let us not be tired of doing good things, that's the scriptural injunction.

(v) Anglican youth Fellowship (AYF)

There is evidence of fruitfulness in the efforts of the Chaplain, Rev. Canon Chris Ike Nnadi and his executive to resuscitate AYF from Diocesan level to church level. More Parishes participated in the Diocesan Rally this year. We appreciate the three (3) sample Parishes (St. Michael & All Angels', Owerre Obukpa, St. John's, Edem-Ani and St. Andrew's, Orba Road) who were saddled with the responsibility of reviving AYF in all Archdeaconries for their efforts so far. We acknowledge their sacrifices and pray God's blessings on them.

We have specially invited St. Andrew's AYF, Orba to this synod Thanksgiving service in appreciation for their performance and as a way of encouraging others to do same.

Again as a further step to revive the Anglican Youth Fellowship and restore one of our heritages of singing native tunes with local instruments that is almost dying, we direct that AYF should lead in praises with their local instruments, during Thanksgiving, in all the Episcopal services. While we appreciate the usefulness of the modern or English musical instruments, we should remember the inclusiveness that the local instruments offer to the people in praising God.

All Vicars are therefore charged to do everything necessary to have AYF active in their Parishes.

(vi) Young Anglican Crusaders (YAC)

We thank the leadership of this group for what God is using them to do among our youths. We commend their commitment and pragmatic approach to school evangelism in recent times. By this they have answered one of the questions we raised last year which was “how do we make YAC useful in secondary school evangelism?” We are happy for this positive development. However, one of our questions remains unanswered: where do we fix these young ones when they cross the age limit for YAC? The leadership has to give attention to this.

(vii) Anglican Children Ministry (ACM)

God is the builder of His church and He has continued to sustain this delicate aspect of the church amidst many challenges. To Him is all the glory. We wouldn't want to bore you much but to say that it seems all we said last year about this organization fell on deaf ears. All the mentioned negative attitude of workers towards this group has continued in some quarters as we can see it in their report. We therefore summon the leadership of this group to make defined report to us of any defaulting worker or church. If you do not understand us then go and read what we said about ACM last year and compare it with the report you have in your booklet.

(viii) Anglican Communion Brigade (ACB)

This organization is doing well. We appreciate their sensitiveness to the security challenges of our time. Their role in all our functions is outstanding. We commend their doggedness.

(ix) The Prison Ministry

This ministry is a practical gospel. Many lives have been touched and transformed through the activities of this ministry. It is demanding but thank God for the zeal of those who have shown commitment to it. We implore every one of us to contribute to the success of this ministry and you will enjoy your reward.

(x) The Lay Readers

This ministry has been impacting the lives of students in different secondary schools and the prison inmates. We want to mention specifically the efforts of Lady Dr Florence Ezeudu, and Lady Uche Uzodinma who have made a lot of sacrifices in ministering to the students of St. Theresa's College, and Queen of the Rosary Girls' Secondary School Nsukka. They have been rendering all pastoral services to these children, without heeding the wound or counting the cost. Their services include conducting Sunday services, teaching, inviting Clergymen for Holy Communion services and preparing them for confirmation and sponsoring it. All these they have done silently and humbly too. May God remember this and reward you abundantly. We equally commend all our Lay Readers especially for their passion for school and prison ministry and pray for more grace on them.

(xi) Diocesan Guild of Stewards

The relevance of this organization to our worship life is very prominent. They give our functions the needed orderliness. We commend their leadership and charge them with the responsibility of ensuring that what we enjoy at Diocesan level is replicated in all churches.

(xii) The Triumphant Ministry

Triumphant Ministry by God's grace has impacted many lives. It has come to stay as a platform for meeting the spiritual needs of the people. We thank God for His faithfulness in

growing this ministry and for making it famous to His own glory. We commend the selflessness of the coordinator, Rev. Canon Dr. Moses Chukwuebuka Omeke and his team. The Triumphant Ministry Team has demonstrated what service to God should be. The prayer team, the Counseling team, the Music team and the Choir, the Ushers, the technical team, the media team, the security team, are all wonderful. Their commitment, zeal, sacrifice, humility and tenaciousness are beyond what human nature can allow. Whenever I see them working with the right heart as unto the Lord, I just conclude that this is the "Finger of God". May God bless you in Jesus name! Amen.

(xiii) The Music Festival/Choir Competition

The role of music in our worship life as a Church cannot be over emphasized. Though some of our Churches have gained some considerable improvement in music and worship, there are still many who don't see the need to grow in this aspect of our worship. It is not wonderful that a Parish headquarters does not have a choir even to process with the leaders of the service each Sunday. We don't want this to continue.

Therefore, we will organize Diocesan Music Festival by next year. The syllabus and programme for the event is as follows:

Grade 1

1. Abu 1
2. Abu Oma 46
3. English Anthem – Blessed are all they (Ps. 128)
4. Igbo Anthem – Okwu Asaa nke Kraist
5. Canticle - Benedictus

Grade 2

1. Abu 237
2. Abu Oma 121
3. English Anthem – Nsukka Diocesan Anthem
4. Igbo Anthem – Ndi Nna bu Ide
5. Canticle – Easter Anthem

Grade 3

1. Abu 216
2. Abu Oma 23
3. English Anthem – Nsukka Diocesan Anthem
4. Igbo Anthem – K'amara nke Onye-nwe-ayi
5. Canticle – Jubilate Deo

Note: Churches will be assigned to individual grades subsequently.

Rehearsals

March – Saturday 4th – Meeting with Choir Masters and Organists.

Saturday 11th – Workshop with Choir Masters and Organists (Sharing of the syllabus)

Workshop for Choristers will be held as follows

April – Sat. 15th – Workshop for Choristers

May – Sat. 13th – Workshop for Choristers

June – Sat. 10th – Workshop for Choristers

July – Sat. 15th – Workshop for Choristers

Aug – Sat. 12th – Workshop for Choristers

September – (Competition in Archdeaconry Levels)

October – (Grand finale at the Diocesan Level)

Note: *We solicit for trophies from the Diocese, individuals, church groups etc.*

All church workers must ensure that their churches participate. Vicars are encouraged to treat this as a matter of great importance for the growth of church music in the Diocese.

DIOCESAN ESTABLISHMENTS

1. Faith Foundation Mission Hospital

God's hand is on this project. It has remained the fastest growing hospital in this state. On 17th February this year, we, in company of the Enugu State Commissioner for Health, Dr. Samuel Ngwu and PATHS 2 officials led by the State Team Leader, Prof. Eddy Nwobodo commissioned the first ever Central Medical Laboratory in the state built in our hospital. The laboratory is being equipped by PATHS 2.

The gigantic hospital complex under construction has reached another level. The roofing has begun and we pray for open heaven financially so we can complete it. To meet the rapid growth of the hospital, a new sienna car was purchased to enhance ambulance services. On the 29th of September, the hospital at the 1st National Quality Improvement Project (NQIP) Dissemination received the 2016 NIGERIA QUAL AWARDS for an outstanding performance in recognition of her consistent commitment to improving the quality of HIV Care and Treatment Services in Nigeria, by the Federal ministry of Health in collaboration with University of Maryland USA at Transcorp Hilton Hotel Abuja.

Our hospital is one of the eleven hospitals throughout the federation that received the award and the best among facilities working under implementing partnership with PATHS2. FFMH and Cottage hospital, Iji Nike were the only two that received the award from Enugu State, and the performance of the two hospitals earned Enugu state an award of the best state in HIV management.

In fact, there is much to say; you can refer to the report for more information. We appreciate the Medical Board led by Sir Dr. C. O. B. Eze, the Chief Medical Director, Rev. Can. Dr. Samuel Chukwuemeka, the Hospital Administrator, Ven. C. C. Eze and all the staff for the good work going on.

2. Deus Refugium Printing Press

This establishment is thriving by God's grace. They were able to save over N3m in preparation to purchase a chord machine which at present is N6.8m in the market. Instead of allowing the money to remain in the account, we approved that they invest it. We thank Sir Barr. Chukwudi Chukwuemeka, whose sacrifice made this idea to work. We pray God to bless the management team under the chairmanship of Sir Barr. Johnson Onah.

3. His Glory Bookshop

The Bookshop is growing seriously. It has gone beyond sales of books to sales of some church and communion vestments. We solicit your patronage and prayers for this outfit. We appreciate the management and staff for their ingenuity and innovative ideas that have contributed to this growth and pray God to bless them.

4. Agric Farm

God has been sustaining this department. We see green light with the developments we are seeing. We are hopeful that in no distant time, something will be coming out from them to

support the Diocese. However, we appreciate Dr. Shedrack Asogwa and his team for their doggedness in this area.

5. Our Schools

Education still remains our Flagship Project. We have continued in giving the needed attention to our schools. The environments are beginning to wear new looks as a result of renovations and constructions going on in the schools. Through the DEB and SBMCs, with the cooperation of the principals, the academic life, hostel life and spiritual life of the schools have been raised to a better height. The journey has just begun and we will not rest until our schools have become best among bests. We covet your prayers and other supports.

CATHEDRAL PROJECT

We have not been able to do much as we intended on this project since after the last Synod, because of the paucity funds. But God has graciously granted us the following.

- ★ The Women Ministry of the Diocese has completed the building and installation of the entire Windows in the Cathedral at the cost of fifteen million, one hundred thousand Naira (₦15,100,000.00)
- ★ The Diocese has built and installed all the hand rails of the Cathedral corridor.
- ★ We completed the plastering of the entire Cathedral.
- ★ We have built and installed customized iron doors for the main entrance to the Cathedral and the basement. The payment is still outstanding.
- ★ We have built, roofed and plastered the two security posts at the Cathedral Gates.
- ★ We have built and installed all the fence rails. But we have not paid for them.
- ★ We have built a standard Brigade saluting Base at the Cathedral.

On the 2nd of January this year, God led our brother and friend, Chief Arthur Eze (Ozoigbondu 1 of Igbo Land), out of his love for God and philanthropic heart to promise to take up the ceiling of the Cathedral and to buy Pipe Organ for us. His intention was to redeem this pledge before end of the first quarter of the year but the dwindling economy has affected everything in the country. We appreciate him for this love and pray that God will give him the needed enablement to fulfill this promise. We equally thank our Archbishop, Most Rev. Dr. Emmanuel Olisa Chukwuma *oON*, through whom, God made the connection possible and for actively playing the role of a middle man. Your Grace, may God reward you.

Again, early this year, the family of Late Ven. S. A. Eze volunteered to complete all the remaining work at the Cathedral Chancel. So all that you are seeing at the Chancel now came from this godly family. May God beautify your lives from generation to generation!

You will recall that our desire is to complete and dedicate the Cathedral immediately after this synod. We still have strong faith that with your prayers and support it is achievable.

ENUGU PROVINCIAL NEWS

Provincial Council Meetings

Our usual Enugu Provincial Council meeting held twice during the Synod year. The first was hosted by Abakaliki Diocese at the Cathedral Church in February this year.

The second Council meeting was held at the Cathedral Church of Mary, Ngwo from 7th to 8th September, 2016, hosted by Enugu North Diocese with the Theme: Examine yourself 2 Cor. 13:5. We were fully blessed and edified by the Archbishop's Address. The departments

through which the Province is being run are all active. The Provincial prayer conference will be holding this year at Agwu Aninri Diocese, Provincial football league will be coming up next year. Also Provincial Youth conference will be held next year. Details of these will be communicated in due time.

CHURCH OF NIGERIA NEWS

Laying Foundation Stone of the National Secretariat

Our Primate, Most Rev. Dr. Nicholas D. Okoh laid the foundation of our proposed National Secretariat building at plot 942, Gudu District Apo, Abuja on Friday 13th Nov., 2015. In order to expedite action on the project it was resolved that all advent collections should be forwarded to the National office of our church. Nsukka Diocese complied fully with this last year and we have remitted the proceeds to the National Church. Next edition will be coming up on the first Sunday in Advent. As obedient servants we request that all the churches in this Diocese should comply with this directive. **God bless you.**

Retirement of Bishops

In this out going year, some Bishops through the grace of God have attained the age of 70 and are now retired.

- (a) Bishop Ralph Okafor of Ihiala Diocese, now replaced by Rt. Rev. Prof. Israel Okoye former Secretary of the Church of Nigeria.
- (b) Archbishop Prof. B. Akinde of Lagos Main Land Diocese, now replaced by Rt. Rev. Pelu Johnson former Provost of Christ Church Cathedral, Marina.

GAFCON

At the meeting of GAFCON Primates held in Nairobi Kenya, from April 18 to 21, 2016, our Primate, the Most Rev. Dr. Nicholas Okoh was elected Chairman of the Body. He took over from the outgoing Chairman, Most Rev. Eliud Wabukala of Kenya who was proceeding into retirement. We rejoice and congratulate our Primate, and remain highly optimistic that GAFCON will prosper in his hands. While we pledge our loyalty to the vision and prayers for our Chairman, we wish his predecessor a happy and peaceful retirement.

All Anglican Clergy Conference

The All Anglican Clergy Conference was held at the Benue State University, Makurdi from Monday 12th to Friday 16th September, 2016. About 108 Clergymen attended from our Diocese. The Theme was “Breaking Ministerial Limits”. It was indeed highly enriching as the participants testified.

ENUGU STATE

Our Governor, Rt. Hon. Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi (Gburugburu) has not disappointed us. We congratulate him for his giant strides so far. The whole state is enjoying your good works, especially the good roads under construction. We are hopeful that they will soon be completed. We also look up to the manifestation of other good plans of yours. Your Excellency, we wish to advise as follows:

- The security challenges of the state especially as it relates to the killings in different parts of the state, by Fulani Herdsmen, has brought great fear on the inhabitants of the state. As we appreciate the wisdom and empathy with which you have been handling the situation, a more proactive measure should be put in place. The Government of Enugu State should as a matter of urgency come up with a legal framework that should guide cattle rearers in

the state. Therefore we suggest the following: If Fulani cattle rearers would remain in the state, they should pass through a process of signing an agreement/Business terms with the leadership of the host community, and to be approved by the State Government. The traditional rulers should therefore not allow any cattle rearer enter their communities without proper documentation and approval. Night grazing and movement by herdsmen should be prohibited. Lands sold to the cattle rearers by some selfish and corrupt traditional rulers should be recovered and returned to the communities.

- Though the state is among the nine states in the country that do not owe their workers, we wish to draw your attention to the suffering of our Local Government employees, some of whom have not been paid for about eight months now. Please, do well to put smiles on the faces of these citizens, by clearing these debts. You can do it.
- Please let your Government correct without further delay the lopsided and ill-willed handover of schools to mission agencies. Our education system will be better if you give mission agencies the opportunity to run their originally owned schools.
- The injustice that has been perpetrated in some appointments in the state must be corrected. For instance, while some Local Government Areas in the state can boast of up to four judges, Uzo-Uwani and Isi-Uzo Local Government Areas have none.

May God bless your reign in this office! Amen.

NIGERIAN NATION

There is no need to give much space to talking about Nigeria, our endeared country. The situation for now is too ugly to talk about. The expectations of Nigerians are being cut short daily.

While we appreciate the global economic challenges and our peculiar security problems coupled with the age long corruptions that have combined their forces to halt our developmental journey. We believe that with the right government policies and the right people at the driver's side of this country, we can navigate the storm.

So we advice the president that if he meant well for this country;

- I. He should as a matter of urgency, change his cabinet with young, intellectual, vibrant and innovative ministers, who may not necessarily be politicians.
- II. The President should pay attention to the advice of well meaning Nigerians, as many of them are not giving prejudiced suggestions.
- III. The presidency should give more quality time and effort to what should be done to make Nigeria better than in blaming past governments. The Holy writ advices that; *"...Let not him that girdeth on his harness boast himself as he that putteth it off." "For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again."* (1Kg 20:11; Matt. 7:2)
- IV. The fight against corruption is commendable and must be sustained until the country is relieved from its chains. But the presidency must do this with respect to rule of law and within the armpits of the constitution.

Moreover, the fight should be done in a way that will convince Nigerians that the government is not using it as a tool against pre-conceived enemies. All corrupt people both in the past and present government must be made to face the law. Fight against corruption should also move into our Educational Institutions, Security Agencies, the Civil Service and every other sphere of the life of the Nation.

We have a message of hope to all Nigerians: God is not asleep. *“Weeping may endure for a night but joy comes in the morning.”* There is always light at the end of the tunnel. We believe there is a lesson that God wants us to learn in this experience. Let us therefore be sober, to be able to understand the mind of God, work hard in what we are doing, being prudent in our spending, and give less time to talking and criticism. We have to trust God and develop an intimate relationship with Him and He will make things better.

DIOCESAN MERITORIOUS AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

The prophetic role of the Church to be the voice of the voiceless, especially as it relates to the promotion of Democratic values and good governance for the wholesome development of our people, is not just needful at this moment, but must be taken as an integral part of our evangelization and being salt of the earth.

While this prophetic responsibility has a lot to do with challenging and questioning government policies and programs that exclude or marginalize a certain people; the spending of public funds must also include boldness to encourage and commend those in government who have demonstrated a strong political will for Good Governance.

As a Church, the Anglican Diocese of Nsukka, in playing this aspect of the prophetic roles of the church in promoting Good Governance, has instituted an Award to be given to those in positions of leadership.

On this first edition of the Nsukka Diocesan Meritorious Award of Excellence, we have chosen someone who in a short time in office and at a very difficult period has demonstrated in practical terms his commitment to Good Governance. He is the Executive Governor of Enugu State, Rt. Hon. Lawrence Ugwuanyi (Gburugburu).

In the past Seventeen months as the Executive Governor of the State, he has been able to do the following:

1. Prompt payment of staff salaries and other wages: Enugu State is among the nine states in the federation that do not owe their workers and we are not among the oil producing states.
2. Promotion of Sports. The Enugu Rangers International Football Club, within these few months of His Excellency tenure, without change of name or privatization, has bounced back to the premier position after 32 years of relegation.
3. Massive Infrastructural Development in various areas;
 - a) Road Construction and rehabilitation in the following roads:
 - I. 9th mile By Pass (completed)
 - II. Airport junction to Eke Obinagu Emene road (completed)
 - III. Abakpa Nike Road (completed)
 - IV. Opi - Nsukka dual carriageway; ongoing with massive underground drainage system starting from Ugwuoye to AKU road junction. A distance of over one kilometer(1km) which is the first of its kind in the whole of South East. The

drainage, we were made to understand at some points is over six meters underground.

V. Nsukka township roads namely:

- ✓ University roundabout to Ikenga junction through Odenigbo roundabout. (completed)
- ✓ Orba road: starting from Nru junction to Enugu Road at Prince Oil Filling Station. (ongoing)
- ✓ Urban Girls road: from Oba Echara to Ikenga road junction. (ongoing)

VI. Imilike-Ulo - Ezimo - Imilke-Agu - Ogbodu-Aba - Obollo-Etiti - Obollo-Oye - Amalla - Obollo-Afor Udenu ring road. (ongoing)

Vii. Rehabilitation of federal roads in Enugu State, with special attention on Enugu - Onitsha.

- b) Erosion control works at major erosion gully at 9th mile area being handled by NEWMAP.
 - c) Rehabilitation of classrooms and other school infrastructures, with the supply of desks and seats to primary schools in the state.
4. The ongoing recruitment of qualified teachers, which was done in the most transparent manner, devoid of the normal practice of politicians sending their lists. This method provided the needed level playing ground for all the job seekers, and at the end of the day recruiting the best.
5. The restoration of water supply at people's homes for areas covered by pipeline distribution, such as Odenigbo, Onuiyi, Enugu road etc. This has not been so since 2002.

In view of the foregoing, we wish to give him this award as an encouragement to do more, in touching the lives of the citizenry and changing destinies.

THEME: THE RETURN OF THE ARK

TEXT: 1 Chron.13:1-3

And David consulted with the captains of thousands and hundreds, and with every leader. And David said unto all the congregation of Israel, If it seem good unto you, and that it be of the Lord our God, let us send abroad unto our brethren everywhere, that are left in all the land of Israel, and with them also to the priests and Levites which are in their cities and suburbs, that they may gather themselves unto us: And let us bring again the ark of our God to us: for we inquired not at it in the days of Saul. And all the congregation said that they would do so: for the thing was right in the eyes of all the people.

INTRODUCTION

In our last Synod, the Lord spoke to us on the theme; "*I Will Do a New Thing*". The message was revealing and prophetic. It was a landmark insight into where God has decided to take His church to; and indeed, since that word came to us from the Lord, a lot of new things have been happening – and certainly, many more new things shall happen in the name of Jesus. Amen.

This year's theme is a deliberate divine guide posts on how to handle and sustain the *New Thing* God is committed to doing in our Diocese and beyond. The way to keep the global wave of divine move and other aspects of the *New Thing* is actually to bring back the Ark. So, as part of God's definite instructions on how to handle the *New Thing*, He has decided to confront us this year with the matter of the Ark.

The Ark, among other things, represents God's *presence*, His *covenant* and His *strength*. The message of the Ark is the message of true worship of God based on deep, personal conviction and unshaken covenant relationship with Him. The Ark bearers' life is so critical to the move of God that even when the form and contents of the Ark are intact but the inner life of the carriers of the Ark is not correct before God, the power of the Ark will not manifest in the lives of the Ark bearers. These are very critical issues that burden the heart of God in this generation; and it has pleased Him to gather us here so that He would show us the principles of Christian living and the bedrocks of handling the move of God in our generation - using the analogy of the Ark.

BACKGROUND OF THE THEME

The two books of Chronicles are more of repetitions. But not vain repetitions, for there are excellent and useful things in them which we cannot find elsewhere. Their repetitions appear as establishing truths that have before been said or revealed, and to aid inculcation and remembrance.

The author of the books of Chronicles is widely accepted to be Ezra, that ready scribe in the law of the Lord (Ezra 7:6). The collection was made after the captivity yet the original language is sometimes retained.

1 Chronicles is divided into three (3) major parts. However, our theme text falls in the second segment which is "A repetition of the history of the translation of the Kingdom from Saul to David, and of the triumph of David's reign, with large additions" covering chapters 10-21.

Chapter 13 of the 1 Chronicles from where we have our theme is a paraphrase of 2 Samuel 6. The incidence that preceded the action of David in returning the Ark (as recorded in both 2 Sam.6 and 1 Chron.13) actually took place in 1 Samuel chapters 4-7. Israel had lost their

spiritual standing in God before the battle with the Philistines as recorded in 1 Sam.4. The Philistines were defeating Israel, so Israel had to pray. Without genuine repentance, Israel enquired of the Lord to know why the Philistines were defeating them (1 Sam.4:3). In the midst of the backsliding and without a clear word from God, Israel quickly went to Shiloh to fetch the Ark of the Lord so that the power in the Ark will make them win the Philistines in the battle (1 Sam.4:4).

When Israel brought the Ark, without correct inner life of holiness and consecration, they began to shout with a great shout so that the ground shook (1Sam.4:5). When the Philistines heard the shout, they feared and thought that a supernatural force had come to help the Israelites in the battle. However, the Philistines decided to continue the fight against the Israelites. Behold, the shout of the Israelites even in the presence of the Ark, was an empty shout! So, the Philistines defeated them and also captured the ark of the Lord – 1 Sam.4:4-11.

So, from this time till twenty years and seven months, the ark of the Lord was not in its proper place. For seven months, it was in the hands of the Philistines (people outside the commonwealth of Israel); for twenty whole years, the ark *was in one man's house in Israel*. For those lengthy periods, the ark was not in its divinely assigned place: in the Holy of Holies in the Tabernacle.

The sequence of the events of chapters 12 and 13 reveals that as soon as David was well enthroned, his utmost concern was about the ark of God thus he emphasized in the words of our text, *“Let us bring the ark to us”* (1 Chron. 13:3). According to Matthew Henry's Bible commentary, he aimed at two things here:

- I. *“To do honour to God, by showing respect to his ark, the token of his presence.”*
- II. *“To have the comfort and benefit of that sacred oracle.”*

David had the bringing back of the ark first on his priority list. He saw it as fundamental and foundational to his reign and success. It is not out of place to say that while David was on the bench waiting for his manifestation as king, he had given thought to what was the problem of his would be kingdom. His eyes were inspired to note that though all religious activities were going on, there were still prophets and priests, the name of God was still being mentioned, prayers were still being said, sacrifices were being offered; in fact, normal religious routines were going on but something very prominent was missing, “the Ark”.

To David, it is the Ark that gave and gives credence to all religious activities. He felt that all that were going on were meaningless without the Ark. He therefore saw the bringing back of the Ark as his utmost and primary assignment. Thus we can quickly assert here that the matter of the Returning of the Ark began with one person, King David. It started with having the right mind and then applying the right approach. His approach was to communicate the need for the return of the Ark to the leaders and through them to all the people.

Now, one may ask, what is so special about the Ark that it engaged the whole of David's thoughts and efforts?

THE THEOLOGY OF THE ARK

In Exodus 25:10-16, we have a clear record of God's instruction to Moses to build the ark. That divine instruction on the construction of the ark came to Moses as part of the whole instructions God released to him on the pattern for building the Tabernacle. The Lord said to Moses concerning the craft men that were to build the ark:

*And they shall make an ark of shitim wood: two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half shall be the breadth thereof, and a cubit and a half the height thereof. And thou shall overlay it with **pure gold**, within and without shall thou overlay it, and shall make upon it a crown of gold round about...And thou shall put into the ark the Testimony which I shall give thee – Exo. 25:10, 11, 16.*

When Ark is mentioned, our minds may move to different directions. Some may quickly remember Noah's ark, a kind of ship. Some others may reflect on Exodus 2:3 that speak of the bulrushes' ark in which the infant Moses was laid. Some may also think of the "Ark of God" as captured in 1 Samuel 3:3.

The Ark referred to in our theme is the "Ark of God". In Joshua 3:6, it is called the "Ark of the covenant" while Exodus 25:22 calls it the "Ark of the testimony." These three concepts present this very Ark as sacred – this is why it is covered all over with the purest gold amidst other make-ups.

Easton's Bible Dictionary has it that over the ark, at the two extremities, were two cherubim, with their faces turned toward each other (Lev. 16:2; Num. 7:89). Their outspread wings over the top of the ark formed the throne of God, while the ark itself was his footstool (Exod. 25:10-22; 37:1-9). This description gives us an insight into what the Ark stands for.

It depicts the presence of God:

It was the most important symbol of the Jewish faith, and served as the only physical manifestation of God on earth – it was central to the Jewish faith. In other words, the Ark was the manifestation of God's physical presence on earth; it was an indication of the Shekhina, that is, the presence of God. Of course, you know from the scriptures that God's presence is frequently seen in the guise of a cloud in the Bible (Exod. 24:16) and the Ark is constantly accompanied by clouds.

The author of "Ancient Jewish History: The Ark of the Covenant" supported the above idea when he asserted that when God spoke from between the cherubs, there was a glowing cloud visible there (Ex. 40:35); when the Jews traveled, they were led by the Ark and a pillar of clouds (Num. 10:34); and when the High Priest entered presence of the Ark on **Yom kippur**, he did so only under the cover of a cloud of incense, perhaps intended to mask the sight of the Shekhina in all its glory (Lev. 16:13).

If the Ark was an expression of the physical presence of God on Earth and its presence in a place depicts God's presence was in the place, then its absence also shows that God's presence is no longer in the place; thus David's worry to return the Ark. It was therefore a move to bring back the presence of God, the glory of God, and this is a pursuit for revival.

It expresses the rulership of God:

That the Ark has the Throne of God is an evidence of "Theocracy" (rulership by God) in any place where it is. It showed that the Israelites were ruled by God whenever the Ark was with them or in their midst. No wonder the Ark has in it the tablets containing the Ten Commandments. These commandments formed the constitution of the nation Israel; it formed their culture, rules and regulations

The implication of the above is that any time the Ark was away from Israel's possession, it meant that God was no longer controlling their affairs or lifestyle. It further implies that God was removed from governing them – the government changes from Theocracy to any other

form, may be monarchy or autocracy. At that point of delusion, the people deride the commandments (the moral law) of God which stand for the covenant. But whenever the Ark is with the people, it expresses their submission to the rulership of God, that is, His governance, His ordinances, and He becomes in charge of the spiritual, political, social and economic life of the people.

It shows the acknowledgement of Yahweh as the only God of the Universe:

In the description of the Ark, its basement formed the footstool of God, of Jehovah, of Yahweh. In theological reflection, the basement of the Ark stands for the whole universe being the footstool of God. By this, the presence of the Ark in the midst of the Israelites expressed their religious faith in God as the one and only true God. It expressed rejection of other gods (idols or ancestral worship).

In connection with the above, it is obvious therefore that at any time the Ark was lost or taken away, the implication was that the people have been given into the worship of strange gods. It further expresses that the people have backslidden from their belief in God as the only true God. That is to say those other things have taken the position of God in their affairs. To this, whenever the Ark was away, it appeared that the people have taken to religious harlotry, prostituting with other gods.

The Ark represents divine assurance of protection and victory:

It is evident in the scriptures that the Ark stood as an assurance for protection and victory to the Israelites. It was used by God as an indicator of when He wanted them to travel and when to stop. Its presence with the people in times and places of war was symbolic, providing motivation and aiding victory. This is seen throughout Israel's journeys in the Old Testament.

In other words, at any time the Ark was not in the midst of the people, the whole picture was that the shield of safety and the provider of victory was gone; implying exposure to dangers and defeat. At such time, there were obvious possibilities of losing their position, inheritance, freedom, identity; of becoming slaves, of going into exiles, etc. Thus it was very central to their physical existence, comfort, freedom and happiness. It was therefore the determinant of the expression and fulfillment of their destinies; the aid to a fulfilled life. Its loss meant loss of destiny, loss of fulfillment of life's purpose. This accounts for why John McGee said, "*when the Ark was in its rightful place in Israel there was real blessing; when, on the other hand, it was relegated to a secondary place the blessing was withheld.*"

The Ark gave the tabernacle (temple) Efficacy:

In the words of McGee, "*the Ark was the most important part of the Tabernacle plan, as well as the leading article of furniture ... The Ark thus epitomized all that the Tabernacle stood for in the minds of God's people.*"

The synthesis of the above statement is that the Temple (tabernacle) was meaningless without the Ark. Its beauty and magnificence notwithstanding, the temple was an ordinary monument or best described, "a matter" without the Ark. It is just like any other building if the Ark was not in the Holy of Holies. In other words, it is the Ark that gives meaning to the temple building. Without the Ark, the presence of God, the glory of God, the manifestation of God's presence, the temple is no different from other halls of meetings.

In its deeper sense, the activities in the temple – sacrifices, worship, prayers, reading and interpretation of the codes of covenant (the commandments) are meaningless if the Ark is not in the temple. The activities will only amount to mere routines without any effect on both the

worshippers and the society. Thus the Ark determines the efficacy of the Temple, that is, it determines the effectiveness, meaningfulness and impact of the temple life on both the worshippers and the entire environment. In fact, without the Ark, the temple or tabernacle is just a multi-purpose hall for human entertainment. No wonder David deliberately resolved to first seek the return of the Ark before any other thing. It was like seeking first the kingdom of God.

The Throne on the Ark represents the Mercy Seat:

Nicholas Batzig conceived the throne of God which the outspread wings of the two cherubim at the extremes of the Ark formed as “the mercy seat.” This is agreeable because there is no difference between the throne of God and the mercy seat. Both are the same but only a matter of divergent functions.

So, the Ark carries the Mercy Seat, and therefore, assures not only the presence of God but also His mercy, forgiveness, pardon and acceptance. The symbolism of the Ark reached its grand climax on the Day of Atonement. When the blood of the sacrifice was sprinkled on the mercy seat, the glory of God appeared between the two angels on the lid.

The New Testament concept of the ark:

In Jeremiah 3:16, God said through the Prophet: *And it shall come to pass, when ye be multiplied and increased in the land, in those days, saith the Lord, they shall say no more, The ark of the covenant of the Lord: neither shall it come to mind: neither shall they remember it; neither shall they visit it; neither shall that be done any more. At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the Lord; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the Lord, to Jerusalem: neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart. In those days the house of Judah shall walk with the house of Israel, and they shall come together out of the land of the north to the land that I have given for an inheritance unto your fathers.*

God was speaking of the time of the New Testament when the reality of Christ indwelling both the Jews and the Gentiles will overshadow the form of the ark in the Tabernacle. In other words, God was looking forward to a time when the ark will no longer be an external box located at the Holy of Holies and accessible only by the High Priest once a year; God was looking forward to a time like now when the ark is Him in us.

That is what Isaiah’s prophecy of Jesus means: “*God with us*”. Paul calls the New Testament ark: “*Christ in you, the hope of glory...*” Not just Christ in heaven or Christ on paper; it is “*Christ in you...*” That is the Ark in the New Testament: Emmanuel – God with us; or, as someone puts it in a Trinitarian form: God the Father for us; God the Son for us; and God the Holy Spirit *within* us. This is the Ark!

Beloved of God, if the Ark stands for the presence of God, the rulership of God, acknowledgement of Yahweh as the only true God, assurance of protection and victory, the efficacy of the temple, and the mercy seat by which the person and saving work of Christ is expressed, then suffice it to say that there is no Christianity without the Ark. We can therefore appreciate the weight of this matter, "The Return of the Ark".

THE IMPLICATION OF “RETURN” IN OUR THEME

Return in the premise of our theme simply means to bring back. This was why David said, “... *let us bring again the ark of our God to us ...*” When you talk of bringing back, it means what is referred to was before with you or in your possession but was taken away. It somehow

expresses that you have knowledge of the where about of the missing object or item, though not in your possession at the moment. That is to say, that there is knowledge of hopefulness not hopelessness; there is the possibility of recovering what is missing.

If the Ark indeed stood for all we can think about meaningful relationship with God, and it was missing from the midst of the people, does it imply that God was missing? If we say yes in haste to this question, we will be doubting or questioning the omnipresent nature of God, yet if we say no, we may reduce the potency of the Ark.

Like the New Testament has it, *“the hand of the Lord is not too short ... but your sin has separated you from Him”*. This gives a better picture of the situation: God did not disappear, but communion between God and the people was hampered, so they could not access the friendship of God but His judgement, His discipline. The Garden of Eden’s experience expresses this better. That God asked Adam *“where are you?”* does not mean he was out of God’s sight; it rather meant he was not within the friendship environment of God that could enable him experience the life and glorious manifestation of God.

On this ground, when David spoke of the return of the Ark, he was not referring to bringing God back to Israel as though He was an object. He rather meant a re-union of the people and God on the environment of friendship and relationship. In theological reflection, the right language is Reconciliation for the purpose of Revival. So in other words, what David meant was *“let us be reconciled to God.”* A healthy relationship with God is the Ark because in such relationship, all that the Ark stands for are expressed and experienced.

Return of the Ark therefore implies revival, reconciliation, a renewed commitment and relationship with God.

THE BEARING OF THE THEME ON US

We have increasing number of churches today. We are witnesses to beautiful and gigantic edifices standing as church buildings, parsonages and other multi-purpose buildings. The clergy and other church workers are today riding costly cars and owning mighty buildings, establishments, and bagging a number of higher degrees in academics. Churches can boast of owning the best nursery, primary, secondary and tertiary schools. Some denominations are almost becoming richer than the state Government. In fact, there are too much to say about the landmarks of the churches industrially, economically, financially, materially; even politically, the church has her members well positioned.

In another dimension, churches are experiencing numerical outbreak. More crusades, prayer meetings, and many other programmes with different nomenclatures are going on almost on daily basis. Can all we have listed in the above paragraphs stand as true evidence of the presence of the Ark, of a healthy relationship with God, of having the presence of God in the church? With all the wealth and numerous activities, we observe that the church has little or no positive impact in the society; the society is influencing the church instead. For true revival is not assessed by what happens within the four walls of the Church, but by what the Church has been able to do in its community. The Church is meant to bring about the fear of God, the righteousness of God, and the light of the Gospel, in her environment, that will naturally spring up development and societal transformation. Whenever or wherever this is not happening, God is always uncomfortable and doesn't rest until He brings the needed awakening that will cause the church to sit up. This awakening, to me is what we usually call REVIVAL.

But you will agree with me that we have church members in positions of authority, both in political, business, and even in ecclesiastical circles, under whose watch, corruption has thrived; social vices are gaining more ground both in the society and in the church. Most traditional rulers are members of the church but we see promotion of evil culture and traditions. When you compare the Christian songs of today with those of the old, you see only noise and entertainment as against soul refreshing inspirations.

No wonder a song writer described the goings on in the church today as *“so much noise without the power.”* The power here refers to the Ark that gives the church building efficacy. You can now see that we need the Ark, the glorious presence of God. We had it but allowed a separation between it and us – We need Revival now that it has become obvious that the church has lost its saltiness, its efficacy.

Permit me to reiterate what was said during the 2015 CMF conference; Revival refers to a spiritual reawakening from a state of dormancy or stagnation in the life of a believer. It encompasses the resurfacing of a love for God, an appreciation of God’s holiness, a passion for His word and His church, a convicting awareness of personal and corporate sin, a spirit of humility, and a desire for repentance and growth in righteousness ... Revival breaks the charm and power of the world, which blinds the eyes of men, and generates both the will and power to live in the world but not of the world.

According to Edwards, *“A true Holy Spirit revival is a remarkable increase in the spiritual life of a large number of God’s people, accompanied by an awesome awareness of the presence of sin with a passionate longing for holiness and unusual effectiveness in evangelism, leading to the salvation of many unbelievers.”*

Obviously, there is a decline in spirituality in our Churches today. While we can boast of numerical and structural growth of the Church, we may not be able to boast of the qualitative growth. On this, I think we need the Ark, we need Revival. It is the key to unlocking the full manifestation of the New Thing. It is the solution to all our social, economic and political problems as a nation, as a church and as individuals.

HOW TO BRING BACK THE ARK

And David consulted with the captains of thousands and hundreds, and with every leader. And David said unto all the congregation of Israel, If it seem good unto you, and that it be of the Lord our God, let us send abroad unto our brethren everywhere, that are left in all the land of Israel, and with them also to the priests and Levites which are in their cities and suburbs, that they may gather themselves unto us: And let us bring again the ark of our God to us: for we inquired not at it in the days of Saul. And all the congregation said that they would do so: for the thing was right in the eyes of all the people - 1 Chron. 13:1-4.

I. A burden on a David

It is not clearly written in the Bible how many years David became the king of Israel before raising the agenda of bringing back the ark, but the essential thing is that it was his priority as a king to do that. Again, David was not a priest but he had a definite burden for the ark. Such a burden must have come out of a sincere heart for God and His agenda for the people.

The first step in bringing back the ark is a genuine, personal burden for the ark. It is not a matter for the clergy only; the laity, like David, can actually have that burden and pursue

it with the church. If don't get anything from the message of the ark, get at least the burden for the ark. That is the starting point for its return.

Several of us have become so indifferent to spiritual matters that we no longer know the difference between activities and divine agenda. Sometimes, God will send the leadership of the church a definite burden, we will put it in form of a programme, but many of us will not run with it. The Triumphant Night and SOMAYCO are more than Diocesan programmes; they are spiritual waves of divine move based on His burden for this generation.

Therefore, even if you don't have an original personal burden for the ark, it is wonderful for you to co-operate with the leadership in the burden for the ark.

II. Deliberate co-operation of the people

When David raised the agenda of bringing back the ark, the people of Israel (both the clergy and the laity) embraced the agenda. That is the spirit of **team work**. In genuine service for God, everybody must not initiate a move of God; some, by divine permission may initiate the move, others should work with foreman. That is God's principle of acceptable service.

If we must bring back the ark of God in our generation, we must learn team work as a church. The keys are: burden and co-operation. The burden of David for the ark was genuine; it was not about his interest and personal gain; it was about the agenda of God. Let us all cooperate with one another in this matter, and God will do His work to His own glory.

In addition to these two fundamental steps, we charge both individual Christians and the Churches to make a deliberate effort in bringing true revival in our time which is the essence of this theme. To succeed on this journey, we have, in the concept of Dr. Steve Ogan, routes to revival. These routes include but not limited to:

1. **Appreciating the level of Decay in the Land (2 Chronicles 15:3-6)**. Our eyes must be opened to the level of decay both in the church and the society, and more importantly, in our individual lives. The alarmed conscience should be resurrected to recognizing sin and having a burning hunger for righteousness.
2. **Taking Personal Responsibility (2 Chr. 15:1-2, 7)**. We must be available for the Revival. You must work for it before it comes because it shall come as a reward for your work.
3. **Demonstrating Courage and Determination (2 Chr. 15:7-8a)**. There are many factors that are ready to limit or stop the actualization of the return of the Ark. You need to make deliberate decisions, damning the seeming consequences.
4. **Removing of the Idols in the Land (2 Chr. 15: 8b)**. You must put away whatever must have taken the place of God in your life, church and society. This requires courage. The Ark and idols cannot stay together.
5. **Restoring the Altar of Worship (2 Chr. 15:7-8c)**. You must confess your sins, forsake them and worship God in the beauty of His holiness. Worship activities must be taken seriously, done in spirit and in truth.
6. **Mobilizing the Entire Nation (2 Chr. 15:9)**. This move must spark up the church to being Christocentric in her teachings and preachings so as to get her members and those of the society to embrace the move of God. There must be a witness of this move among church members and an impact of it on the environment. David mobilized the whole nation, beginning with the leaders. We have to do same.

THE ARK BEARERS

“...the Lord separated the tribe of Levi to bear the ark of the covenant of the Lord, to stand before the Lord to minister unto Him, and to bless in His name...” – Deut.10:8.

It is said that revival happens when someone cares. That is to say, that revival will always come through one man. As determination and desire to bring back the Ark is important, the type of persons who would be instrumental to the return of the Ark is equally important.

Bearing the ark is a very serious matter to God. It is not a duty for every dick and harry; it is not an all-comers' affair. The reason is that there is a direct connection between the power of the ark and the inner life of the carriers of the ark; that was why the Lord had to give definite instruction on those who should carry the ark. The life of the ark must be born in the ark bearers. That is the principle of God in handling the ark, otherwise, the ark shall be 'robbed' of its power.

If the external activity of bearing the ark is not flowing from a correct inner life, the ark will not manifest its power. This is a very critical matter. God is particular about this principle. So, when Israel was making all the noise in the presence of the ark without carrying the correct inner life, the Philistines still overcame them. Also, the ark did not function in the hands of the Philistines, except that God had to punish the Philistines while they carried the ark because there were a wrong people for the ark.

The staff of Elisha did not function in the hands of Gahazi. The reason is simple: Gehazi did not have the life the staff of Elisha represented. Therefore, it is very imperative that if the ark will be meaningful in our hands; if the move and global wave of the programme of God in our hands will not fail, our inner life must be correct before God. Ark bearing is not just an activity; it is a ministry, the ministry of transferring the life of God to others. So, no matter the shouting and the noise of activities, if our inner life is not correct before, the Philistines will definitely continue to defeat us!

Again, let us note very well that in the Philistines land of idolatry and ungodliness, the ark will not manifest its power except that of plagues. If we deliberately continue in godlessness, yet with the externalities of religion and empty formalities, the ark of the Lord not work in our hands.

Furthermore, in bearing the ark, we should not be presumptuous like Uzzah and the men of Bethshemesh who presumptuously carried and looked into the ark of God. The closer we come to God, the more meticulous about His principles He expects us to be. Let us not be too familiar with God and His word that we treat either with levity. That is dangerous. The inner life of the ark bearer must reflect the contents of the ark. They that bear the ark must have the ark born in them.

WHEN THE ARK RETURNS

In the days of King David, the return of the ark was the return of joy, genuine worship and the power of God. In the days of Solomon, during the Dedication of the Temple, when the ark of God was put in its proper place at the Temple, the experience the worshippers had was awesome: *And they brought up the ark of the Lord, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and all the holy vessels that were in the tabernacle, even those did the priests and the Levites bring up. And king Solomon, and all the congregation of Israel, that were assembled unto him, were with him before the ark, sacrificing sheep and oxen, that could not be told nor*

numbered for multitude. And the priests brought in the ark of the covenant of the Lord unto his place, into the oracle of the house, to the most holy place, even under the wings of the cherubims...And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy place, that the cloud filled the house of the Lord, So that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud: for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of the Lord - 1 Kings 8:3-6, 10-11.

The cloud of the glory of God in the Temple could not allow the priests to do the routine priestly functions. Why? The ark has been given its proper place. The only visible Person in the Temple was God in form of the cloud; no other person was seen. Ministry and activities turned to worship; the cloud swallowed up every other thing and every other person in the Temple.

When the ark of God returns to its place in the church, all the worshippers will not see themselves anymore; they will see only God. Christian service will become a delightful worship; all will prostrate to His majesty. Classism will go; division will go; sin will go; envy will go. Only God would we see in one another! What a glorious experience.

Lord, may your ark return in our midst in Jesus name. Amen.

Please join me in this hymn;

Revive thy work, O Lord;
Disturb this sleep of death
Quicken the smouldering embers now
By thine almighty breath.

Revive thy work, O Lord!
Give Pentecostal showers;
The glory shall be all thine own,
The blessing, Lord, be ours. Amen!

God bless you for listening and for catching the flame in Jesus name. Amen.

Your Brother, Friend, and Bishop.
+Aloysius

APPENDIX I