



SPOTLIGHT

ON THE PROVINCE OF NIGERIA

Volume 11. No. 3. 3rd Edition 2022

HIGHLIGHTS

YOUNG SISTERS' SESSION 2022



The mystique of Living Together was the theme of the Young Sisters'/ under 10 years of vocation session held in St.

Catherine's community, Umunede, Delta state from 1st – 10th August, 2022. This theme was drawn from the just

concluded General Assembly. St. Vincen in one of the conferences admonished us to “live together as having but one heart and mind,...and by the image of the spirit you may be a true model of the trinity”.

21 sisters from the various communities in Nigeria and Ghana were in attendance. The overall aim of the session was to enable the sisters be refreshed and renewed in the holy spirit so as to live in cordiality, loving one another in the imitation of Christ, bearing joyful witnesses for Christ and living an ideal community life.

After the day of arrival, the programme began with the celebration of the holy mass by Rev. Fr. Cletus Kpalap CM, the Visitor of the Congregation of the Mission, Province of Nigeria.

Speakers included; Fr. Cletus Kpalap, CM, Sr. Ifeoma Arinze, DC, Sr. Beatrice Alaribe, DC, Sr. Fidelma Akata, DC, Sr. Agatha Nkemjika, DC, Sr. Florence Emmanuel, DC, and Sr. Angelina Mark who accompanied us throughout the session. They all had time to

interact and teach the young and vibrant ones of the company. They also entertained spontaneous questions. They all spoke with wisdom on a wide range of topics relating to community life.

On the first day of interaction, we were edified with the insightful words from Fr. Cletus Kpalap, CM who spoke on the “Scriptural Basis for Community Living” refreshing our minds of what community really is; a place of encounter and responsibility of life. Hence, the religious community is the stable/ visible form of community life. He stressed that anyone willing to live in community must be determined to live like a pilgrim on earth, change one's standard of behavior, mortify their passions, seek God and God alone, serve, and not to be served, suffer and work and not to live in luxury and idleness. Thus, community living is an incarnational reality that allows for the transformation of love in the human relationship of its members.

To buttress that in community



life everything is grace, Sr. Beatrice Alaribe, Dc spoke to us on the need for “Openness to reconciliation in the spirit of ongoing conversion and breaking the barriers to encounter one another as a mystery of God's presence in community”. According to Hillary Clinton, “being human, we are imperfect, that is why we need each other, to catch each other when we fall and encourage each other when we falter. When we do this, some may lead, others follow, but none of us can go it all alone”.

We enumerated some things that

can cause barriers to encountering one another as; intolerance, self-righteousness, lingering anger, impatience, lack of love, prayerlessness, sects, pride, ineffective communication, stages of life, level of stress, value system, etc. We also dared to proffer a way forward so that we can break through the gates of our barrier that hinders healthy community living so as to encounter one another as; change of orientation (positive view), make excuses and grow in forbearance, love, forgiveness, listening, praying

among others. Just as Martin Luther would say; “we must learn to live together as brothers and sisters or we perish together as fools”.

Also stressing on reconciliation, she said that it does not come by chance, but intentional and since St. Vincent believes strongly that the continuation or dissolution of the company depends on forgiveness and reconciliation at all times, we are to make conscious efforts and steps toward it. Fraternity and forgiveness can be easily talked about but not easy to express especially in our day and time when most people are unconcerned about the other and most often see the other as an enemy.

Sr. Fidelma Akata, DC took more time to discuss with us on “Community life of the Daughters of Charity in the 21st Century, its strengths and Challenges”. She explained that community life transcends the self/ individual interest and looks at the common goals. Taking us back in history to the time of the early church, how they lived in the Acts of the

Apostles, sharing everything they had in common and how our founders considered community as a milieu based on affection that fosters a healthy environment that fosters human and spiritual growth as well as apostolic creativity.

In recent times, community is gradually becoming a place of relaxation, competition, modernization, rivalry, suspicion and all, but through prayers and continuous quest for conversion, we can build an ideal community in the 21st century. We were encouraged to make positive and personal efforts so as to be able to recreate the ideal community in reality through prayer, forbearance, fraternal correction/ charity, harmony, love of God and neighbour, respect, etc.

Sr. Florence Emmanuel also spoke on the value of chaste love for community living. Giving practical examples, she explained chastity as the dignity of the body, the ornament of morality, the sacredness of purity, the peacefulness of home and the crown of concord. She also told us that chastity is more

than abstaining from sexual activities and is not to be reduced to celibacy. It is always modest and the mother of innocence. It seeks nothing in the way of adornment and it is its own glory. Most importantly, it is that which commends us to the Lord and unites us with Christ, for it is only the pure heart that will see God.

To achieve chastity, prayer is not left out because it is the strength and off-shoot of all our actions and also we need to be matured.

Meeting with Sr. Agatha Nkemjika, DC, was a beautiful experience of grace as both her words and life spoke to us about humility in community and the Blessed Virgin being a perfect model for us all to emulate.

She made it clear to us that humility is far from self-belittling, but the recognition of God's grace and greatness in our lives. It is recognizing that we are dust and all that we are have been gifted us by God. She traced the humility of Mary to the scriptures who in the gospel of Luke recognizing that she possesses a great gift from God blessed God in her magnificent.

Hence, humility is of supreme importance in answering Gods call. In community living, we should always like Mary, seek to see how we can serve, say "YES" sincerely to Gods will for us through our superiors and always ask Him what he wants us to do by making time for silence and resting in His presence.

The Visitatrice was also present with us to interact and share with us from her wealth of knowledge. As the St. Louise of our time here in the Nigerian province, she admonished us motherly on the need to get our roots deep down in the things of the company so as to live out and pass on the heritage. Speaking on the theme of "the mystique of living together", she re-affirmed that community is all grace.

She also simplified the Assembly documents and helped us to understand better our values. She also said that in as much as knowing our values as Daughters of Charity is important, it is even more important to let it show in our way of living in community, service and apostolate. It was a

remarkable experience with her because we all felt deep in our hearts the challenge to be more for the community, the poor and for God.

We also had time to socialize, to go out. The sisters of the community already made sure that our vehicles were ready and packed full with snacks for the journey. We went out and became tourist attraction for many. I heard with my heart some people asking; *who are these "Blue Armies?"* Those who were friendly enough approached us to know who we were and we ceased the opportunity to evangelize. Is that not what we should do always with words and our way of life? Yes! Armies of the Lord indeed. We visited Shop Rite Asaba and did some shopping, even though some of us went window shopping (smiles). We also went to the Cinema to see a movie but the time wasn't favourable, so we had a brief stop-over at Mr. Agbeha's house; a pious Catholic and the family with which Sr. Angelina Mark grew up. He encouraged us all as a father to continue in this right

path that we have chosen. We prayed with the family also and we left. We had a smooth ride home and was greeted with a sumptuous meal on arrival. We crowned the day with the social night in which individuals and vocations mates had the opportunity to showcase their talents. The sister servant thanked us for all we have been during the past days. We will surely miss them as much as they would us. We ended the day with the night prayer.

In the morning, we were all set to move. Some of us went home for holidays, others for their annual retreats and some back to their various local communities.

The young sisters' session 2022 was a huge success to the glory of God.

Sr. Fidelia-Maria Okezie, DC.

WORKSHOP FOR 25YEARS-34YEARS VOCATION



The 27th day of August saw the gathering of sisters of the above vocation for a 3days workshop on Openness to Reconciliation and Forgiveness and Community life of the Daughters of Charity in the 21st century: strength and challenges. The workshop was facilitated by Sr. Margaret Mary Ekanem, DC and Rev. Fr Cosmas Ukadike, CM. It opened on the 28th with a session on Memory Lane presented by Sr. Margaret Mary Ekanem. Introducing it, she explained that we could begin the memory lane from a given period of our life. Each sister present had the opportunity to

retrospect on particular events in her life over a given time. The sisters found it a very useful exercise for healing of bad memories and for appreciating what was done to them in the past which they saw as punishment but now have they have seen goodness in those events. Some sisters still hurt from the memories of the past and they were asked to continue to work on themselves and commit those experiences to God for healing. She also introduced a new concept to us known as '*Morning Pages*.' This was an exercise we went through during the time of the workshop.

It is writing the first thought that comes to your mind as you wake up. You don't think about it but you write daily and you don't go back to read it until after six months. We did it for the three days and it was very helpful for some people even though it was tiring because it needed time. It meant waking up before the usual time. It also calls for discipline. I hope we will be able to continue with it after the workshop.

The second day had us reflect on Forgiveness and reconciliation. This all important topic was well handled by Fr. Cosmas Ukadike, C.M. Forgiveness as noted by him and all of us is a common human experience. We have all sought

forgiveness, and we have all bestowed it. In his presentation, he made us see forgiveness as openness to reconciliation with the wrongdoer with respect to the wrongdoing. This view's main advantage is that it explains forgiveness' power to effect reconciliation with a repentant wrongdoer. He also gave another view of forgiveness being the wronged readiness to forgive but not entering into reconciliation with the offender. We were made to understand that one can forgive without going for reconciliation but for reconciliation to happen, there must be forgiveness. As for us Daughters of Charity who are called to life in community, both forgiveness and reconciliation



are important elements in our life. We must both forgive and be reconciled so that life will flow and together we shall build a loving and forgiving community.

This ushered us to the topic: Mystique of living together-community life of the Daughters of Charity in 21st century: strength and challenges. While looking at this topic, Sr. Margaret Mary took us back to the time of St. Vincent and St. Louise to remind us of how community life was lived then for us to compare it with how we are living it now. We all

appreciated what was and challenged ourselves on how we have deviated which calls us to go back to basics.

In all, the workshop was an interesting one. It was a time for reunion even though the turn up was low because of the timing, the participants were grateful to have had the opportunity to meet as age grades. We thank our facilitators for sharing from their wealth of experiences and for making it a successful one. We thank the Visitatrix and council for giving us the opportunity to have this all-important workshop.

POEM

The Hundredfold

O Virgin Mother, full of grace,
The joy of Israël,
The fairest honor of our race,
More blessed than tongue can tell!

All beautiful art thou, Marie,
In thee there is no stain,
Nor grief in thy sweet company,
Consoling all our pain.

Delight of angels, Queen of earth,
To thy poor child dost deign,
To whom in sorrow didst give birth,
That with thee she might reign.

Pressed to thine Heart Immaculate,
Her frail soul findeth rest
And all its worries there doth quit,
At thy maternal breast.

The child thy tender arms do hold
Present to God Most High.
Thus carried in thy mantle-fold,
She hath no fear to die.

To thee 'tis not too much to give
All that she doth possess.
To have thee truly is to live,
To serve thee holiness.

To all the thorns of earthly loves
How dost thou, friend, compare?
So pure thy gaze, thine eyes are doves,
And thou a lily rare.

To know herself beloved by thee
Is worth more than all gold.
Renouncing all, her heart is free
For thee, the hundredfold.

FEAST ST. VINCENT DE PAUL IN ELEME

Every 27th September is a memorable day for all the Vincentian Family as they celebrate the feast of Saint Vincent De Paul. St Vincent was born on April 24th, 1581, in France and died on September 27th, 1660. His parents are Jean de Paul and Bertrand de Moras. And his siblings were Marie-Claudine, Jean, Marie, Gayon and Bernard. St. Vincent Studied in the University of Toulouse (1597-1604). He was a saint who devoted his life and time to the spiritual and corporal service of persons who are poor and he saw them as suffering members of Christ's body.

In Eleme community, the feast of St. Vincent de Paul this year was unique and exciting for us, the seminary sisters. It began on September 26th 2022, the eve of the Feast. Meanwhile Serious preparations had been made as the Chapel altars were beautifully decorated by the seminary sisters. They designed posters reflecting the words of St. Vincent and pasted them at the strategic places such as the refectory door, chapels, community rooms etc, That evening, we also prayed together as

a family.

On the D-day, we had mass at 11am with well-planned liturgy. The songs were beautifully rendered. One could feel the presence of St. Vincent as mass was going on. Immediately after the mass we had a sumptuous breakfast generously prepared by the Sister-Servants St. Louise Provincial House Eleme, Sr. Christiana Igechi DC. At dinner, we had assorted food and drinks. The seminary sisters entertained the sisters with a short drama titled “the different faces of Jesus” as reflected in Matt.25:45.

Infact, celebrating the feast of our founder for the first time in the seminary for me was very exciting. I will never forget this day. It was as though St. Vincent was present with us body, soul and spirit. I and my fellow seminary sisters were undoubtedly convinced that he was with us in spirit. The day ended beautifully well. It was indeed a jolly day for us, All thanks to God Almighty for the gift of St. Vincent to us and the world.

Sr. Vanessa Ndzelen



POPE TO CLARETIANS: ALWAYS SEEK NEW WAYS TO SERVE THE LORD

By Lisa Zengarini

Pope Francis on Monday received in audience the academic community of the Claretianum Institute of Theology of Religious Life in Rome celebrating the 50th anniversary of its foundation.

The Institute, which has been incorporated into the Pontifical Lateran University in Rome, was established in 1971, after the Second Vatican Council, though it traces its origin back to the early 1930s. It is the first institution of its kind in the Catholic Church specialized in the field of Theology of Consecrated Life.

In his address, Pope Francis

praised the work carried out over the past five decades by the Claretianum “in the spirit and mission” of St. Anthony Mary Claret, the founder of the Missionaries Sons of the Immaculate Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary, commonly known as Claretians.

A fruitful service

The Pope remarked that in these decades the six centres the Claretians run in Rome, Madrid (Spain), Manila (Philippines), Bangalore (India), Bogotá (Colombia) and Abuja (Nigeria), and other initiatives promoted in other countries, have offered and continue to offer “a fruitful service” to the understanding

and development of the theology of consecrated life, by valuing the contributions of human sciences. This, he said, has helped give “a more human face” to religious life.

In a special way, Pope Francis thanked the Claretians for their engagement in divulging the Magisterium of the Church on consecrated life, thus assuring the communion with the Apostolic See, with the Pastors of the local Churches and with the Federations and Confederations of Major Superiors, while working “to share their service of animation and renewal with other vocations and ecclesial ministries”.

Communion and fraternity

The Pope encouraged the Congregation to continue to serve consecrated life with the missionary Claretian spirit. Noting that consecrated life “cannot be lacking in the Church and in the world”, he emphasized that the first service of their theological institutes must be that of being “houses of welcome, praise and thanksgiving” in which

“communion is manifested” and solidarity with the poor, fraternity without border, and an out-going mission are encouraged.

“Your help to consecrated men and women, before being intellectual, is a testimony, a confession that Jesus is the Lord.”

Pessimism is not Christian

Pope Francis went on to warn against discouragement and the “spirit of defeat” in the face of the ongoing decline of vocations and aging of religious men and women. He invited them, instead, to confide in the Lord and the Holy Spirit. “Those who let themselves be carried away by pessimism put their faith aside”, he said “The spirit of defeat and pessimism are not Christian”.

Intergenerational dialogue

While acknowledging the many challenges consecrated life is facing today, the Pope called on the Claretian missionaries to faithfully follow Jesus in the spirit of their founders, to

prioritize their community life, as opposed to individualism, and to live interculturality as a journey of fraternity and of mission. He particularly emphasized the importance of promoting the encounter between different generations in consecrated life, as well as in the Church and in society as a whole.

“Young people need to frequent the old, they have to talk, and the old need frequent the young. Look ahead, look at the prophecy of Joel, it’s so beautiful! With this dialogue, the old will dream and the young will make prophecies: they will be able to go forward, but with the dream of the old. Please don't let the elderly die without dreaming! The old must die dreaming and those who make the old dream are the young”

Do not tire of going to the frontiers

Pope Francis further urged the Claretians to “always seek new ways to serve the Lord” and the people of God, and “to cultivate more and more God's style”: that of closeness, compassion and

tenderness

“Do not tire of going to the frontiers, even to the frontiers of thought; to open roads, to accompany, to be bold in the mission rooted in the Lord.”

Bringing his discourse to a close, Pope Francis insisted on the importance of theology and research for the mission of the Church, and once again thanked the Claretianum for its work in this field. At the same he urged the Claretians not to forget, in their life and in their academic work, those who live in different forms of poverty: "To truly encounter Christ - he said - one must touch His body in the wounded body of the poor, confirming the sacramental communion received in the Eucharist".

Concluding, Pope Francis invited those present to pray the Lord with him to be freed from the presumption of self-sufficiency, the spirit of worldly criticism, self-referentiality, and “from the diabolical deception of polarizations".

ADIAGHA OBONG COMMUNITY CELEBRATES THE FEAST OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL WITH OUR LORDS AND MASTERS.



The celebration of the feast of our Founder, St. Vincent De Paul this year took a different dimension as the different arms in Uyo, the capital of Akwa Ibom State were involved in the planning, preparation and the actual celebration.

The preparation for the feast day started with the novena to St. Vincent on September 18th, 2022 in the various arms established here in Uyo diocese.

On the 24th September 2022,

the Vincentian family arranged to visit the persons who are poor and to share with them the joy of the celebration both spiritually and corporally. The society of St. Vincent De Paul, the Friends of the Daughters of Charity and The Daughters of Charity, Adiaha-Obong Community put together various food items and clothing which were distributed around the villages in Uyo.

The visit to our various poor brothers and sisters was very

exciting, evangelizing and challenging. It was exciting because we were happy to see their beautiful and smiling faces as they were equally enchanted by our visit, the little tokens we offered them and the prayers we shared with them.

On the other hand, it was challenging as we discovered that many of the elderly ones have practically no one with them to help them at home. Most of them have children outside the town who only come once in a long while or send money occasionally for their needs which is barely enough considering the length of time it takes to get what they need.

It also ignited in us the need to evangelize the young people in the church and the society to be aware of their responsibility towards the elderly as Pope Francis reminded us last year when he

invited us to “Honour our father and mother” as God commanded us in Exodus 20:12. He explained that the elderly do not find life easy at this stage when their lives are marked by “the experiences of confusion and despondency, of loss and abandonment, of disillusionment and doubt.” He further stressed that:

“It is not just about one's own father and mother. It is about their generation and the generations before, whose leave-taking can also be slow and prolonged, creating a time and space of long-lasting coexistence with the other ages of life. In other words, it is about the old age of life”(Vatican News).

This can be seen and felt in the pain they expressed in not having anyone around to help them or keep them company, which makes them ask God to take them soon. Some were at the mercy of good neighbors who check on them now and



then or provide for them out of their own meagre resources. We hope that this will bring a change sometime very soon. On the 27th September 2022, we had the celebration of the Holy Eucharist in the chapel of the Daughters of Charity, Adigha - Obong, Uyo Community with Very Rev. Fr. Leo Etim as the chief celebrant and Very Rev. Fr. Michael Idobo as the co-celebrant. The various arms of the Vincentian family were in attendance, the women from Providence Home and

the pupils and teachers of St. Vincent's Center for Inclusive Education were represented as well. The school notably used the feast day to inaugurate the 2022/2023 Academic year, invoking our Patron Saint to intercede for us as classes commence. After the Eucharistic celebration, the second part of the feast took place which consists of social interaction and sharing meal together.

Daughters of Charity, Adigha Obong Community, Uyo.

The Invitation

What's this I hear of wayward son?
Upon return, a feast begun?
My strained service I should have ceased,
So that I could enjoy a feast.

Laboring hard both day and night,
I slaved under Thy perfect sight.
Every single mistake of mine
To further toil did me confine.

Sowing for Me with tears and sweat,
Beloved son, do not regret.
Counted not I so much thy gains
As thine attempts and labor pains.

Brother of thine has now returned.
Enter the home where I have yearned
To have thee sit with us to dine
And know that all I have is thine.

A MESSAGE GIVEN AT THE END OF THE 3RD NATIONAL PASTORAL CONGRESS ON THE **THEME: TOWARDS A SYNODAL CHURCH: COMMUNION, PARTICIPATION AND MISSION WHICH HELD AT BISHOP KELLY PASTORAL CENTRE, AIRPORT ROAD, BENIN CITY, 8–11 NOVEMBER, 2022.**

Preamble

The Church in Nigeria represented by the Bishops, the Priests, the Religious, male and female, and the Lay Faithful gathered in the ancient city of Benin, known for her very rich cultural heritage, to review our evangelisation mission for the last 10 years and to chart a new path for the future. Having sought the face of God in fraternal atmosphere of prayer, engaged in genuine discussion borne out of creative and attentive listening, we hereby issue this Message to the Church and to the Nigerian State.² Gratitude to God We continue to give thanks to God Almighty, the One who was, who is, and who will always be for his benevolence to us as individuals and as a people. Our collective destiny as a Nation has been threatened in more ways than one. Oftentimes, certain nations have been cynical about our corporate existence but the Lord in his wisdom and might has kept us going and together. While we remain to grateful to God, we should not take Him for granted by



abdicating our role in building a state that is God-fearing, egalitarian, safe and prosperous.³ The Power of Listening and Dialogue The Synod on synodality has listening and dialogue as essential components. Faith comes through hearing (Rom 10:17). Listening, therefore, is a necessary prerequisite for faith development. It is an integral part of synodality, for it is only by hearing that we discern properly as a Church. At the different levels of the Church, the pastors and the people are to cultivate an attitude of patience, attentiveness to and respect for the views of others. This attitude paves the way for genuine dialogue. We call for a well-represented pastoral council in all parishes as a way of creating space, more room for

dialogue and participation. In a synodal Church, ways must be devised by which those in the periphery such as the non-literate, materially poor and the quiet members of the Church can be heard. No doubt, wars, dissension, bitterness and acrimony can be avoided by embracing the power of listening and dialogue.⁴

Continuous Catechetical Formation Catechetical formation, which is an ongoing and dynamic process, is at the heart of the growth and development of the Christian life. There is no gain saying that we should be constantly formed in our faith. To achieve this, a well-developed programme, which should include a curriculum on catholic education for mission schools, should be designed for catechetical formation should be such that it does not end with the reception of the sacrament but initiate a process that should accompany the catholic all through life. This is not only desirable, but a necessity for effective Christian witnessing. In pursuance of this ideal, all hands must be on deck. Bishops, Priests and Religious are to take the lead in the catechetical formation of the faithful. As their immediate collaborators, catechists are to be adequately trained and justly remunerated, while parents,

on their part, are to ensure the initial catechetical formation of their wards backed up by exemplary Christian lifestyle.⁵

Towards an Inclusive Church The Church is an inclusive society. She continues to draw all segments of the Church to be active members of the Church family including youths and people with disability. We recognise that Nigeria is a nation with a large population of young people and hence needs to harness their potentials for growth and development. They are an asset. The high rate of joblessness amongst youths creates restiveness and may contribute to aggravating the insecurity plaguing the nation. Government should devise ways to create jobs for her teeming youths both in the formal and informal sectors. Creation of jobs can expedite if the enabling environment is guaranteed such as stable power, stable currency, support for medium scale industries, supporting innovation and innovativeness. We call on Government at all levels and captains of industries to pay particular attention to these. On their part, the youths are called to be responsible citizens shunning indolence, violence, political thuggery and other vices. People with disability are full members of



the Church and society. Their place, presence and participation are invaluable. Many people with disability still suffer from discrimination (social, psychological, material). We, as a Church, are committed to working to ensure that people with disability are able to worship in our Churches without hindrance. Government, on her own part, should make adequate provisions for the infrastructure that supports people with disability in places such as schools, banks, hospitals, parks, supermarkets, shopping malls, cinemas, amongst others and also create the enabling environment that makes it possible for them to be meaningfully engaged.⁶ Unity of Purpose among all Believers We as a people

are ardent believers in the one God, creator of heaven and earth, who has the earth to us as our common heritage, who expects us to relate to him in deference and obeisance, respectful of one another. As a Church, we continue to promote dialogical relations with other faiths such as Muslims and practitioners of the African Traditional Religion. Despite our differences in the faiths we profess, we can and should embark on joint initiatives in the service of the common good. In the spirit of cooperation and co-responsibility, we can and should necessarily unite for the common cause of fighting corruption, ethnocentrism, terrorism and banditry, social injustice, poverty, drug abuse;

fostering good governance and free, fair and credible elections. Our purposeful unity thus help in promoting security, peace and understanding in our communities and nation; protecting the sanctity of our places of worship in the face of wanton destruction at the slightest provocation; safeguarding the environment and caring for those in need. These, no doubt, constitute an ideal way of putting what we believe into practice; walking forward together on the same path of love and solidarity; and moving forward purposefully in the same direction for the good of one and all. As a people of faith, we continue to pray and work for a better future for ourselves and the coming generations.⁷ State of the Nation Political Engagement of Citizens The country is again in the season of elections. Political campaigns have already begun in preparation for the 2023 General Elections. Government should provide the enabling environment for citizens to exercise their franchise devoid of violence, intimidation, vote buying and vote selling. These electoral anomalies harm the democratic process as they contribute to depriving citizens the freedom to make informed choices at elections, by making the process less credible.

Unfortunately, elected officials who emerge from such a defective electoral process, have the additional moral burden of credibility while in office. Citizens should use their PVCs to vote candidates of credibility and integrity who have demonstrated the capacity to pilot the affairs of this nation in a responsible and corrupt-free manner. The electoral umpire, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), should ensure that the electoral process is just, transparent, open, free, fair and credible. INEC, as a genuine umpire, must be neutral and objective and not favour any parties but apply the laws and principles to all in a fair and equitable manner. Government should provide adequate security to enable the citizens come out and exercise their franchise. In addition, campaigns should be idea-based devoid of bitterness and unhealthy rivalry. Political candidates for the election should avail citizens of their electoral manifestoes including strategies for achieving set goals and objectives. The practice of promising the electorate lofty objectives to be pursued by political office holders that look good on paper but only to be jettisoned after such candidates win election has become the common

experience of many Nigerians. It is hoped that political office holders would support their manifestoes with strategies to achieve set targets and actually pursue those goals when elected to office. Holding political office holders accountable is the collective responsibility of all citizens. On this, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) should play active roles through advocacy and enlightenment. As agreed by the Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria (CBCN) at the last meeting in Orlu, Imo State in September 2022, that at the end of this third Pastoral Congress a prayer will be composed for free, fair, credible and peaceful elections in our country in 2023, the bishops have composed the said prayers which should be said in all dioceses, parishes and families from now to the time of elections. Economic situation Despite several efforts by Government, the economy is not in good shape. Citizens are not seeing much improvements in their daily lives but a decline in their purchasing power. The costs of staple food like rice, yam and garri have skyrocketed. Power supply is still epileptic. Fuel is sold at far above the official pump rates in many parts of the country. This should not be happening in a country that is the 6th largest

producer of crude oil in the world. Government should devise a strategy that makes fuel and other petroleum products available, accessible and affordable. The new Government policy of Naira redesign, aimed at curbing inflation and fighting corruption and terrorism, is a lofty idea. In any case, Naira redesign alone cannot provide the needed reprieve in the economy and confront the head-headed problems of corruption and terrorism. A redesigned naira must necessarily be accompanied by strong institutional frameworks and laws such as an effective policing system, tracking and timely prosecution of corrupt persons and strengthening the security agencies to properly police Nigeria's borders to prevent the influx of armed bandits from other countries. Ecological Concerns: Flooding and Other Environmental Hazards We, as a people, should take advantage of the ongoing 27th UN Climate Change Conference (COP27) in Egypt and replicate the positive recommendations in Nigeria. This is because there are still serious ecological concerns in our country, for example, the monumental flooding, which has caused untold hardships on the people leading to the destruction of lives and properties is largely as a



result of lack of care for our environment. We call on Government at all levels to take concrete steps in responding to these challenges. We advocate for a more effective and efficient emergency response strategy, the construction of more dams all over the country while overhauling and expanding the capacity of the dams available at the moment for better water management. We earnestly urge all Nigerians to embrace healthy lifestyle and environmentally friendly attitudes in disposing of wastes arising from human activities. 8. Conclusion: In God We Trust God is always faithful to his people and calls us to be faithful to Him as well. Let us continue to put our trust in the Lord who never abandons his people. Let us not yield to despair and cynicism which would eventually lead to indifferentism and lethargy that breeds hopelessness and despondency. Trusting in God's

help, let us continue working towards the Nigeria of our dream as we turn to God in prayer: Merciful Lord, we plead for mercy and pardon for our many failings and shortcomings. Strip us of greed, corruption, and impunity. Cause your Holy Spirit to expel from us all unjust tendencies and fraudulent practices. Rid us of the all the evils that plague our nation and grant us your lasting peace, joy and hope always. Amen. Glory to God in the highest and peace to men and women of good will!

Most Rev. Lucius Iwejuru UGORJI
Archbishop of Owerri
President, CBCN

Most Rev. Donatus Aihmiosion
OGUN, OSA
Bishop of Uromi
Secretary, CBCN

TRANSFERS

S/N	NAME	COMING FROM	GOING TO
1	DEWA , Sister Shereen	Lindalva Community, Benin City	Our Lady of the Missions, Emu
2	MARK , Sister Angelina	St Louise's Community, Kolonkura, Burkina Faso	St Louise's House, Ikot Ekpene
3	DEINANAGHAN , Sister Janet	St Louise's Community, Kolonkura, Burkina Faso	Adiaha Obong, Uyo
4	ONUOHA , Sister Bernadette	St Louise's Provincial House, Nchia Eleme	Marian Home, Ebubu
5	DURU , Sister Theresa	Marian Home, Ebubu	St Louise's Provincial House, Nchia Eleme
6	AGBA , Sister Blessing Aidie	St Louise's Seminary, Nchia Eleme	The Child, Port Harcourt
7	AGBOR Okey , Sister Joy	St Louise's Seminary, Nchia Eleme	Our Lady of the Missions, Emu
8	EDEMINAM , Sister Aniebiet Matthew	St Louise's Seminary, Nchia Eleme	St Sabina's, Lagos
9	STEPHEN , Sister Janesta Yimi	St Louise's Seminary, Nchia Eleme	St Catherine's, Umunede

DAUGHTERS OF CHARITY OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL PUBLICATION
STRATEGIC PLANNING WORKSHOP





CLOSING OF BANI COMMUNITY



MISSION TO ROSALIE RENDU PROVINCE



FIRST MISSION AD GENTES IN NIGERIA PROVINCE





CELEBRANTS

OCTOBER BABIES

01-Sr. Sylvia Anyanwu
02-Sr. Roseline Dee
03-Sr. Chinenye Keke
05-Sr. Catherine Nkereuwem
09-Sr. Franca Dike

11-Sr. Genevieve Uduk
18-Sr Toyin Abegunde

NOVEMBER BABIES

11-Sr. Mariagoretti Onwuatuegwu
09-Sr. Anthonia Iyade
13-Sr. Juliana Okeke
17-Sr. Margaret-Mary Ekanem
22-Sr. Agatha Nkemjika

24-Sr. Cynthia Obi
26-Sr. Christiana Igechi
26-Sr. Ngozi Aluka
29-Sr. Constance Akantuglikum
29-Sr. Basilia Anozie

DECEMBER BABIES

1st-Sr. Janesta YIMI Syrphen
05-Sr, Victoria Bulaun
05-Sr. Margaret Udoh
07-Sr. Amaka Muoneke
10-Sr. Veronica Ogodo
10-Sr. Rose-Mary Amanfo
11-Sr. Caroline Ologunwa
13-Sr. Assumpta Uruchi
14-Sr. Agwiye Rebecca
14-Sr. Victoria Kotetane
16-Sr. Nkechi Eze
16-Sr. Shereen Dewa
17-Sr. Christine Uwaechie
17-Sr. Gladys Augustine
18-Sr. Philomena Okwu
18-Sr. Bibiana Dura
19-Sr. Fidelia Odoemena

20-Sr. Emilia Asuquo
23-Sr. Francesca Edet
25-Sr. Marie-Therese Okon
26-Sr. Felicia Ezeimo
26-Sr. Eugenia Onuora
30-Sr. Roseline Ibok
31-Sr. Pauline Ekanem
31-Sr. Maria Dabang