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JUSTICE AND LOVE FOR PEACE



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Bishop Eluke flanked by the newly ordained Priests and other Priests of the Diocese at the 2023 Priestly Ordination at Corpus Christi Cathedral, PH.

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Don't be a sad Priest

- Bishop Etokudoh tells newly ordained Priests

The Catholic Bishop of Port Harcourt Diocese, Most Rev. Camillus A. Etokudoh has charged the seven newly ordained priests of the diocese, to be happy in the priestly ministry irrespective of the challenges they might encounter in the future.

The Prelate stated this during the priestly ordination held at Corpus Christi Cathedral, Port Harcourt, on Thursday, October 5, 2023, where he encouraged the priests to be happy. "Be happy wherever you are, be a happy priest, don't be a sad priest. Do your best, forgive and accept forgiveness and be true ambassadors of Christ",

By Benedict Guredam & Kingsley Izejiobi



Bishop Etokudoh

he said.

The Diocesan Bishop who also frowned at the rate of petitions by some persons

that disrupt the progress and peaceful co-existence in the Diocese, called on the priests to believe what they read, teach what they believe and practice what they teach, adding that the priests were ordained after enquires from the formators and the people of God in the Diocese.

Bishop Etokudoh commended the Auxiliary Bishop, Most Rev. Patrick Eluke, the Vocations teams and the parents of the priests for their different functions at different times in the lives of the priests.

In his homily at the holy Mass, Bishop Eluke recalled that the priestly

ordination was a step forward towards evangelization in the Diocese. "By virtue of your ordination, God is sending you out. God called each of us from our mothers' womb. You are here today because God wants you to be His ambassadors", he said.

Bishop Eluke explained

that God knows how to qualify those He called and enjoined them to be faithful servants. "Remember, you are a messenger and not the master. The priestly ministry you are entering into is not yours but Christ's", he said.

He reminded them that they are labourers sent by Christ to the vineyard and urged them to obey the

instruction of the Master and always visit the Blessed Sacrament and called on the lay faithful to always support the priests with their prayers.

The newly ordained priests are Rev. Fr. Kennedy Asuru, Rev. Fr. Paul Onuoma Nyi, Rev. Fr. Pius Barineka Nwana, Rev. Fr. Peter Leranubari Derah, Rev. Fr. Augustine Chiwendu Ukulor, Rev. Fr. Fidelis Sofunichi Wopara, and Rev. Fr. Raphael Dumpe.

Fr. Pius Nwana celebrates first Mass in home Parish

Sunday, October 8, 2023, was another day of joy and thanksgiving to God at St. Francis Catholic Church, Kpean, in Khana Local Government Area of Rivers State, over the priestly ordination of one of their sons, Rev. Fr. Pius Barineka Nwana.

In his homily at the holy Mass, Rev. Fr. Clement Ability recalled that priesthood is a gift from God and not a reward for passing exams or for being holy.

Fr. Ability informed the new priest that he has been chosen to speak the mind of Jesus. "You must bear fruit, produce wine and give account of your action. Priesthood is a surest way to heaven and a shortest path to hell fire. Hope in Jesus and you will succeed", he said.

By Benedict Guredam

He called on Christians to examine themselves if they are living according to the dictate of God as tenants in the vineyard. "The vineyard is not your own. Your duty is to take care of it", he noted.

Earlier, Parish Priest and Dean of Bori Deanery, Very Rev. Fr. Tombari Dee appreciated Fr. Nwana for responding to the call to serve in the sacred priesthood and the parents and benefactors for their support and encouragement.

In his speech, the Executive Chairman of Khana Local Government Area, Hon. Dr. Thomas Bariere expressed joy to God for the call of Fr. Nwana and increase in vocation to priesthood in Khana axis.

Hon. Bariere thanked the Bishop for finding their son

worthy for the ministry. "I am very happy", he said.

The Chairman Ordination Committee, Dr. Lesor Ikeh commended everyone who came from far and near to grace the first Mass of thanksgiving and for their gifts and contributions.

In his appreciation, Fr. Nwana who was ordained on Thursday, October 5, 2023, along with six others, thanked God for the grace to go through formation years.

Fr. Nwana said that God chose him unworthy as he is to be a minister of the word and sacraments and prayed God to bless his family and benefactors. "My father late Mr. Vincent Saromen Nwana and Very Rev. Msgr. (Prof.) Festus Okafor, my mentor, who have gone before us marked with the sign of faith. I pray for the happy repose of their souls"



Candidates for Ordination leading the procession for Mass



Bishop Etokudoh during the laying on of hands



Bishop Eluke saying the prayer of Consecration



Cross section of the Religious and others at the Mass



Rev. Fr. Pius Nwana dancing in thanksgiving with his brother priests

CAN Rivers State calls on politicians to maintain peace in the state

Following the decision of the Rivers State Governorship Election Petition Tribunal, which dismissed all the petitions challenging the declaration of Siminlaye Fubara as the duly elected governor of Rivers State, the Christian Association of Nigeria, CAN, Rivers State branch, has called on politicians in the state to maintain the current peace being enjoyed in the State.

Speaking with newsmen in Port Harcourt, the State CAN Chairman, Most Rev. Dokiboeriya Bray-Kaladokubo commended the political gladiators for following the lawful procedure, saying that since the judges have taken their decision, there is no need for anybody to fight.

By Kingsley Izejiobi

According to the CAN chairman, now that the tribunal has taken a stand, the politicians from the other political parties should join hands with the governor to see to the development of the state.

"This is a Christian state, and we don't want to fight", he said.

On the gruesome murder of the Divisional Police Officer in Ahoada Area of the state, Archbishop Kaladokubo said the Christian body totally condemns such act describing it as not befitting for a state like Rivers State that is purely a Christian state.

He stated that there is no reason for anybody to engage in killing of fellow human being, saying that such gruesome murder of a police

officer is a testament of the fact that the moral fabric of the society is gradually fading away.

"The youths have derailed completely from the core moral values, they are no longer following it, how many of the young ones still go to school to learn about Christian morals value and the related courses", he asked.

The CAN leader insisted that the only way life can be better is for the current government to invest more resources in employment creation, saying that the Ahoada incident wouldn't have happened if the youths were gainfully employed, and that the recent upsurge in the 'one chance' phenomenon and kidnapping are also signs that many youths are not gainfully employed

Why ASUU will continue to embark on strike – President

The Academic Staff Union of Universities on Wednesday, October 11, 2023, said it would continue to embark on industrial actions until the government meets its demands.

Subsequently, the union is against any plan by the Tertiary Education Trust Fund to include private universities in the country as beneficiary institutions of its projects.

The President of ASUU, Prof Emmanuel Osodeke, made the union's position known at a two-day interactive session between TETFund and all unions of beneficiary institutions.

Osodeke maintained that



Prof Emmanuel Osodeke

such a move would lead to the proliferation of private universities devoid of quality.

While commending TETFund on delivery, he

urged the fund to work more on the monitoring method of its projects across the country stressing that the level of performance by the beneficiary institutions is not in tandem as some of them received the same amount of money.

He also called on TETFund to apply sanctions on non-performing institutions and advocate for the abolition of what he referred to as the "stakeholders fund".

According to him, "ASUU will continue to embark on strike until the right thing is done in our tertiary institutions. Stakeholders fund should be abolished".

The Federal Government, through the Minister of Education, Prof. Tahir Mamman, on Thursday, October 12, 2023, warned members of the academia and the university community over matters of sexual harassment on campuses.

The FG noted that the Federal Ministry of Education will deal decisively with perpetrators of such acts.

According to a statement by the spokesperson, Federal Ministry of Education, Ben Goong, which was made available to our correspondent, Mamman gave the warning when he received the report of the committee on alleged

FG warns against sexual harassment in varsities

sexual harassment by the Dean, Faculty of Law, University of Calabar, Prof. Cyril Ndifon.

He said, "Sexual harassment is a serious criminal offence and must be dealt with decisively, when and whenever it occurs, adding that the Federal Ministry of Education will do everything humanly possible to turn the ugly tide in our institutions of higher learning."

The minister noted that the offence of sexual harassment is "cancerous and must be eliminated at all

cost," adding that all hands must be on deck to tackle the menace in our educational system.

He also maintained that the administration of President Bola Tinubu is out to protect the vulnerable groups within the country's educational system.

While reiterating that he will evoke the long arm of the law to ensure that perpetrators are adequately punished, the minister added that no one will be allowed to take advantage of vulnerable groups.

Contribute your quota to the growth of the Society, Nigerians Told – Fr. Nebo

By Victor A. Nwokocho

The Parish Priest of St. Mary's Parish Omoku, Rev. Fr. John Nebo has called on Nigerians from all strata of human endeavour, to put hands on the plough and contribute their quota in Nation building to ensure the Country be on the same pedestal among the comity of nations.

Rev. Fr. Nebo made the call, while delivering the sermon on 1st October, 2023 as Nigerians marked the 63rd Anniversary of the nation's independence.

He said, "for the governed to pursue their own prospects they should not look upon the government to provide everything to it's citizen but they should do their bit to uplift the status of their families, their Local Governments and the entire Country, to anchor at the shores of their dream of hope. As he put it, John F. Kennedy the assassinated President of America, told the American citizenry, "not

to ask what America can do for them but what they can do for America."

The spiritual head of St. Mary's Parish Omoku, prayed God to give the people the leadership that would make them be happy, adding that, "good leadership is the ability of recognizing a problem, before it becomes an emergency, and the essence of leadership, is being able to manage a chance."

He propagated the

creation of viable channels to absorb our youths, who are trained at substantial expenses, to keep the nation afloat with propelling services that could bring economic fortunes to the nation.

In an evangelizing inspiration in the homily, he recalled that people had made history and people had rebelled against the norms of society, even Christ have been the harbingers of great change, for the better.

The homilist advised all

to be determined in accepting new challenges and take up more responsibilities that could improve their lots in spiritual and social life.

He said that this could be possible if they hope in God of providence, who can put cheerfulness which is a priceless success asset, a tonic in the world of problems for soul and body, which cost nothing but with it, you can

experience real joy of living.

He told those who are given the mantle of leadership not to use their status, to suppress the people but rather better their standards.

The homilist therefore, urged the faithful to ask our Blessed Mother, Virgin Mary, Mother of Nigeria to intercede with God to Bless Nigeria for greater prospects.

CREATIVE MIND

LINK POEM, JOKES, QUOTE, PROVERB AND MORAL LESSON

Send your jokes and poems to bro.beng@yahoo.com

POEM TROUBLE

Away, away from me
Vanish now into the sea
Much trouble around I see
No more again come to me
For I seek no friend of thee

The first, second and third war
In grave soon will end the world
Hearts made stones and walls
I searched but find not your worth
Yet, to mortals you sent bad words

Keep your distance, I pray you
Unfriendly friend from days of yore
I knew you, I did not my young
Trouble you're, trouble you long
Not cherish even in the long run

Away, stay away from me
Ginger of chaos, pains in men
Dark hearted friend of many
Song of war, voice of agony
Troubling all, even those coming

Unlike dew, you came to stay
Displaying at night, just to steal
Trouble you did, parades in stain
But away, far away I again say
Go and never again come to stay

Trouble, others caused to sin
Since to the hearts, you sting
Trouble, leave us or we sink
To nowhere hand can hold a stick
Even at your trouble dark scene

A swim trouble makes trouble Sea
Talk of the town, behind every scene
Much trouble, the eyes have seen
One day, this trouble from us will flee
Then all eyes will look and see

Thought to Ponder
Learn to take one step at a time

MORAL LESSON

No Time to Lose

The ship's chief engineer, coming down the companion-way into the engine room, shouted: "How long have you been working in this compartment?"

The fireman, recently assigned to the crew, answered honestly: "Ever since I saw you coming down the ladder".

There is a constant temptation for all of us to "take it easy" until an emergency arises. Often we tend to excuse our own idleness, putting off action to some future time which we imagine will be more opportune.

We are naturally inclined to believe that a kind of routine goodness is enough, and we postpone any really energetic spiritual activity. In actuality every day is the right day for spiritual labour – is the proper time for directing our moral energies toward our eternal goal. Indeed, there is no time out of which we make whatever we will.

Do not brood over the past, or dream of the future, but seize the instant and get your lesson from the hour.

FUNNY JOKES

Science

If you think you are a science student. What is the instrument used to measure poverty?

NIGERIA

Nigeria is 63 years, and some people are 75 years old, where do those ones come from?

e.g.
Till I left school, I never understand what G is doing in e.g. If E is for example then G is for what?

PROVERB

Union is strength
A group has more force than an individual

QUOTE

Peace begins with a smile
– Mother Theresa



Benedict Guredam
0803 523 0811

Sacred Heart Parish Choir Gwara holds Music Festival

Sacred Heart Parish Choir, Gwara in Bori Deanery, on Saturday, September 30, 2023, held the first edition of her music festival in a grand style. The festival featured songs in Ogoni, "Kana language" and English respectively.

The program was honoured by choirs from different denominations ministering in songs and dances to glorify God's name.

In his remark, the Diocesan President, Dr. Cornelius Chukwudi Amadi represented by Sis Scholar Abode commended the choristers to sustain the good job of singing praises to the Lord and appreciated them for the occasion.

The Bori Deanery Choir President, Sis Evelyn Bukpor represented by the music director of Bori Deanery, Mr. Ade Alphonsus applauded the parish Chior for a job well done and called for more unity and support to ensure the choir keeps the heights they have set.

The Parish Choir President, Mr. Barineka

Joseph Nwideemua thanked God for the initiative. "This is the first time in the history of this parish, we are only one year and few months in office", he recalled.

He thanked the Parish Priest, Rev. Fr. Kelvin Ile, the Port Harcourt Diocesan Choir Vice President, Priscilla Kogbo and the Secretary, Mr. Eugene Gwara, his Parish Choirmaster, Mr. Akayogoro Silvanus for his selfless efforts in preparing the choir.

Mr. Nwideemua commended the parish choristers especially the choristers, from one of the outstations, Immaculate Heart Sii for their overwhelming support and commitment.

Present at the event were Bori Deanery CWO President, Dr. Mrs. Victoria Ikaba, Sir Anthony Gua (KSM), Mrs. Lilliana Gua, Andrew Nwaoju, Mrs. Janet Ikagbara, chief Jonathan, Edemaya Adaobi, Mr. Godspower Bakpo, Rosemary Enuani, Rev. Kenneth Biragbara and invited choristers.



Parish Priest and Choristers

KSJI Port Harcourt Grand Commemorates a Decade of Knightly Service

Knights of St. John International (KSJI) Port Harcourt Grand has commenced the celebration of its 10 years of her existence, as they rededicate themselves to the defence of the Catholic faith through faith-deepening programmes.

In the penultimate week, Port Harcourt witnessed a grand spectacle as the Knights of St. John International (KSJI) and Ladies Auxiliary, Port Harcourt Grand - a dedicated family apostolate safeguarding the Roman Catholic faith, unveiled the logo for their remarkable tenth-anniversary celebration. The event, which took place at the Juanita Hotel in Port Harcourt, drew the national leadership of the Order to the vibrant garden city and signaled the commencement of a three-month-long celebration. Leading the national delegation were the Supreme Subordinate President, Sir (Prof) Remy Uche, and the Supreme Subordinate Ladies Auxiliary President, Noble

Lady Chinwe Mgbajiaka. During the unveiling of the anniversary logo, the Grand President, Sir Emmanuel Okene, and a recipient of the Papal Knighthood of St. Gregory the Great from Pope Francis expressed gratitude for the opportunity granted to the Grand Commandery he leads. He remarked, "As we celebrate and revel, we look back and thank God for our humble beginnings as Knights of the Catholic Church."

Before introducing the 10th-anniversary logo, the Grand Commandery organized a logo design competition for Cadets and Juniors - the children of Knights. Prizes were awarded to the top entries, with Master Macdonald Somtochukwu Aririguzo winning the first prize of N100,000.

The winning logo thoughtfully incorporated the dominant colors of KSJI: Red symbolizing the martyrdom of St. John the Baptist, Blue

representing Mother Mary, Yellow symbolizing the radiant light of the Catholic faith, and Green at the base, symbolizing growth. The logo's half-moon shape signifies the banner of Jesus over the faithful.

Master Aririguzo, a 15-year-old senior secondary school student, expressed his joy at winning and emphasized the value of showcasing his creative talent. He stated, "Beyond the prize money, I am happy that my creative work is being used to celebrate this anniversary, and I have also been able to put my talent to use."

Following the logo unveiling, Sir Okene shared the comprehensive agenda for the 10th-anniversary celebration. The program includes the Bishop Camillus Etukudoh Catholic Faith Family Project, a faith and moral advocacy initiative sponsored and coordinated by KSJI. A Catechetical Colloquium with the theme

"Catechesis as an Essential Process of Evangelization" is planned. The celebration will also feature a 210-mass choir in a Choral Classical Hymnal Concert and a Golf kitty. It will culminate with a thanksgiving ceremony to express gratitude for the journey thus far.

The Catholic Bishop of Port Harcourt Diocese, Most Rev Camillus Etukudoh who approved the KSJI 10th anniversary celebrations, appreciated the spiritual essence of their commemoration. He encouraged them to continue being steadfast in their Catholic faith and to actively contribute to the mission of making disciples for Christ, as commanded in Matthew 28:19, "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

The jurisdiction of KSJI Port Harcourt Grand Commandery and Ladies

Auxiliary covers the Port Harcourt Diocese, Bomadi Diocese, and parts of the Aba Diocese. While celebrating ten years in the Port Harcourt Diocese, it is essential to note that KSJI made its debut in Nigeria in 1976 and boasts a membership of over 18,000 Knights and their Ladies

across the country. Beyond Nigeria, the Order has its presence in the United States of America, England, Germany, Canada, Trinidad and Tobago, and several African countries, including Kenya, Ghana, Togo, Sierra Leone, and Liberia.



Cadet Mcdonald Somtochukwu Aririguzo



The SSP & the GP with the Winning Logo



The SSP, GP & GRP with one of the contestants - Cadet Martins Azike



The SSP unveiling the Winning Logo and the GS-Col Vincent Okoleh watching



The Award Winner with the hierarchy of the Order & the Committee Chairman



The SSAP - N/Sr. Chinwe Mgbajiaka & the Award Winner



The Grand President & the Award Winner



The GP, Award Winner, His School mate, father & teacher



From R-L, Committee Chairman, N/Bro. Innocent Akuvue SSP, Maj. Gen. Prof. Remy Uche, McDonald S. Aririguzo, GP Brig. Gen. Emmanuel Okene & the GRP N/Sr. Christy Ihuoha



Some of the Contestant with the Award Winner - McDonald

EDITORIAL

Forgive and accept forgiveness

The virtue of forgiveness is one of the cardinal virtues necessary for the attainment of salvation. While teaching about the importance of forgiveness, Jesus said: "If you do not forgive your neighbour his sins against you, how then do you expect your Father in heaven to forgive you"?

In that teaching Jesus makes it imperative that all are called to forgive, and to accept forgiveness. The Catholic Bishop of Port Harcourt Diocese, Most Rev. Camillus Etokudoh, at the recent priestly ordination in the Diocese, remarked that forgiveness is not memory loss, but is simply overlooking the fault of the person who has offended you, giving and accepting hands of reconciliation.

For a Diocese that is operating in a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic and a cosmopolitan city like Port Harcourt, the virtue of forgiving and accepting forgiveness is one that all the faithful, clergy and laity alike must imbibe, because the work of Evangelization that is ahead of the Diocese is much and nothing other than unity of purpose will be required.

Bishop Etokudoh in a rare address at the ordination, underscored the harm that refusal to forgive and accept forgiveness by some faithful is causing the Diocese; the Diocese hardly makes the kind of progress that is expected of her due to the burden of unforgiveness and refusal to accept forgiveness.

It is not acceptable that after more than 60 years as a Diocese, we still have parts of the jurisdiction of the Diocese with more than four Local Government Areas lumped into one Deanery, or where some areas that should be under the Diocese are being administered by other Dioceses.

The Diocese is also up against the raging wave of Pentecostalism, with many Pentecostal churches springing up on daily basis and luring away some faithful who are deceived by erroneous opinions and those whom discord has kept aloof.

Going by the population of Rivers State, numbering over 5 million people, with 23 Local Government Areas and with over 60 years of the canonical erection of the Diocese, Port Harcourt Diocese should by now be an Archdiocese, with three or four other Dioceses calved out of the present Diocese.

What is paramount at the moment is not who is right or wrong, not who is offended and who is not, but how to ensure that the many outstations and Mass centers under the different parishes that are not privileged to hear Masses every Sunday have the opportunity to do so. How to ensure that there is enough faithful, priests and laity alike who are missionary in nature are deployed to the hard-to-reach areas, to ensure that people in those areas are served spiritually and materially.

Refusal to forgive and accept forgiveness leads to the frequent petition writing which has continued to throw spanner on the wheel of progress of the Diocese.

It is also important to remind those who take delight in scandalizing others in the Church, who have turned their positions in the Church to tools of personal glorification, those who make money from the sacraments of the Church, those who Christ described as the Pharisees who would always lay a heavy burden on the shoulder of the people but will never lift a finger to carry it, to first remove the plank in their eyes, so that they can see clearly the particle in the eyes of another.

We once again remind all faithful of the warning Christ gave concerning those who by their actions and in actions lead the 'young ones' astray, that it would be better to hang a rock on their neck, and have them thrown into the depth of the sea.

A priest who does not forgive or accept forgiveness is contradicting what he celebrates at Mass, and any Christ's faithful, clergy or lay, who neither forgives nor accept forgiveness can best be described as a Gentile, a tax collector and a sinner.

Let all heed to Bishop Etokudoh's call to forgive and accept forgiveness, so it shall be well with us.

CATHOLIC LINK Team

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Catholic Church, Bodo City, Celebrates October Devotion

By Emmanuel Vulasi

October Devotion, just as May Devotion and other Practices, are part of the Tradition of the Catholic Church. The Catholic Community in Bodo City does not joke with such Devotions and Practices, as it is the case with other Catholic Parishes.

The 2023 edition of October Devotion was declared open on Sunday, October 01, 2023, the Solemnity of our Lady Queen and Patroness of Nigeria. The following day, Monday, October 02, 2023, the Memorial of Guardian Angels, the Catholic Parishes of St. Patrick and St. Brigid had a joint ceremony to celebrate the dawn of October Devotion this year. This practice of having a joint opening and closing ceremony by both Parishes started with May Devotion and seems to have come to stay, as a show of solidarity in the Church's business to Evangelize and heal the world.

The Celebration started early in the morning with Rosary procession from St. Patrick, through the Community to St. Brigid with the image of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The Ceremony terminated at St. Brigid with the sacrifice of the Holy Mass concelebrated by the Parish Priests of the both Parishes.

In the Homily, Rev. Fr. Anderson Amaechi, the Parish Priest of St. Brigid Catholic Church, Bodo City, acknowledged to the congregation that we all

have Guardian Angels who minister to, and serve, every person. Rev. Fr. Amaechi then posed the question: "Do Guardian Angels still guard us? If so, why do we derail and go astray, fall into temptation and die unprovided death". Illustrating that the answer to the question is "Yes" and "No", the Homilist said God still allow the Guardian Angels to guard those who are close to Him, but they will be far from us if we are not in Communion with God. He stated that being far away from God does not mean that God is deaf, dumb or having a short hand; but our iniquity drives us far away. Illustrating further, the homilist said Africans believe in reincarnation and in the spirit of our Ancestors that still affect us because they are close to us, and we still libate and sacrifice to them, and still believe that if their spirits leave us and go far away, we will derail. Rev. Fr. Amaechi then explained that similar to this traditional belief, when we forfeit the Spirit of God, we derail and behave as we like and our Guardian Angel provides the opportunity for us to examine ourselves and then our Guardian Angel will abide with us, adding that they cannot dwell with us in iniquity. He encouraged the people to struggle daily and God's mercy will assail them. "May the celebration of the day restore our Guardian Angel to guarantee our Salvation". The homilist, Rev. Fr. Amaechi, concluded.

In the Vote of thanks, Rev.

Fr. John Poroma, the Parish Priest of St. Patrick Catholic Church, Bodo City, was sincerely thankful to God for the way the both Parishes demonstrated their faith to the people of Bodo city by the Rosary Procession from St. Patrick, through the Community, to St. Brigid. He prayed to the Lord to provide for the people, to be there for them, to give them their miracle and do something for their children, adding that by this demonstration of Faith in Bodo City, may God bless the Community. Rev. Fr. Poroma also said "we will continue to pray until something happens and God will hear and answer us". He further stated that as the joint celebration started with Rosary procession from St. Patrick at the Opening ceremony, the Rosary Procession will start from St. Brigid to end at St. Patrick during the Closing ceremony on October 31, 2023, as it was the case at the beginning and end of 2023 May Devotion when the joint celebration started. He thanked Rev. Fr. Anderson Amaechi for the cordial working and Pastoral relationship between the two Parishes, which he said will continue to the glory of God. Finally, Rev. Fr. John Poroma thanked everybody in their Groups: Bloc Rosary Crusade, Children of Mary, the Choir, Catholic Youth Organization, Catholic Women Organization, Catholic Men Organization and the Knights and their Ladies.

12 Inmates of Port Harcourt Correctional facility consecrated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus

By Kingsley Izejiobi

No fewer than 12 inmates of the Port Harcourt Correctional Facility were on Sunday, 8th October, 2023 consecrated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, while another 10 old members renewed their consecration vows.

Their consecration was as a result of a year long preparation for their consecration, and was also part of the evangelization activities of the Popes Worldwide Prayer Network, otherwise known as the

League of Sacred Heart of Jesus, Apostleship of Prayer, Port Harcourt Diocese.

The newly consecrated were provided with uniforms and other prayer materials for their weekly devotions within the facility, while the League also provided food, toiletries and other personal effects for the inmates.

Addressing the inmates, the Diocesan President, of the League, Mr. Damian Ezewudo congratulated the newly consecrated,

encouraging them to remain committed to their devotion to the Sacred Heart, as they will surely benefit from the 12 promises of Christ to those who are devoted to His Heart.

According to him, the visit of the League and their consecration to the Heart of Jesus will bring about the freedom of many of them in no distant time.

Highpoints of the consecration was a mini donation to purchase a functional sound system for the church inside the facility



Members of the League of Sacred Heart of Jesus, after their visit to the correctional facility in Port Harcourt

Glitz glamour as St. Francis Parish Rumuokwuta, marks Patron Saint's Feast Day

By Kingsley Izejilobi

Sunday, October 8, 2023, will no doubt continue to remain a memorable day in the heart of parishioners of St Francis Catholic Church, Rumuokwuta, Port Harcourt as the parish marked this year's parish Patron Feast Day celebration with glitz and glamour.

It was a five-in-one celebration, namely; Feast celebration, Pastoral visit and Confirmation of over 400 candidates,

Fundraising for the building of St. Francis College, Blessing of the Parish Hall in honour of Mr. Francis Bruce, and Distribution of N10,000 cash palliatives to over 200 parishioners.

The event brought together dignitaries from within and outside Rivers State, including the Governor of Bayelsa State Senator Duoye Diri, represented by the Secretary to the State Government, Hon. Gideon Ekeuwei, former Senator

from Bayelsa State, Emmanuel Pauker, as well as some former members of National Assembly from Bayelsa State.

Other dignitaries include the parish benefactor, Mr. Francis Bruce, former President of Nigeria Bar Association, NBA, Chief OJC Okocha, Dr TC Osanakpo, SAN, and his wife, Barr. Dame Helen Osanakpo, retired Justice Denton West and a host of others who came to support the church on the invitation of Mr. Francis Bruce.

The Auxiliary Bishop of Port Harcourt Diocese, Most Rev. Dr. Patrick Eluke, while conferring the Sacrament of confirmation of the candidates, reminded them that the sacrament they have received is the one that gives them the fullness of the Holy Spirit, and as such the Church expects them to be defenders of the Catholic faith and not destroyers of the faith.

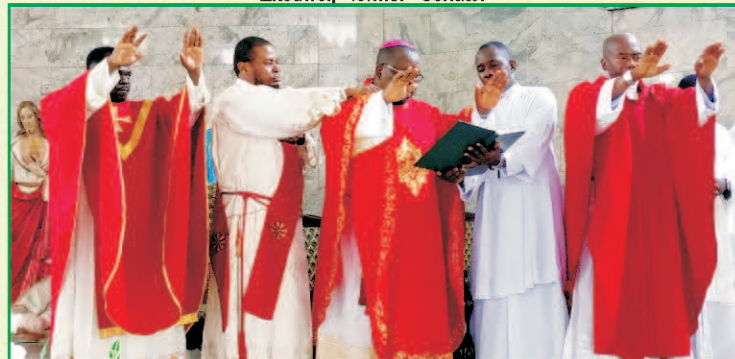
Most Rev. Eluke, who was a Parish Priest in St Francis before his appointment as the Auxiliary

Bishop, thanked parishioners for their support while he was in the parish, urging them to continue to pray for the Bishop and his Auxiliary and support them in any way they can.

The Parish Priest of St. Francis, Rev. Fr. Paul Okeregwu while welcoming the Bishop and other dignitaries to the feast, said with the kind of parishioners in the parish, it is possible to achieve the things that seem to be impossible.

He thanked the parish benefactor for all that he has been for the Church in Port Harcourt Diocese and in particular St. Francis Parish, and prayed God to continually bless him.

High points of the feast celebration include; cultural dance competition between Akwa/Cross, Imolites, Edo/Delta and Rivers/Bayelsa, distribution palliatives to members of the church, cutting of a feast celebration cake and lavish entertainment for parishioners and visitors alike.



Bishop Eluke and other priests, saying the prayer of confirmation on the candidates



Former Parish Priest, Msgr Charlse Agu presenting an award to the Bishop



Bishop Eluke presenting an award to Mr. Francis Bruce



Mr. Francis Bruce and some of his friends during the Mass



Mr Francis Bruce flanked by Members of the school project committee



Mr. Francis Bruce and his friends, coming for thanksgiving



SSG Bayelsa State, Hon. Gideon Ekeuwei, TC Osanakpo and wife during the Mass



Newly confirmed candidates with the Bishop after the Mass



Fr Paul Okeregwu welcoming the Bishop to the Presbytery



Bishop Eluke blessing the newly constructed Francis Bruce hall



Parish Priest Fr Paul Okeregwu making a speech



A cross session of members of at the Mass



A cross session of members of CWO



Members of CYON coming to pay homage to the Bishop



Members of St Francis Choir



Rivers Bayelsa cultural dance



Imolites cultural dance



Edo Delta cultural dance



AkwaCross cultural dance



Bishop Eluke, Francis Bruce and other dignitaries cutting the feast cake



Parish Priest, Fr Paul supervising the distribution of cash palliatives to parishioners



Parish Priest Fr Paul Okeregwu making a speech at the reception



Mr Francis Bruce dancing with parishioners

Theme for 2024 World

Communication Day: Artificial intelligence

"Artificial intelligence and wisdom of the heart: for a fully human communication" is the theme chosen by Pope Francis for the 58th World Communication Day, which will be observed in 2024.

A note from the Holy See Press Office announcing the theme observed that "The evolution of artificial intelligence systems makes it ever more natural to communicate through and with machines, so that it has become increasingly difficult to distinguish computation from thought, and the language produced by a machine from that generated by human beings."

The statement continues: "Like all revolutions, this one based on artificial intelligence, too, poses new challenges to ensure that machines do not contribute to a large-scale system of disinformation and do not also increase the loneliness of those who are already alone, depriving us of the warmth that only communication between people can provide. It is important to guide artificial intelligence and algorithms, so that there is in each

individual a responsible awareness of the use and development of these different forms of communication that go hand in hand with social

media and the Internet. It is necessary for communication to be oriented towards a fuller life of the human person.

Over 1,200 Israelis killed in Hamas attack, new figures show

Israel has massed troops at near the border with Gaza, including 300,000 reservists.

There seems no sign of this brutal conflict calming, and the death toll in Israel from the Hamas attacks keeps climbing.

As of Wednesday, October 11, 2023, it reached 1,200 - with more than 2,700 people injured, most of them civilians.

The Palestinian authorities say more than 1,000 people have been killed by Israeli air strikes on the Gaza strip.

On Wednesday afternoon, the main electricity supply went out in Gaza after its sole power station ran out of fuel.

Since Hamas's brutal attack at the weekend, Israel has forced a siege of Gaza, cutting its supplies of electricity, fuel, food, goods and water. And, as the humanitarian situation continues to deteriorate, the public are fearful of what the coming days may bring.

The UN estimate 260,000

people have fled their homes in Gaza. For its part, Israel says it aims to destroy Hamas's military capabilities. Lt Col Jonathan Conricus said Israel's mission was to ensure Hamas wouldn't 'have any military capabilities by which they can threaten or kill Israeli civilians'.

Meanwhile, in the north, Israel has attacked Lebanese territory in response to an attack from Hezbollah.

Earlier, US President Joe Biden said Israel had a right

Pope Francis appeals for peace in the Holy Land and says Israel has the right to defend itself, but affirms that violence cannot help achieve a lasting peace built on justice.

Speaking at the Wednesday, October 11, 2023, General Audience, Pope Francis expressed his "sorrow and concern" for

and a duty to respond to Hamas' attacks which he described as an "act of sheer evil". He said the United States would stand with Israel and provide whatever assistance it needed.

The Palestinian militant group Hamas launched an lethal attack on Israel on 7 October, with gunmen entering communities near the Gaza Strip, killing hundreds of people, and taking dozens of civilians - including women and children - as hostages.

Pope Francis appeals for peace and restraint in Israel-Hamas war

the war that has broken out between Israel and Hamas, an Islamist militant organization operating in Palestine.

The Pope mourned the many people who have been killed and injured.

"I pray for those families who have seen a day of celebration turned into a day of mourning and ask for the immediate release of the hostages," he said.

Militants from Hamas launched a surprise attack on the southern part of Israel on Saturday, as Jews marked the feast of *Simchat Torah*, or "joy of the Torah".

Hamas took dozens of hostages during its incursion into Israel and has threatened to execute them if

Israel attacks areas within the Gaza Strip.

Violence cannot lead to peace

In his appeal, Pope Francis acknowledged that "it is the right of those who are attacked to defend themselves".

However, he expressed concern for the "total siege facing the Palestinians in Gaza, where there have also been many innocent victims."

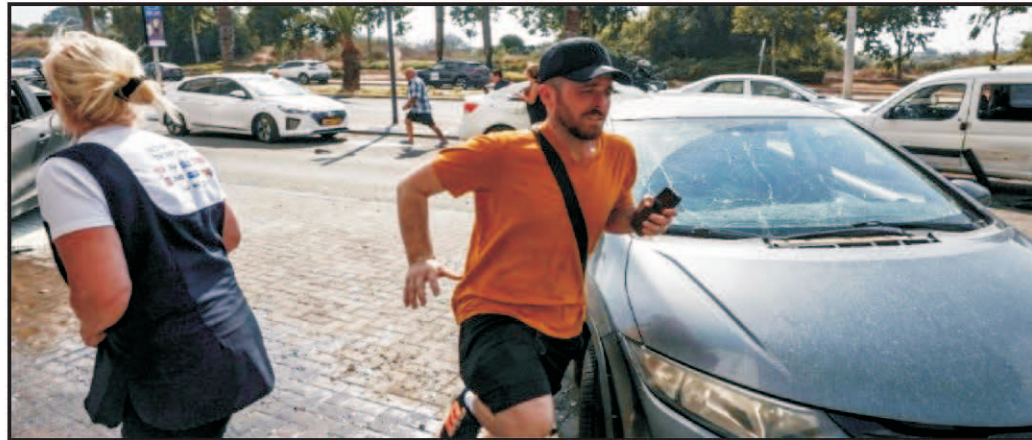
Israel announced a "complete siege" on Gaza, promising to shut off access to electricity, food, water, and gas.

The Pope invited both parties to restraint in hopes of reaching a solution to the war.

"Terrorism and extremism do not help to reach a solution to the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians, but fuel hatred, violence, and revenge, causing suffering to both sides," he said.

Pope Francis concluded his appeal for peace in the Middle East with a call for fraternity and dialogue.

"The Middle East does not need war but peace, a peace built on justice, dialogue, and the courage of fraternity," he said.



POLITICS

Tinubu tells Supreme Court to ignore Atiku's appeal for lack of focus

President Bola Tinubu has told the Supreme Court that the petition by presidential candidate of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) against the February 25 election is a mere blockbuster with thrilling suspense.

The President, therefore, asked the apex court to throw out the appeal filed against the September 6 judgment of the Presidential Election Petition Court.

Part of the grounds canvassed for dismissal of Atiku's appeal was that it is vague, unwarranted, and has no known focus.

Tinubu, in a response filed on his behalf by a senior advocate, Wole Olanipekun, said the appeal has no legs to stand upon or wings to fly to the direction being sought by the PDP presidential candidate.

He maintained that he defeated Atiku and PDP in

virtually all states of the federation, prompting Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to declare him winner, after lawful collation of results in the presence of agents of the appellant.

Tinubu faulted allegations of malpractices, non-compliance with electoral laws, and non-qualification raised by Atiku, saying the lower court did not find merit in

any; hence, they were dismissed.

The President also challenged the competence of Atiku's petition, insisting what the PDP presidential candidate dressed as statement of facts were mere hearsays with no probate values.

Tinubu asserted that while Atiku claimed to have won the majority of lawful votes cast at the election, he never gave the figure he scored.

He claimed that what Atiku termed 'expert report' was a worthless paper, having been produced outside the period stipulated by law, making it inadmissible by any court.

As of the time of this report, the Supreme Court had not fixed a date for hearing of the appeal, marked SC/CS/935/2023.

court ordered Chicago State University to release Tinubu's academic records at the request of the Presidential candidate of the Peoples Democratic Party and former Vice President, Atiku Abubakar.

Atiku had previously sought the release of Tinubu's certificate, suspecting that the one submitted to the Independent National Electoral Commission may not be authentic.

According to Obi, the controversy surrounding Tinubu's identity has worsened Nigeria's image internationally, portraying every Nigerian as a fraudster, certificate forger, or identity thief.

Rivers housewife arrested for bathing husband with hot oil

Operatives of Rivers Police Command have arrested one Mrs Hope Nwala for allegedly pouring hot vegetable oil on her husband, Ekelediri Nwankwo while he was asleep at their home in Okehi, Etche Local Government Area of the State.

It was gathered that the ugly incident happened after an altercation between the husband and wife arising from an accusation of infidelity.

Nwankwo, who is now battling with third-degree burns alleged that his wife after pouring the hot vegetable oil on him, began to hit him with a hammer, took his phone and fled from their matrimonial leaving him reeling in severe pain.

He alleged that he incurred the wrath of his wife after he asked the sister to leave his house.

He said: "I told my wife's younger sister to leave my house because of the way she has started dressing, and the way she was occupying my matrimonial bed, even when I am around. No young guy will tolerate such behaviour. But my wife has refused the younger sister to leave the house".

Nwankwo also accused the wife of flirting with a yet-to-be-identified young man.

"I also saw my wife alone with one tall black guy in the shop I rented for her, not that he is in for business, he followed my wife and sister here and there. Because of this, I gave her younger sister N2000 transport fare to go home so that I could actually understand what was happening in my house. But my wife got upset, while I was sleeping, she poured hot groundnut oil on me, then started hitting me with a hammer to kill me," Nwankwo alleged.

However, SP Grace Inge-Koko, the Spokesperson for the Rivers State Police Command has confirmed the arrest of Mrs. Hope Nwala.

In response to inquiries, SP Inge-Koko said "Good afternoon, the wife has been arrested in police custody now".

Tell Nigerians your real name, Obi urges Tinubu

The Labour Party's Presidential candidate in the 2023 elections, Peter Obi, has urged President Bola Tinubu to tell Nigerians his true name and everything related to his educational career.

The former governor of Anambra State said this on Tuesday, October 10, 2023, in a press conference in Abuja and asked Tinubu to provide clear details about the schools he attended, whether he participated in the National Youth Service Corps, and if he changed his name at any point.

Obi added that Tinubu needs to introduce himself to Nigerians and the world so as to further avoid doubts and international embarrassment.



Mr. Peter Obi

"Mr Tinubu should tell the nation his true name, the school he attended, where he served, and the certificate he obtained. He must do this task once and now," Obi said.

The call comes after a United States of America

Bishop Eluke installs 12 Lectors, 9 Acolytes

The Auxiliary Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Port Harcourt, Most Rev. Dr. Patrick Eluke on Saturday, October 7, 2023, installed a set of 12 senior seminarians as Lectors and nine as Acolytes respectively.

The installation ceremony was held at St. John's Catholic Church, Rumuokwursi, Port Harcourt, and witnessed by parents of the candidates and the parishioners.

In his homily at the installation Mass, the Parish Administrator, Rev. Fr. Samuel Inaku explained that Lectors were installed to read at Mass, prepare candidates for sacraments and proclaim the Holy Eucharist. He said that Acolyte helps to prepare bread and wine that would be used for Mass, take holy Communion to the sick and assist in the distribution of the Holy Eucharist during Mass.

The Administrator who is also the Secretary, Diocesan

By Benedict Guredam

Vocation's Team, admonished the seminarians not to be so excited after the installation but focus more on the duty expected of them. "Don't just rejoice that you have been installed. It is beautiful to conduct deliverance, speak in tongue, conduct healing and become a prayer warrior but all these things are the only means to an end but rejoice that your names will be written in heaven", he said.

He called on them to follow the steps to the sacred priesthood which begins with being a Lector, an Acolyte, a Deacon before becoming a priest. "You cannot jump from Lector to become a Deacon. You have to follow the procedure".

Speaking on the gospel reading of the day, Fr. Inaku said that Jesus allowed 70 others to share in His ministry which is an indication that no one can do the work alone, there is need for collaboration. "We are co-responsible for the building

up of the Church of God. If we fail, we fail together and if we win, we win together", he said. He also charged the newly installed seminarians to carry out their responsibilities for the good of the Church.

Fr. Inaku thanked the Diocesan Bishop, Most Rev. Camillus A. Etokudoh and the Auxiliary, Bishop Eluke for encouraging vocation in the Diocese.

In his speech, Bishop Eluke congratulated the newly installed Lectors and Acolytes who have spent six and seven years in formation at the seminary and thanked their parents and parishioners who witnessed the ceremony.

Those installed Lectors were Clinton Amadi, Samuel Sornaata, Samuel Akujor, Peter Giadom, Paulinus Guredam, Bonaventure Gbaawa, David Vidag, Dennis Deegbara, Long-John Michael, Malachi Jude, Stephen Kooro and Valentine Woke.

While those installed Acolyte were Clinton Amadi,

Samuel Somaata, Samuel Paulinus Guredam, Emeshie, Michael Agumagu Akujor, Peter Giadom, Godspower Agbam, John and Solomon Kaafor.



Bishop Eluke, the installed seminarians and CMO and CWO of St. John's Rumuokwursi



St. Patrick and St. Brigid Parishes as they marked the beginning of October Devotion on the Feast Day of our Guardian Angels

Bishop Eluke challenges politicians on charity

Auxiliary Bishop of Port Harcourt, Most Rev. Dr. Patrick Eluke has challenged politicians in Nigeria, especially, Catholic politicians to be charitable and work hard to reduce the level of suffering in the country.

Bishop, who addressed politicians while speaking at a ceremony in St Francis Catholic Church, Rumuokwuta, Port Harcourt, said it was sad that politicians have continued to grow fat, while majority of Nigerians continue to wallow in abject poverty.

He reminded the political elites that no one can be truly happy when majority of those around him or her cannot feed whereas he or she has enough to throw away.

"If there are politicians here, I want to appeal to you, let our people feed, we are hungry, do not feed on the people, do not be the only light that will shine, around your neighborhood, you are putting on a generator while others are in darkness, and that is why you are

By Kingsley Izejiobi

carrying Mopol everywhere", he said.

The Prelate called on the political class to use their offices and positions in the society to make life better for the people, saying that things have become very difficult in Nigeria, including the cooking gas which ordinary people can use to cook their food has become so expensive that ordinary people can no longer afford it.

According to him, the amount of money used in buying fuel today has become about three times the former price, saying that the recent award of N35,000 announced by the Federal Government for its workers is nothing but a mockery of the real situation in the country.

"How many people are working in federal civil service?, That money that was posted in the emails legislators, how much is it? And I want to urge you to please know that we are

suffering so that you can make the burden a bit lighter", he stated.

Bishop Eluke also reminded the political leaders that it was not an offense that the people voted for them, and as such they owe it to the people to make life much better by reducing the level of suffering in the country.

The Auxiliary Bishop concluded by reminding the politicians that there is heaven and that there is hell, and that any wealth acquired with the suffering of the people will not last and will always be the source of worry to you, urging the political leaders to make the basic necessities of life available

"I use to warm my car every morning, but today I no longer warm it unless I am going out, I used to fill my tank with N15,000, but now I use N49,000 more than even the N35,000 that is being proposed by government", he added



The Statue of BVM used by St. Patrick and St. Brigid Parishes during the Devotion



Prof. Mother Marie Pauline Eboh (DMMM), celebrates 50th Anniversary of her Religious Profession at Mater Dei Cathedral Umuahia recently.

Master Barinuaka Guredam goes to Church

Little master Barinuaka Benedict Guredam, the son of Mr. and Mrs. Benedict Guredam was presented to God on Sunday, October 1, 2023, at Corpus Christi Cathedral, Port Harcourt.

In his homily at the holy Mass, the Cathedral Administrator, Rev. Fr. Martin Amadi, observed that the Sunday marked the 63rd independence of the existence of Nigeria, and called on the faithful to glorify God for the gift of life.

Fr. Amadi called for good leadership, justice and peace in the country. "We are all leaders

in one way or the other. We all participate in leadership beginning from our homes", he said.

He explained that Jesus came to establish peace and justice on earth where no one will be rejected. "There can never be peace without justice. Imitate Jesus for peace to reign in the Church, family and country", he said.

The Administrator congratulated the family of Mr. Guredam for the presentation of their son to God and prayed God to protect master Barinuaka, watch over him, fill him with wisdom, grace and understanding and provide for

the parents the necessary means to train him.

Speaking with Catholic Link, Mr. Guredam thanked God for His love and favour upon his family and especially for the gift of his son. "God has been so good to me, His favour is all I see. My son is named Benedict because he is my first son and he was also born in the month of June. It was divinely arranged. His birth gives me joy", he said.

Mr. Guredam prayed God for the grace and financial favour to be able to care for his family and train up his children on the path of Christ.



Mr. and Mrs. Benedict Guredam, family and friends before the altar

ACCOMPANYING THE ELDERLY: This Column proposes to accord recognition and provide social, psychological, spiritual support to the elderly of Port-Harcourt Diocese, to enable them live out the sunset of their lives in dignity and relative peace of mind and body. The Column is open and interactive, so that our readers may ask questions or provide alternative points of views on issues raised here. Questions, comments and other inputs may be directed to the Editor or the Column Curator at 08033105043. "Old age is a gift from the Lord", says Pope Francis. Let us cherish it!

WHO ARE THE ELDERLY?

Before we delve into the world of the elderly, let us discuss the question: who are the elderly? There are many schools of thought on this question. The elderly may go by the appellation: grandpa, grandma, paapa, maama, the aged, senior citizens, old man, old woman, retiree et cetera. Other names are: agadi nwoke, agadi nwanyi, ichie, onye ichie (Ibo); un vecchio, una vecchia (Italian); The scriptures often refer to them as the gray-haired, the hoary headed (Pro. 20:29, Deut. 32:28, Pro. 16:31, Lev 19:32). By whatever name they are called, the elderly have distinctive features and characteristics by which they are recognized.

These names mean different things to different people. A child of 5 years was asked: "who is grandma?" She answered: "that old lady who gives me sweets and biscuits and stops mommy from beating me when I am bad".

Another child of ten years met her mommy sobbing because her younger brother of 39 years was going in for surgery. For consolation the child said: "Mommy, stop crying, even if your brother does not pull through – after all he is old".

There is a popular running television series, titled: Age is a number". Another school of thought asserts one is as old as one feels. In other words, age is quality of the mind. A priest or pastor may talk of "church elders". In fact, the parish Pastoral Council is made up of individuals knowledgeable in the affairs of the parish one is appointed/elected to represent the parish in his/her area of expertise, and can be relied upon to make decisions to enhance the well being of the section of the parish that he/she represents. He or she is regarded as an "elder", regardless of his or her age.

In this forum, however, we shall be dealing with elders characterized by the following attributes: chronological age (number of years lived on planet earth); biological age (depicting the state of the body) (ravaged by one debilitating illness or another or kept trim and fit); psychological age (how old a person feels and acts) (depressed by the sudden loss of loved ones or simply stressed out by anxiety over

living conditions); and social age (describing changes in family interconnections, economic circumstances and ability to participate in community activities, loneliness etc). The chronological age seems to be the simplest to describe although the women folk do their best to conceal their age. In the United States of America, retirement age is 60 years, and then one moves into senior citizens cadre. Similarly in Nigeria. The World Health Organization marks persons over 60 years old as elderly. Popular opinion in Port Harcourt generally regard elders as men and women 65 years and ageing. Debilitating diseases can make a 50 year old look like or even 70 years, so that, chronologically, he/she is 50 years but biologically, he/she is 70 years. Painful hurts, accidents, deep spiritual wounds that may need healing, all contribute to the psychological state of the individual and so affect the individual's feeling and behaviour. A person taken out of his/her normal environment, away from familiar friends and family and interests is known to age faster than one immersed in his usual environment. These count for social ageing indices.

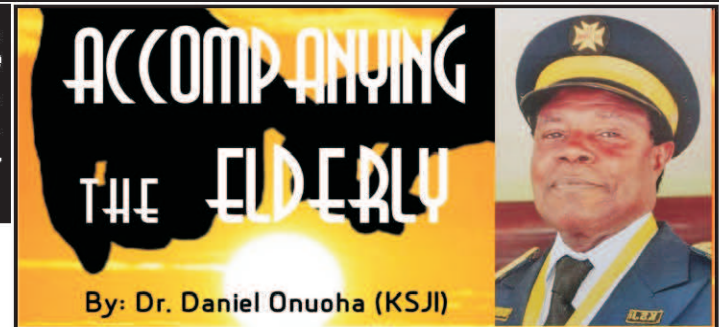
Our discussion will not be complete without talking about how long man is expected to live on earth. In the prayer of Moses, the man of God, one finds:

"Seventy years is all we have, eighty years, if we are strong". Ps. 90:10

But, the Lord Himself said, in reaction to the Sin of Adam:

"I will not allow people to live forever, they are mortal. From now on they will live no longer than one hundred and twenty years" Gen. 6:3.

But, lifespan of one hundred and fifty years is possible, Christian Jacobsen Drakenberg, a Dane, is said to have lived between 141 -146 years. He died in 1772. In April, 1958, a Columbian (South American) died at a ripe old age of 168 years. He was examined at Cornell Medical Centre in New York where gerontologist declared Xavier Periera to be more than 150 years old. An Azerbaijan farmer (Russia) was reported by Newsweek Magazine (in June



By: Dr. Daniel Onuoha (KSJI)

1958) celebrating his 150th birthday. He was father of over 23 sons and daughters, his eldest daughter being 122 years at that time. Reports from Asia show the Hunzukuts, a tribe in remote Pakistan, live to be 120 or even 140 years. My in-law died 103 years of age and prior to that she could take her bath by herself and keep her room clean. The mother-in-law of a friend is 109 years and ageing.

Let me anticipate your question here: In Genesis Chapter 5, we find that Adam lived 930 years; his son Seth 907 years, Methuselah 969 years before he died; Enosh 945 years; Kenan 910 years; Mahalalel 895 years; Jared 800 years; Lamech 777 years; Enoch 365 years.

But, then Abraham lived 175 years (Gen. 25:7) Joseph his son... years, David... years and so on.

Your perplexity is well founded, but we leave the matter for theologians. However, note what God said in Gen 6:3

"I will not allow people live forever; they are mortal. From now on they will live no longer than a hundred and twenty years".

Then later on the scripture records:

"when the Lord saw how wicked everyone on earth was and how evil their thoughts are all the time He was very sorry that he had made man (Gen 6:5)

It appears, therefore, that as the wickedness of man increased, man's span of life decreased progressively from epoch to epoch. Observe that from Adam to Noah, the span was 600-900 years. From Noah to Abraham, the span was 200-600 years. Hebrew Patriarchs lived between 100-200 years. As wickedness increased, longevity decreased.

Pro. 10 -20 declares that long life is a blessing from God. Isaiah also makes it clear that long life is one of the privileges of the coming Christ as David declares in Psalm 91.

Let us leave this with the theologians. Our aim here is to see how we can live long enough with joy and in good health. We shall find that apart from providence, our lifestyle from youth to middle age, and especially in old age, can promote healthy and joyful living and stay the hand of Father Time.



Love is supposed to be beautiful, and marriage more beautiful. But many people have gone through lots of emotional trauma in the hands of the ones they love. This column is a place where you can pour out your heart; talking about it might not solve your problems but it certainly will make you feel better. Are you in a relationship and yet there are issues and questions bothering you, feel free to send your questions along with your age to: 09096025866 and it shall be published for other readers to share in your pain and sadness in the next edition. If you do not want your problems shared publicly, that's alright, still send your problems to 09096025866 and you will get a prompt response privately. Remember, a problem shared is a problem halved! Quit shedding the tears and start talking!... Remain blessed!

Good Communication... The Key To A Successful Marriage

1. No relationship/marriage can be sustained without good communication.

2. There are two types of communication: Good communication and bad communication. You may be communicating, but are you communicating well?

3. Communication has two goals: To be understood and to be on the same page. Teamwork needs proper communication.

4. Communication can be improved. You can better your relationship/marriage.

5. You can inspire your spouse/partner to better communicate with you by being good at communication. Be friendly. Yes, there are marriages where the two are husband and wife but are not friends. This shouldn't be.

6. It is not just about what you say but also how you say it. Check your tone of voice and facial expression if they communicate love.

7. You know your marriage needs work when a majority of what you talk about is children and responsibilities and of each other and not your love. Bring back your love into the agenda.

8. Sometimes your spouse/partner will open up to you, not because he/she wants advice from you, but because he/she just wants to be heard. You don't have to advise or solve problems every time. Sometimes the best thing to do is to listen

9. There are things about your spouse/partner you will never know unless you ask. Learn to ask the right questions.

10. There are conversations you two will not have unless you invest ample time in each other. Communication becomes shallow when time spent is rushed or brief. Make time to just be around each other and naturally you two will open up.

11. How you handle the sensitive, painful, private and not so pleasant secrets your spouse/partner reveals to you, will determine if he/she will reveal some more to you.

12. Never get tired of exploring each other. There is always something to discover even after being married for many years.

13. If your spouse/partner is feeling misunderstood then you have failed.

14. Start each day right. With a smile, warm words, a blessing. Don't expect the day to go well if you don't start right?

15. Connecting deeper with another person is emotionally cheating. Don't be unfaithful.

16. Ladies, it is not the role of the man alone to start a conversation.

17. Women love to talk. It is not that they chatter for no reason but that talking is a fruit of true companionship.

18. Men love to talk too. All a man needs is an environment of peace, warmth, maturity, fun and his

wife/woman to stimulate him intellectually.

19. Ladies, if you want him to open up to you more, don't push him. Be his buddy. Don't take things too seriously. Demonstrate to him how to do it by opening up to him. Show him you need him. A man who feels needed and welcomed lets down his guard.

20. Gentlemen, if she nags that means she feels ignored, frustrated and avoided. You have made her feel that way. Feed her love and she will nag less.

21. Two people in a relationship/marriage can look at the same thing differently. Don't assume you both are on the same page. Talk things out.

22. It is normal for you two to disagree. Respect each other's view point.

23. Giving silent treatment when your spouse/partner wrongs you damages communication. Keep the communication going even when in the middle of a storm. The more you damage communication, the more you two will get used to being apart, the harder it will be to reconcile.

24. Communication is dependent on mood. Set the mood conducive for deep talks. Go out on dates. Plan a picnic. Have a candle light dinner.

25. When your spouse/partner talks, give him/her eye contact.

SUNDAY OCTOBER 15, 2023 (28TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME)

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

If you, O Lord, should mark iniquities, Lord, who could stand? But with you is found forgiveness, O God of Israel.

COLLECT

May your grace, O Lord, we pray, at all times go before us and follow after, and make us always determined to carry out good works. Through our Lord...

FIRST READING

A reading from the Book of Isaiah (Isaiah 25:6-10a)

The Lord will prepare a feast and will wipe away tears from all faces.

On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of fat things, a feast of choice wines — of fat things full of marrow, of choice wines well refined. And he will destroy on this mountain the covering that is cast over all peoples, the veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death forever, and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces, and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the Lord has spoken. It will be said on that day, "Behold, this is our God; we have waited for him, that he might save us. This is the Lord; we have waited for him; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation." For the hand of the Lord will rest on this mountain.

The word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Psalm 23:1-3a, 3b-4, 5, 6 (R. 6cd)

R/. In the Lord's own house shall I dwell for length of days unending.

The Lord is my shepherd;
there is nothing I shall want.
Fresh and green are the pastures
where he gives me repose.
Near restful waters he leads me;
he revives my soul. *R/.*

He guides me along the right path,
for the sake of his name.
Though I should walk in the valley
of the shadow of death,
no evil would I fear, for you are with me.
Your crook and your staff will give me comfort. *R/.*
You have prepared a table before me
in the sight of my foes.
My head you have anointed with oil;
my cup is overflowing. *R/.*

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me

all the days of my life.
In the Lord's own house shall I dwell
For length of days unending. *R/.*

SECOND READING

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Philippians (Philippians 4:12-14, 19-20)

I can do all things in him who strengthens me.

Brethren: I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound; in any and all circumstances I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and want. I can do all things in him who strengthens me. Yet it was kind of you to share my trouble. And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. To our God and Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

The word of the Lord.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia. May the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ enlighten the eyes of our hearts that we might know what is the hope to which he has called us. Alleluia.

GOSPEL

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew (Matthew 22:1-14)

Invite to the marriage feast as many as you find.

At that time: Again Jesus spoke to the chief priests and elders of the people, in parables, saying, "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a marriage feast for his son, and sent his servants to call those who were invited to the marriage feast; but they would not come. Again he sent other servants, saying, 'Tell those who are invited, Behold, I have made ready my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves are killed, and everything is ready; come to the marriage feast.' But they made light of it and went off, one to his farm, another to his business, while the rest seized his servants, treated them shamefully, and killed them. The king was angry, and he sent his troops and destroyed those murderers and burned their city. Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding is ready, but those invited were not worthy. Go therefore to the streets, and invite to the marriage feast as many as you find.' And those servants went out into the streets and gathered all whom they found, both bad and good; so the wedding hall was filled with guests. "But when the king came in to look at the guests, he saw there a man who had no wedding garment; and he said to him, 'Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding garment?' And he was speechless. Then the king said to the attendants, 'Bind him hand and foot, and cast him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' For many are called, but few are chosen.

SUNDAY REFLECTION

PUTTING ON THE RIGHT GARMENT by Fr. Ikokwu

This 28th Sunday in ordinary time year A, Holy mother Church invites us to partake of the joy and gladness the Lord has prepared for us in His banquet. It is a feast that no one can afford to be absent from. Naturally, nobody would like to be absent from the banquet of sumptuous meal, prepared by God and to which he has graciously given them an invitation. But unfortunately, in the Gospel parable of this Sunday, the original invitees (the Jews) did not show up. They had all sorts of excuse to give and so declined when the banquet was ready. So, the invitation was made open to the people of all walks of life; those who acknowledge the son of God and became Christians, including you and I.

But we must still realize that even though we have been called to the banquet as the new invitees, we cannot remain in the banquet unless we are properly dressed with proper garments, by conducting ourselves to our new status as the new people of God. God truly wants us to be present at His banquet and to be present in our proper attire. Most times we respond to the invitation to discipleship with the wrong attire. We combine Christian discipleship with hatred, envy, pride, selfishness, impurity, dishonesty, irresponsibility etc. To follow Jesus, we must strip ourselves of negative garments and put on the garment of righteousness: humility, gentleness, forgiveness, purity, peace, honesty, prayer and love.

No matter when, where or how one received the invitation to follow Jesus, they have no excuse not to put on the right garment. We need to empty ourselves so we can be filled with all the good things that feature in the banquet. When we respond to the invitation with the right garments of love and righteousness, even in the midst of worldly hardship, we will be able to say with St Paul: I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. Jesus is the one who strengthens us, and as St Paul says: he will supply our needs according to his riches in glory if we remain in His banquet with the right garment.

SUNDAY OCTOBER 22, 2023 (29TH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR A)

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

To you I call; for you will surely heed me, O God; turn your ear to me; hear my words. Guard me as the apple of your eye; hide me in the shadow of your wings.

COLLECT

Almighty ever-living God, grant that we may always conform our will to yours and serve your majesty in sincerity of heart. Through our Lord. .

FIRST READING

A reading from the Book of Isaiah (Isaiah 45:1, 4-6)

I have grasped the hand of Cyrus to subdue nations before him.

Thus says the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have grasped, to subdue nations before him and uncover the loins of kings, to open doors before him that gates may not be closed: "For the sake of my servant Jacob, and Israel my chosen, I call you by your name, I surname you, though you do not know me. I am the Lord, and there is no other, besides me there is no God; I clothe you, though you do not know me, that men may know, from the rising of the sun and from the west, that there is none besides me; I am the Lord, and there is no other.

The word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Ps 96: 1 and 3, 4-5, 7-8, 9-10a (R. 7b)

R/. Give the Lord glory and power.

O sing a new song to the Lord;
sing to the Lord, all the earth.
Tell among the nations his glory,
And his wonders among all the peoples. *R/.*

For the Lord is great and highly to be praised,
To be feared above all gods.
For the gods of the nations are naught.
It was the Lord who made the heavens. *R/.*

Give the LORD, you families of peoples,
Give the LORD glory and power;
Give the LORD the glory of his name.
Bring an offering and enter his courts. *R/.*

Worship the LORD in holy splendor.
O tremble before him, all the earth.
Say to the nations, "The LORD is king.
He will judge the peoples in fairness. *R/.*

SECOND READING

The beginning of the first Letter of Saint Paul to the Thessalonians (1 Thessalonians 1:1-5b)

Remember your faith, love, and hope.

Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, to the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace. We give thanks to God always for you all, constantly mentioning you in our prayers, remembering before our God and Father our work of faith and labour of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. For we know, brethren beloved by God, that he has chosen you; for our Gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction.

The word of the Lord.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia. You will shine as lights in the world, holding fast the word of life. Alleluia.

GOSPEL

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew (Matthew 22:15-21)

Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's

At that time: The Pharisees went and took counsel how to entangle Jesus in his talk. And they sent their disciples to him, along with the Herodians, saying, "Teacher, we know that you are true, and teach the way of God truthfully, and care for no man; for you do not regard the position of men. Tell us, then, what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?" But Jesus, aware of their malice, said, "Why put me to the test, you hypocrites? Show me the money for the tax." And they brought him a coin. And Jesus said to them, "Whose likeness and inscription is this?" They said, "Caesar's." Then he said to them, "Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.

The Gospel of the Lord.

SUNDAY REFLECTION

GIVE TO CAESAR by Fr. Ikokwu

This 29th Sunday in ordinary time and mission Sunday, our attention is drawn to our duties as dual citizens. As Christians, we are both citizens of heaven and of earth. Whatever makes people good Christians fit for heaven, also makes them good citizens of the earth. As members of the society, we have duties and obligations which we must carry out without letting them rob us of our heavenly citizenship.

And today Jesus says give to Caesar. Giving to Caesar does not refer literally to the coin, but to the fulfillment of our civil and social responsibilities. It is part of our calling as Christian to be involved in the secular affairs without compromising our faith. Our Christian identity does not exempt us from our civil obligations and engaging in societal affairs; but in all of these, you must allow God to take centre stage in our lives. After all, even Caesar himself belongs to God.

The call therefore today is to invite us to develop ample interest for the happenings in our society and our home. Don't just sit down and watch things going wrong and refuse to do or say anything about the wrongs in our society, Church and homes. God invites us to develop interest and participate in the family, social and political process, so that we can create a godly system. We are challenged to get involved and not just become mere observers in our society. In the words of Edmund Burke: "the only thing needed for the triumph of evil is for good people to sit down and do nothing."

Today, God is inviting us to be active in our civil responsibilities. We must not turn a blind eye to the things that concern our society and home — be actively involved and bring God into them. Our Christian obligations does not give us the excuse to dodge our civic and family duties.

So, give to God what belongs to God; that is your time and your entire being. But give to your family what belongs to your family: love and respect to every member of this family, yes parents must contribute financially, but children must learn respect and work hard in their studies to bring glory to their home. Each of us must take up with joy our daily duties, and don't wait for anyone to remind us of the duties we know belong to us.



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