



**CBCN
Honours
Dokpesi**

**Behold!
The new Pope!
First American Pontiff,
takes the name
Pope Leo XIV**

**Port Harcourt
Diocese Hosts
2025 Jubilee
Year of Hope
Celebration**



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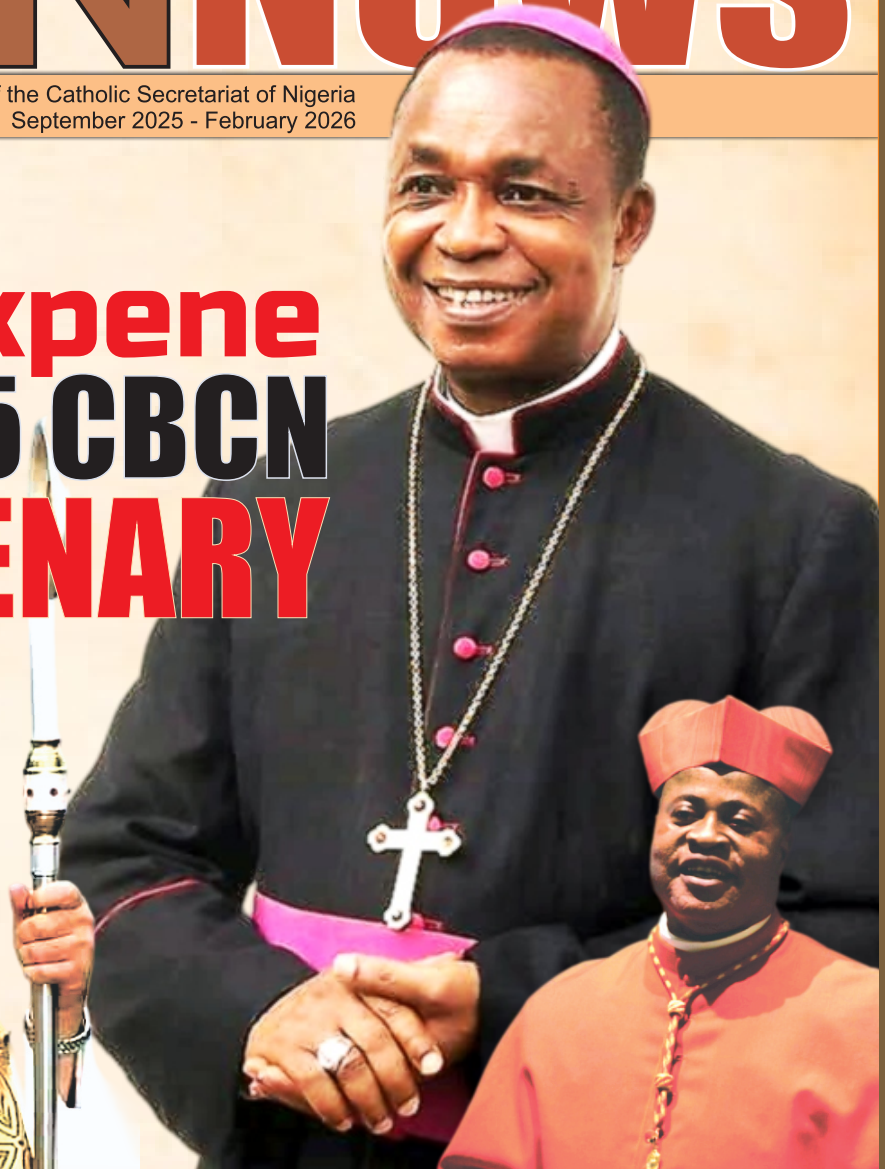
Vol. 11 No. 48

...News Service of the Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria
September 2025 - February 2026

Ikot Ekpene Hosts 2025 CBCN 2ND PLENARY



**CBCN decries
Benue Killings,
insecurity**



**Bishop Mamza
elected SECAM
first Vice President**



*'It was a privilege to
participate in the
Conclave'*
– *Cardinal Okpaleke*



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*Published and Printed by the
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Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria, Durumi, Abuja*

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EDITOR'S

Note



Dear Friends,

In this fresh edition of CSN Magazine, we reflect on a pivotal season in the life of the Church, marked by historic events, profound moments of sorrow, and milestones of hope that resonate deeply with us all. Within these pages, we invite you to journey with us through the stories, insights, and reflections that capture the essence of this extraordinary time.

Focusing on the Diocese of Ikot Ekpene as they take on the significant challenge of hosting the 2025 2nd Plenary Assembly of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria (CBCN). With a rich history dating back to 1929, this diocese is home to many iconic institutions that have shaped the faith and lives of countless individuals. Through gatherings like the plenary assembly, the bishops demonstrate their unwavering commitment to faith, unity, and nation-building. Notably, the CBCN also spoke out prophetically against the tragic killings in Benue State, underscoring the Church's vital role as a moral compass in society.

This edition also captures a glimpse of the world bidding farewell to Pope Francis, a shepherd remembered for his humility, compassion, and unwavering advocacy for the poor. In the sacred tradition of continuity, the conclave ushered in Pope Leo XIV, while CSN Magazine notes with delight how Peter Ebere Cardinal Okpaleke made history as he joined the College of Cardinals in electing the new pontiff.

At the continental level, the Church in Africa witnessed notable transitions, as bishops representing the various conferences in Africa and Madagascar, under the umbrella of the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM) gathered for the 20th Plenary Assembly of the body in Kigali, Rwanda, from July 31 to August 4, 2025. That gathering produced Bishop Stephen Dami Mamza of Yola Diocese as the 1st Vice President of SECAM, while Bishop Emmanuel Badejo gracefully concluded his tenure after years of devoted



With a rich history dating back to 1929, this diocese is home to many iconic institutions that have shaped the faith and lives of countless individuals.



service as the President of CEPACS (Pan-African Episcopal Committee for Social Communications). The 20th SECAM Congress echoed Africa's growing voice in shaping the future of global Catholicism, focusing on issues like justice, peace, and dignity for all people.

Port Harcourt Diocese, under the leadership of Bishop Patrick Eluke, hosts the national celebration of the Jubilee Year of Hope in Elele, following the successful inauguration of the Communication Week (Comweek) programme months earlier. This season of evangelisation in Nigeria through media was marked by a special tribute to the late High Chief Raymond Dokpesi, whose contributions to media and public life have left a lasting impact. The Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria (CBCN) honored his legacy, recognising his dedication to shaping the narrative and inspiring generations.

This edition also engages with one of the most thought-provoking questions of our time: the role of Catholic priests in politics. It's a conversation that continues to stir reflection on the delicate balance between pastoral duty and civic responsibility. The Bishops in Nigeria are however clear on their stand. Read it.

As you turn each page, we invite you to witness not just headlines, but the living story of a Church that is dynamic, and continues to shape faith, history, and society. May this edition inspire hope, spark thought, and deepen our understanding of the times we share.

Happy reading!

Fr. Michael Nsikak Umoh
Editor-in-Chief



Bits from the Secretary General

■ Rev. Fr. Michael Ayanleke Banjo ■

Highlights of Hope: Leadership, Solidarity, and Dialogue in the 2025 Speeches of Fr. Banjo

At the CSN Media Parley

Rev. Fr. Michael Banjo, Secretary General of the Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria, welcomed attendees at the 5th Media Parley on behalf of CBCN President, Most Rev. Lucius Ugorji, and the CSN community. He appreciated the media's support in the Church's mission and introduced key personnel changes, including the new Apostolic Nuncio, Archbishop Michael Francis Crotty. Fr. Banjo emphasised the media's role in advancing the 2025 Jubilee Year of Hope and shared the World Communications Day theme, "Share with gentleness the hope that is in your hearts." He encouraged ethical journalism, truthfulness, and media literacy, urging journalists to promote unity, justice, and reject misinformation. He concluded by calling for continued collaboration in spreading messages of faith, truth, and hope.

At the Migrants and Refugees Programme ...

The Secretary General of the Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria, opened a landmark forum on migrants and refugees with a call for compassion, cooperation, and decisive action. He warned of the rising toll of irregular migration and human trafficking, praised Fr. Augustine Akhogba's "visionary leadership and tireless efforts" in the Church's response, and urged stronger Church–government–community partnerships to tackle insecurity, unemployment, and other root causes. Advocating humane migration policies, returnee support, and public awareness, he challenged all present to make this gathering "the beginning of a new chapter in our shared mission... every kind word to a migrant is a gesture offered to Christ himself."

At the 2025 Communications WEEK (ComWEEK) Public lecture

Rev. Fr. Michael Banjo opened the ComWEEK Public Lecture, flagship event of the CBCN's Communications Week, by welcoming dignitaries and praising the National Director of Social Communications, Rev. Fr. Michael Umoh, for championing dialogue, truth, and hope in Catholic

media.

He also led a tribute to the late High Chief Raymond Anthony Aleogho Dokpesi, founder of DAAR Communications, lauding his pioneering role in breaking broadcasting monopolies, launching Ray Power FM and AIT, and upholding African and Christian values while resisting sensationalism. A posthumous award from the CBCN was presented in Dokpesi's honour, with Fr. Banjo urging that his legacy of principled, value-driven journalism guide future communicators.

Speaking on "Media with Gentleness: A Path to Being Narrators of Hope in a Distressed Nation," he called on Church and media practitioners to treat communication as a ministry of presence—a force for compassion, unity, and moral renewal amid Nigeria's challenges. He closed with prayers for ComWEEK's success and a call for continued collaboration to build a hopeful, well-informed nation.

At the 60th Anniversary of Nostra Aetate

At the 60th anniversary of Nostra Aetate, Rev. Fr. Michael Banjo celebrated its enduring call to interfaith understanding in a world of "promise and peril." He urged moving "in place of indifference, suspicion, or hostility" toward dialogue, mutual respect, and collaboration, stressing that religious diversity is a blessing when guided by wisdom and justice.

Citing personal encounters of Muslim–Christian goodwill, he affirmed that "Nostra Aetate is not merely a Church document, it is a lived reality and a global invitation to embrace unity across religious lines." He called for honest reflection on shortcomings and more practical steps to make peace through listening, cooperation, and shared humanity.

On World Refugee Day

Fr. Michael Banjo marked World Refugee Day with a heartfelt appeal for genuine, action-oriented solidarity with displaced persons: a solidarity that begins by "recognising and humanising them... We see their faces, call them by name, hear their stories."

Recalling Pope Francis's foot-washing of refugees as a Gospel model, he detailed the Church's outreach through Caritas Nigeria and the Migrants & Refugees Unit — from relief aid and healthcare to legal support and pastoral care across all dioceses. Declaring that "no one is foreign, no one forgotten, no one left alone," he urged both Church and state to deepen collaboration, ensure refugee rights, and

move from symbolism to concrete action. He pressed parishes to help secure identity documents and legal aid, stressing that “the Church stands ready to partner in restoration and integration efforts nationwide” and calling on all people of goodwill to “rise to the occasion” in supporting vulnerable communities.

At the Leadership Seminar for Rectors and Formators

Fr. Michael Banjo opened the Leadership Seminar for Rectors and Formators in Abuja by praising the often-unseen sacrifices of those shaping future priests and religious, calling their work “the noble task of formation in Nigeria.”

He warned of cultural shifts affecting candidates — from “dishonesty... normalized as a survival tactic” to emotional fragility — and urged vigilance against liturgical abuses, commercialization of sacraments, and self-promotion on social media. “We appeal to our priests to respect the sacred vestments... not for entertainment but for worship,” he stressed. Celebrating the “true witnesses of fidelity” serving in hardship, he told formators: “You plant seeds whose fruits may not be seen for years, but... will nourish the Church for generations.” He encouraged personal renewal, saluted their “labor of love,” and framed the seminar as a moment to strengthen leadership, discipline, and ecclesial consciousness for the Church's future.

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Congratulations to Pope Leo XIV

Message from the President, Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria

Archbishop Lucius Iwejuru Ugorji

09 May, 2025

To the faithful and People of Goodwill,

In the joy of the Easter season, we add our voice in thanking God for the successful completion of the conclave which ended with the election of Pope Leo XIV as the new Supreme Pontiff of the Catholic Church. On behalf of all the Catholic Bishops in Nigeria, all Christ's faithful, and indeed all men and women of goodwill, we extend heartfelt congratulations to His Holiness Pope Leo XIV and assure him of our allegiance, prayers and support as he embarks on his Petrine ministry.

We also extend our congratulations to all the Cardinals who participated in the conclave, especially our Venerable brother, Peter Ebere Cardinal Okpaleke, and to the entire College of Cardinals for their role in the election.

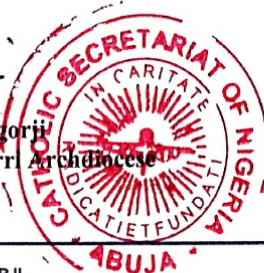
Notably, this papal transition showcases the Church's commitment to dignity, honor, and spiritual discernment, offering the world a powerful example of conducting affairs with grace and reverence as children of God.

We invite all Nigerians and people of goodwill to join us in praying for the new Pope, that he may be endowed with wisdom, courage, and grace to fulfill his sacred mission.

As is customary, we remind our priests that the Votive Mass of Thanksgiving for a New Pope may be offered in all our churches.

May God bless Pope Leo XIV and the entire Catholic Church.

+ L Ugorji
+ Lucius Iwejuru Ugorji
Archbishop of Owerri Archdiocese
President, CBCN



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CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE OF NIGERIA

A NATIONAL CALL FOR PRAYER AND SOLIDARITY In the Wake of the Renewed Killings in Benue and Other Parts of Nigeria *"If one member suffers, all suffer together" (1 Cor 12:26)*

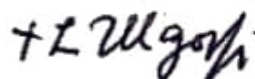
19 June 2025

To All Catholics in Nigeria, and All People of Goodwill


Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

1. We, the Catholic Bishops of Nigeria, once again lift our voices in sorrow as shepherds of God's flock and guardians of our nation's conscience. Following our recent statement of 6 June 2025, "CBCN Statement on Benue Killings and Mokwa Flood", it is profoundly heartbreaking that, less than two weeks later, we are compelled to speak out again. The renewed wave of killings in Benue State and other parts of our country continues to wound our collective spirit. It is our fervent hope and prayer that we will not have to issue such sorrowful statements again.
2. We commend all individuals, communities, and organisations who continue to speak out against these heinous crimes. We are also grateful to our brother Bishops who have already called for prayers in response. In union with these efforts, we now call on all Catholics in Nigeria and all people of goodwill to observe a Nine-Day Prayer beginning from Saturday, 21 June 2025. Each day, we ask individuals, families, parishes, and communities to recite the Rosary, followed by the Prayer for Nigeria in Distress. On the final day, Saturday, 29 June 2025, the Solemnity of Saints Peter and Paul, Holy Mass should be offered across all dioceses and parishes for peace and healing in Nigeria, the repose of the dead, the comfort of victims, divine protection, and for the conversion of those responsible for the barbaric massacre of unarmed fellow citizens, including women and children.
3. To our suffering brothers and sisters in Benue State and across Nigeria wounded by violence, we assure you that the Church stands with you. As a concrete sign of our support, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria has already provided emergency assistance to some affected communities, and a CBCN delegation will soon pay them a solidarity visit. We ardently pray that the day will soon come when such sorrowful interventions will no longer be necessary, and our voices may instead rise in thanksgiving for a land healed and at peace.

May our Lady, Queen and Patroness of Nigeria intercede for our nation. May Christ, the Prince of Peace, heal our land. Amen.


+Lucius Iwejuru Ugorji
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President, CBCN




+Donatus Aihmision Ogun, OSA
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To all Catholic Priests in Nigeria

On Clerics Actively Engaging in Partisan Politics

Over the years, some priests in Nigeria, without the requisite authorisation from the competent ecclesiastical authority, have actively ventured into partisan politics or the exercise of public office. This situation has not only contravened the universal laws of the Church (cf. Canon 285 §3 and Canon 287 §2) but has also scandalised a vast majority of Christ's faithful in the country. In light of this troubling trend, the Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria (CBCN), with deep pastoral concern and having sought clarification from the Dicastery for Evangelisation and the Dicastery for Legislative Texts, underscores the following progressive penal measures applicable in cases of transgression of the above referenced canonical norms:


1. A cleric who is culpable of violating the prohibitions established by Canon 285 §3 and Canon 287 §2, notwithstanding the appeals and two canonical warnings of his proper Ordinary (cf. Canon 1339 §1), and who has given no sign of reform, must be suspended from every exercise of the power of orders and of governance (cf. canon 1333) for an appropriate period and could also be punished with canonical sanctions, such as having to reside in a particular place or territory (cf. Canon 1336 §2, 1^o).
2. If the cleric persists, he also incurs the delict of disobedience to ecclesiastical authority according to the norm of canon 1371 §1. In this case, the proper Ordinary, considering that this is disobedience in a grave matter about the specific ecclesial context, can ask the Dicastery for Evangelisation to apply the penalty of dismissal *in poenam* of the cleric from the clerical state by virtue of the faculties granted by the Holy Father.

It is also important to note that, in accordance with Canon 672, the prohibitions established in Canon 285 §3 and Canon 287 §2 apply equally to religious. Therefore, Major Superiors of Religious Institutes in Nigeria are urged to take note of these canonical provisions and ensure their diligent application within their respective jurisdictions.


We reaffirm the Church's unequivocal prohibition against clerics actively engaging in partisan politics or assuming public office without proper ecclesiastical authorisation. This is a matter of utmost gravity, and we urge all priests to adhere faithfully to these canonical laws and embrace their sacred duties with the utmost fidelity and devotion.

May the Holy Spirit inspire us to live according to the teachings of Christ and the Church. Amen.

Given this First Day of October, in the Year of the Our Lord Two Thousand and Twenty-Four, the Solemnity of Our Lady, Queen and Patroness of Nigeria.


+Lucius Iwejuru UGORJI
Archbishop of Owerri
President, CBCN




+Donatus Ailunsiun ODUN
Bishop of Uromi
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CBCN Statement on Benue Killings and Mokwa Flood

6 June 2025

1. With heavy hearts and deep anguish of soul, we, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria (CBCN), strongly condemn in the most unequivocal terms the utterly barbaric massacre of innocent citizens in Benue State. These cold-blooded attacks on defenceless communities where countless have been slaughtered, homes destroyed, and families left in anguish—are an affront to God, a stain on our shared humanity, and a terrifying reminder of the utter breakdown of security in our land.
2. There is no justification whatsoever for the continuous bloodletting that has become the daily reality of many in Benue State and across Nigeria. The relentless attacks on innocent and defenceless communities under the watch of civil authorities constitute a grave moral and constitutional failure. This carnage must end!
3. We recognise the efforts of the Benue State Government, especially in the areas of infrastructural development, the opening of impoverished neighbourhoods in Makurdi through road construction, the improved transportation system connecting surrounding villages to the capital, and the consistent payment of salaries to civil servants between the 23rd and 25th of each month. These are commendable strides in governance.
4. However, no matter how well a government pays salaries or builds roads, its failure to protect human lives renders its achievements hollow. The sanctity of human life is supreme. It is sacred. It is inviolable. Any government that fails to make the safety and protection of its citizens and their property its foremost priority abdicates its fundamental responsibility and moral legitimacy.
5. We, therefore, call on the Government of Benue State, and indeed the Federal Government of Nigeria, to rise beyond mere rhetoric and take immediate, firm, and sustained action to secure lives and restore hope to our people. The perpetrators of these heinous crimes must be identified, apprehended, and brought to justice without delay. We call on the security agencies to end the culture of impunity and bring professionalism, intelligence, and compassion to bear in addressing the deepening insecurity. Every Nigerian life matters. Every single death in such circumstances is a national tragedy and a scandal against our common humanity.

6. We are also deeply saddened by the devastating floods in Mokwa and surrounding areas in Niger State that have resulted in enormous loss of life, injury, displacement, and destruction of homes and infrastructure. The scale of this disaster calls for urgent, coordinated relief and rehabilitation efforts to restore hope and dignity to the affected communities. We commend the government's response so far but urge more comprehensive and compassionate action to support the victims, alleviate their suffering, and rebuild the devastated areas. At the same time, we call on the authorities to take proactive and preventive measures to mitigate the risk of future disasters and better protect vulnerable communities.
7. To the bereaved, displaced, traumatised, and wounded, we extend the deepest sympathy and spiritual closeness of the Catholic Church in Nigeria. Our hearts break with yours. We pray that Christ's mercy brings rest to the souls of the departed and comfort to all who suffer. Amen.

+L Ugorji
+Lucius Iwejuru Ugorji
Archbishop of Owerri
President, CBCN



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Messages from the Ecclesiastical Provinces...

Catholic Bishops of Abuja Ecclesiastical Province

The Catholic Bishops of Abuja Province, meeting in Otukpo in August 2025, celebrate signs of growth in their dioceses while confronting the stark realities of insecurity, hardship, and moral drift. Rooted in their mission as “light of the world and salt of the earth” (Matt 5:13), they pledge steadfast pastoral service marked by forgiveness, reconciliation, and hope.

They invite all the faithful to embrace the Jubilee Year of Hope through renewed prayer, deeper unity, and active compassion—especially toward the displaced, the poor, and the young—calling on chaplains and communities to foster spiritual growth and inclusion: “Love one another as I have loved you” (Jn 13:34).

Unflinching in the face of violence, economic strain, and ethical challenges, they press leaders and citizens alike toward integrity, vigilance, and service. Trusting in divine help, they commend the province to Mary’s care, echoing the Gospel mandate: “Forgive one another as our Heavenly Father has forgiven you” (Matt 6:14).

Catholic Bishops of Owerri Ecclesiastical Province

The Catholic Bishops of the Owerri Ecclesiastical Province, meeting in Orlu in July 2024, issued an urgent yet hopeful call for Nigeria’s renewal. They decried worsening hardship, leadership failure, and deepening distrust, while affirming that “both leadership and followership in Nigeria have responsibilities to fulfil to move our nation forward.” They urged political leaders to inspire trust with integrity, vision, and service; citizens to reject corruption and reclaim their civic duties; and communities, especially in the South East, to re-embrace the post-war “spirit that refused to accept that our present challenges are beyond redemption.”

Rooted in faith and the Church’s Year of Prayer, they invited all to see that spiritual renewal fuels social change: “We believe that the prayer of our Christians will touch the heart of God to spare this nation from anarchy and doom.” Their appeal blends moral courage with a conviction that justice, reconciliation, and solidarity can still shape a Nigeria where no one is left behind.

Catholic Bishops of Onitsha Ecclesiastical Province

The Catholic Bishops of Onitsha Ecclesiastical Province, meeting on 18 June 2025, speak with grief and righteous anger over the “relentless shedding of innocent blood” in recent massacres in Benue and Enugu States, calling such violence “inhuman, barbaric, and a gross violation of the sanctity and dignity of human life.”

They demand the government urgently fulfil its duty to restore peace and security, even as they rally the faithful to meet fear and brutality with faith-fuelled action. Declaring Friday, 20 June a special day of fasting and intercession, they urge priests and Religious to dedicate Masses, Rosaries, and Divine Offices for this cause, affirming with Saint Paul that “our hope cannot disappoint us” (Rom 5:5).

Looking to God as the nation’s ultimate help (Ps 121:2) and entrusting Nigeria to Mary, Queen of Peace, they hold fast to the conviction that prayer, solidarity, and moral courage can yet turn the tide toward healing, unity,

Catholic Bishops of Ibadan Ecclesiastical Province

Nigeria’s Ibadan Ecclesiastical Province Bishops In Synodal Interaction With Women Religious

By Bishop Emmanuel Adetoyese Badejo, Bishop, Catholic Diocese of Oyo

The Catholic Bishops of Ibadan Ecclesiastical Province of Nigeria, in the spirit of the ongoing synodal process in the Church, have held an interactive session with the Superiors of the Women Religious Congregations working in Ibadan Province. The session, which was held at the close of the second plenary of the bishops of Ibadan Province took place at the MM Pastoral Centre, Ilorin on August 12, 2025. It was intended as an expression of the ongoing Jubilee Year of Hope, was conducted in the synodal spirit of listening to one another in order to create together a more hopeful pastoral life for the Church and the future of Ibadan Province.

The Metropolitan Archbishop of Ibadan Province, Most Reverend Gabriel Leke Abegunrin, in his opening remarks, reasoned that the synodal interaction of

listening to one another, derived from the periodic interactive session which the Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria (CBCN) was already holding with the Religious Superiors at the national level. He revealed that the Bishops of Ibadan Province were eager to bring the exercise closer home by organizing this session on the level of the Province in order to address more effectively some issues that are peculiar to the ecclesiastical Province. He reminded all present of our calling as missionaries to our own people who must work together to actualize the mission of Jesus Christ in the contemporary times in which we live.

The Women Religious Superiors who attended the session largely personally and by representation, expressed gratitude to have been invited to discuss the life of the Church especially the issue of mission. They unveiled some areas of concern for them in their apostolate which include challenges with youth catechesis and the general religious environment which has become more liberal than ever before. They expressed concern about how to be effective pilgrims of hope when they do not have the material means of actually giving hope to people, about the excessive attempts at inculturation and innovation by some priests in certain parts of worship, and the balance of relationship in collaborative ministry especially where it involves priests and Religious.

The Religious Superiors appealed to the Bishops to check some excesses within the liturgy being manifesting by certain individuals and in various forms and which need to be checked because they damage the faith of the people and even of the Religious. Such matters have been addressed at the level of the national conference of Bishops but need to be made more effective at the provincial level as well. They also called for the Bishops to pay attention to the proliferation of Religious Congregations, some of which have little or no structured formation or community life.

These carry on with their speculative religious life with little or no ecclesiastical control while soiling the name of other Religious in the eyes of the faithful who innocently consider them all of the same stock. Such tendencies, if allowed to fester, actually endanger the very mission of the Church.

During the sustained listening period, the Bishops, speaking individually, admitted that the Church today, even as she is growing pastorally and admirably, has many challenges to confront. They admitted that the ongoing meeting is intended to reinforce their determination with the Religious to collectively address old and emerging challenges in the Church. It is a reinforcement of the important role that Women Religious play in the life of the Church, in the life of families and in the society especially within Ibadan Province. "We must find every way to help sustain the dignity and integrity of the church of Jesus Christ bequeathed to us over time".

Some Bishops emphasized that an adequate understanding of ecclesiology must be factored into the formation of priests and Religious in order to secure authentic spirituality because the latter actually derives from the former. A corollary of this must be an appreciation and sustenance of community life, lived as brothers and sisters to safeguard the sanity of the priest or Religious. All this, coupled with visionary and courageous leadership for priests and religious will discourage the flourishing of spirituality and pastoral practices that are extraneous and damaging to the catholic faith. The Religious were then urged to exploit more the educational and healthcare spaces which they govern in the Church like hospitals and schools to propose multimedia catechesis and catholic spirituality for evangelizing those they encounter every day.

Catholic Bishops of Calabar Province Address Emerging Heresies, Liturgical Aberrations

By Fr. Michael Nsikak Umoh, CSN

The Catholic Bishops of Calabar Province have issued a strong warning against emerging heresies and liturgical aberrations in the Church. In a communique titled "Hope Does Not Disappoint," the bishops expressed concern about the rise of false teachings and practices that threaten the integrity of the Catholic faith.

"We have observed a rise in the spate of heretical teachings," the communique states. "We need to emphasize that many of these resurgent heresies perpetrated by popular gospel preachers especially through social media, had long been dealt with through the teachings of the Church Fathers and various Ecumenical Councils."

The prelates attributed the spread of these heresies to ignorance of Church history or a willful distortion of theological facts. They urged the faithful to be discerning and to hold on to true teachings that emanate from the teaching authority of the Church.

In addition to addressing emerging heresies, the shepherds of the Church also tackled the menace of liturgical abuses. They lamented the proliferation of private ministries by priests and the inherent abuses. The bishops emphasized that the ministry of the priest is the one he was called by God, ordained, and entrusted with by the bishop.

Furthermore, the bishops also expressed concern about the rise of lay ministries in the Church, cautioning that while the Church acknowledges the common priesthood of the lay faithful, they should know their limits and not usurp the roles of ordained ministers.

'It was a privilege to participate in the conclave' – Cardinal Okpaleke



How do you feel being part of the conclave that elected the Vicar of Christ on earth and Bishop of Rome?

It was a privilege to participate in the last conclave. It was my first. It was a spirit-filled event that strengthened my faith in the abiding presence and direction of the Church by the Holy Spirit.

What personal moment/s from the conclave will stay with you forever?

I am glad that you recognize that there are indeed moments (in the plural) and not just one moment that will stay with me forever. Let me draw attention to some of them in no order of importance. The joy that greeted the white smoke announcing that the Holy Father had been elected without even knowing who has been elected, was one of the things that stood out for me. For me, this is a manifestation of trust in the work of the Holy Spirit and acceptance of whoever it has pleased the Lord to call to be the successor of St. Peter the head of the apostles. Still at the square, the number of young people who were there is a sign of hope. Another thing that will stay with me is that communion experienced among the Cardinals. Before the Conclave, there were speculations that it would last long because the Cardinals supposedly did not know themselves. Indeed, there were Cardinals from different parts of the

world and from different rites within the Catholic Church. Yet, there was a palpable sense of communion and singleness of purpose. The weight of personal responsibility in conscience before God as the votes were cast as well as the spiritual atmosphere of the whole exercise will surely remain with me. Finally, the meticulous application of the stipulated rules for a conclave is an experience I cherished too.

Before the conclave, did it ever cross your mind that Robert Francis Cardinal Prevost could emerge the Pope?

Not at all! That did not cross my mind. I doubt if it ever crossed his mind too. Let us remember that there were speculations in the media about papabilia which is not too subtle a way of mobilizing bias for and/or against some Cardinals. I wonder if Robert Francis Cardinal Prevost was ever mentioned.

From what you can share with us, what were some major considerations that were shared to the Cardinals in choosing the next Pope?

Before and after the burial of Pope Francis, there were the Congregational meetings of all the Cardinals – the Cardinal electors and the non-electors included. The meetings, following Catholic

tradition, can be seen as an exercise in collective brainstorming on the challenges facing the Church and suggestions as regards the way forward and the ordering of priorities, at least from the perspective of the Cardinals making the suggestions. The presumption was that the Holy Father was sitting in the room although not yet known because he had not yet been elected. From the above, you can see that there was no pre-planned job description or recommended orientation handed over to the Cardinals to guide their choice of the successor of St. Peter. Rather, from the meetings, every Cardinal was sensitised to the needs of the Church in contemporary times such that if it pleased the Lord to call any to the ministry, he would have gained from the exchange at the Congregational meetings an enlarged perspective on the needs of the Church in contemporary times.

How personally close are you to Pope Leo?

I was at the consistory in 2023 when he was created a Cardinal. Thereafter, we met a couple of times during the congregational meetings. Coincidentally, during the Conclave, we shared the same floor at the Domus Sanctae Marthae (St. Martha House) where all the cardinal-electors were accommodated. His room was adjacent to mine. So, we shared the elevator and exchanged pleasantries on the hall way. We celebrated mass together and also shared meals together.

What do you see as the greatest gift the new Pope brings to the Church?

What I see as his greatest gifts are his experiences as a missionary in Peru and also his extensive travels and experience of the Church in different parts of the world when he was the superior of the Augustinians.

Nigeria has one of the fastest-growing young Catholic population in the world. How should the Church channel this energy into vocations, lay leadership, and authentic witness?

It is the same old and irreplaceable emphasis of the Church on evangelisation – helping people to gain experience of and enter relationship with God who is Trinity – and discipleship. Catechesis will then clarify this relationship and help to gain a deeper understanding of the truth God has revealed and to be moved to bear witness through ongoing conversion and commitment to the values of God's Kingdom. Because the audience are young people, an appropriate medium and format must be chosen for the achievement of the goals outlined. As Pope St. Paul VI reminded us in his

Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (no. 41), people listen more to witnesses than to teachers and if they listen to teachers, it is because they are also witnesses. We must also emphasise with Pope St. John Paul II in *Catechesi Tradendae*, the need for young people to be at the forefront of the evangelisation of young people without downplaying the perfect complementarity between the catechesis of adults and of young people.



At times, speaking truth to power causes discomfort in both Church and society. How do you discern when to speak out forcefully and when to work quietly behind the scenes?

This question is both hard and easy to answer. It is hard to answer if we do not query the presuppositions of the question. This will put one in the double bind of either 'forceful denunciation' or 'quiet diplomacy' in relation to secular power. If we however look at the example of Jesus, we can see that the Good News is revolutionary. Roman rule was the suffocating power at the time of Jesus. How did he engage this power? He did not call people to rise up in arms against the Romans. Some Jews, like the Zealots, who expected the messiah to be a warlord to help them throw off Roman oppression, were disappointed. Jesus chose a radically different approach – preaching about the kingdom of God, a kingdom of truth, love, justice, and peace. Did Jesus' teaching speak truth to power in his time? How did he do it? He introduced a discourse that subverted oppression at its root. He was crucified in the process and gave us an example to follow. This is the core mandate of the Church. We must therefore, first of all, speak the truth of the Good News to the power of evil/selfishness in us and among us. Having been converted to the values of the Kingdom of God, we will be in a better position to discern at each point the best line of action. Yes, there are structures that perpetuate evil. There is need for conversion of structures. This, however, needs utmost care, least, in the effort to fight evil, one does not choose morally unacceptable means or cause more evil by one's choice of style of engagement.

How can parishes become centres not only of worship but of concrete social outreach that makes the faith visible in everyday life?

Your question seems to denigrate worship. But I know that you do not mean it that way. Some ways of understanding and enacting worship do not promote social outreach. Indeed, parishes can become concrete centres of outreach that make the faith visible in everyday life by worshiping well and not by looking for something extra to be added to worship. Worship is not empty ritualism. Rather, it is sacred action in which and through which we encounter the divine and are transformed therein to carry out God's love to others. The way you formulated the question shows a misunderstanding, and I suggest we refer to the book by Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger (later Pope Benedict XVI): *The Spirit of the Liturgy* for an explication of the relationship between mysteria



(mystery/sacrament), leitourgia (liturgy/worship) and diaconia (service/charity). According to Pope Benedict XVI, the Church has three main ministries – Kerygma/Martyria (teaching/witnessing), Leitourgia (liturgy/worship) and Diakonia (service/charity). The three go together. The three should be reflected in the life of the Church at all levels and especially at the grassroot - the parish.

What are the key lessons that the Church in Nigeria can draw from the experiences of the Church in Europe, and how can these lessons be applied in the Nigerian context to inform the Church's mission and ministry?

The key lesson is to guard against any break in the transmission of faith. Once any generation or a significant number of people are not formed in the faith especially in the family, it will be difficult for these to hand over the faith to their own children and the vicious cycle begins and can only get worse. The church in Nigeria must therefore pay attention to the family. This includes having a programme for children and following them up as they transition into young people and then adults. This programme must find ways of helping people develop personal relationship with God by making the Church a family, where everyone feels loved and cared for. Another thing we must learn is the need for evangelisation of culture. Culture is very powerful and structures individuals in a deep way. Such an evangelisation requires witness as well as intellectual engagement. Finally, there is need for hope – that conviction of God's involvement in the world and in the Church. It is such hope that will help us as individuals and as a community of believers to uphold the values of God's kingdom even in difficult circumstances while remaining expectant of the fulfillment of his promises.

Pilgrims of Hope: Thousands Expected at Nigeria's National Jubilee Celebration in Elele, Port Harcourt

By CSN Media

The Catholic Church in Nigeria is set to host thousands of devotees for the highly anticipated Jubilee of Hope celebration, a significant event that brings together Catholics and Christians from across the country. This is scheduled to take place from Friday 19 September to Sunday 21 September 2025, at the Sanctuary of Jesus the Saviour and mother Mary in Elele, Rivers State. This national celebration promises to be a time of spiritual reassessment, forgiveness, and mercy.

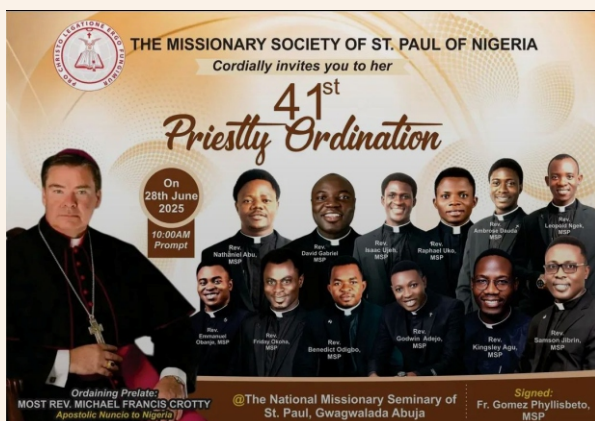
According to the Director of Pastoral Affairs at the Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria (CSN), Rev. Fr. Augustine Fasiku, the Jubilee Year is a celebration of hope, forgiveness, and mercy, focusing on the themes of reconciliation, pilgrimage, and mercy. "The Jubilee Year provides an opportunity for Catholics to deepen

their faith, seek forgiveness for sins, and engage in acts of charity and kindness," he emphasized.

The Jubilee Year will feature pilgrimages to designated sites, such as cathedrals and shrines, where participants will journey to sacred sites to deepen their faith. Also, special doors in basilicas and cathedrals will be opened, symbolising the path to salvation. The event will also provide opportunities for prayer, adoration, and meditation, as well as encouragement to perform acts of charity and kindness.



Nuncio ordains 12 priests for MSP



The Apostolic Nuncio to Nigeria, Most Rev. Michael Francis Crotty ordained 12 priests for the Missionary Society of Saint Paul (MSP), Abuja, recently.

The Rev. Deacons ordained as priests are: Rev. Nathaniel Abu, MSP, Rev. David Gabriel, MSP, Rev. Isaac Ujeh, MSP, Rev. Raphael Uko, MSP, Rev. Ambrose Dauda, MSP, Rev. Leopold Ngek,

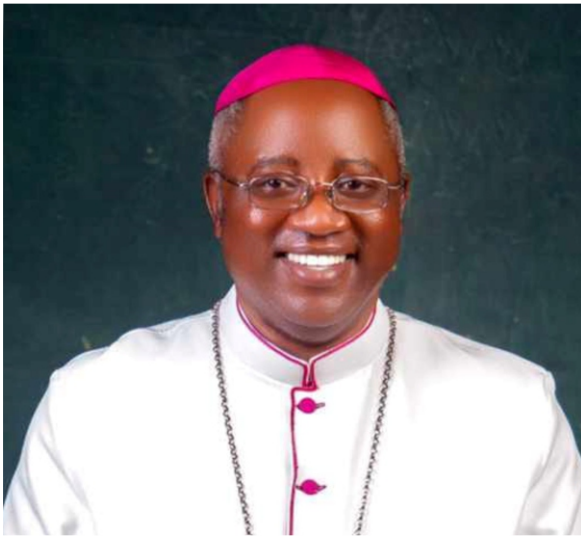
MSP, Rev. Emmanuel Obanje, MSP, Rev. Friday Okoha, MSP, Rev. Benedict Odigbo, MSP, Rev. Godwin Adejo, MSP, Rev. Kingsley Agu, MSP, Rev. Francis Jibrin, MSP.

We pray for the success of the ordination, and that God will make these priests worthy pastors and great missionaries for His Church.

The Missionary Society of Saint Paul (MSP) of Nigeria is a Society of Apostolic Life, founded in 1977 by the Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria (CBCN).

With over 315 priests working in 19 countries across Africa, Europe, and the Americas, including Nigeria, Botswana, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Gambia, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, South Africa, and South Sudan, as well as Canada, Grenada, Ireland, Italy, Sweden, the Bahamas, the United Kingdom, and the United States, the MSP has a strong connection to Ireland, with many members studying in Ireland during their formation, and some priests serving in parishes there.

"Shun Religious Syncretism, Emulate the Apostles," Bishop Daboh Admonishes Christians



By Olivia Obijiaku

The Catholic Bishop of Zaria Diocese, Most Rev. Habila Tyiakonaboi Daboh, has lamented the alarming rate of religious syncretism and condemned the practice of merging rituals among Christians.

During his first Pastoral Visit to Our Lady Queen of Peace Parish, Ahmadu Bello University Zaria, on Sunday, May 4, 2025, the Local Ordinary

administered the Sacrament of Confirmation to 84 candidates. He charged them to emulate the apostles, who were determined to obey God rather than man, as seen in the day's first reading of Acts 5:27-32, 40-41.

Bishop Daboh stated that many places masquerading as prayer houses are actually business centers operated by coded native doctors who deceive their prey with sacramentals. "We believe in God, yet we still go to prayer houses," he pointed out.

"Prayer house is the digital name for bouka houses," he explained. "In those days, when people went to bouka houses, they were told to bring live cocks, lizards, and the rest. Then, they knew where they were. But these days, when they go there, they see a large Bible and a huge Rosary, so that they won't suspect anything immediately."

The Prelate expressed concern about the prevalence of syncretism, saying, "We see a lot of people involved in syncretism – coming to Church and still going back to worship other things. And now that we're bringing the two together, where is God in this? Some of us are here as Christians, but when we leave this place, our attitude, our character, and behavior don't show that we're Christians."

A Shepherd Among His Flock in Grief

Recently, His Lordship, Most Rev. William Avenya, Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Gboko, paid a sorrowful visit to Yalewata community to personally witness the aftermath of the tragic attack that claimed the lives of the mother and four relatives of one of his priests, Rev. Fr. Martin Tsegba.

Guiding the Bishop through the ruins was the



grieving father and husband, now left behind in the pain of unimaginable loss.

Let us continue to lift Fr. Martin, his father, and the entire Yalewata community in prayer. May God console every broken heart and restore peace to our land.

Bishop Mamza elected first Vice President of SECAM

The Catholic Bishop of Yola Diocese, Most Rev. Stephen Dami Mamza, has been elected the First Vice President of the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM).

The election took place during the 20th Plenary Assembly of SECAM, which brought together Catholic bishops from across Africa and Madagascar to deliberate on pastoral, social, and developmental issues affecting the Church and the continent.

By this election, Bishop Mamza assumes a key leadership role within the continental body, supporting the President of SECAM in guiding the mission of the Church in Africa and coordinating initiatives that foster evangelisation, unity, peace, and integral human development.

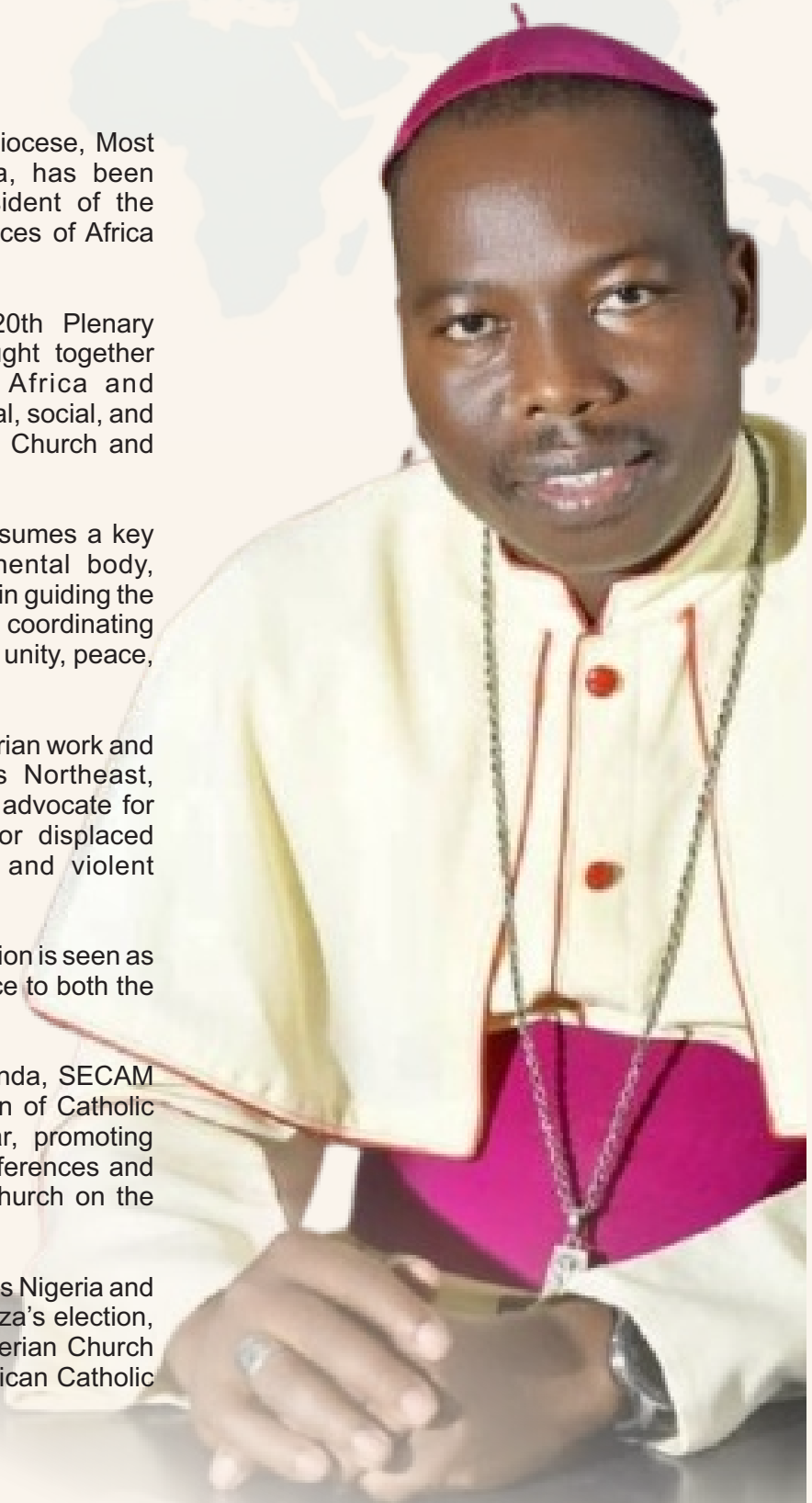
Known for his outstanding humanitarian work and peacebuilding efforts in Nigeria's Northeast, Bishop Mamza has been a strong advocate for justice, reconciliation, and care for displaced persons affected by insurgency and violent conflict.

His elevation to this continental position is seen as recognition of his unwavering service to both the Church and society.

Founded in 1969 in Kampala, Uganda, SECAM serves as the umbrella organization of Catholic bishops in Africa and Madagascar, promoting collaboration among episcopal conferences and providing a unified voice for the Church on the continent.

Church leaders and lay faithful across Nigeria and Africa have welcomed Bishop Mamza's election, describing it as a boost for the Nigerian Church and a sign of hope for the wider African Catholic community.

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SECAM 20th Plenary Assembly: Bishops in Africa Celebrate Resilience, "ecclesial maturity" since Last Gathering

By [Silas Isenjia](#) (Edited by CSN Media)

Members of the [Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar](#) (SECAM) met in Rwanda's capital, Kigali, and lauded the immense growth witnessed in the Catholic Church on the continent since the Bishops' last gathering in 2022.

In their status report presented on Thursday, July 31 at the assembly, the SECAM members expressed that the church in Africa has witnessed ecclesial maturity from July 2022 to July 2025. The period, they said, was also marked by important transitions and initiatives within SECAM.

"The period 2022-2025 has highlighted SECAM's resilience, strategic development and growing ecclesial maturity."

Key achievements, for the period they said, included leadership changes, empowerment initiatives, theological reflections and stronger collaborations, all of which the

Bishops said "lay a solid foundation for a more synodal, evangelising and socially engaged Church in Africa."

In the report, the Catholic Bishops highlighted the achievements and challenges they faced for the past three years.

Achievements

The Bishops highlight the smooth transition following the death of Cardinal Richard Baawobr in November 2022 which they said ensured continuity within SECAM.

They also expressed that regular meetings of the Presidential Council, Standing Committee and national and regional General Secretaries were held, both virtually and in person, to coordinate activities and strategic planning.

"Visits were made to a number of national Bishops' conferences, notably Zambia, Tanzania, Madagascar and Malawi, to encourage the Bishops to take ownership of SECAM and commit themselves to fraternity,"

they affirmed.

The report also noted the improvement of institutional communication within SECAM, in particular with regional Episcopal Conferences, Vatican dicasteries and partner organisations, as well as solidarity with Bishops on the occasion of ordinations, anniversaries, and their crises, and condolences, in moments of grief."

Furthermore, the report showed that SECAM's Commission for Evangelization advanced the Church's mission through biblical, theological and pastoral initiatives including Biblical apostolate, theological reflections and the Synodal process.

Through SECAM's Commission for Justice, Peace and Development (CJPD), the Bishops in Africa also engaged in promoting social justice, good governance and environmental sustainability.

They explained that the commission carried out its mandate on good governance and democracy through the "good governance project", that mainly advocated for transparent governance and a democratic culture. The commission facilitated "peace dialogues, election monitoring and mediation initiatives in conflict areas."

The commission, according to the report, has also facilitated research, awareness campaigns and capacity building for the pastoral care of migrants, through "management of the Migrant Pastoral Project of Catholic nuns, including training, data collection and networking."



Through Laudato Si' principles, the Bishops reported that SECAM has fostered environmental protection by supporting "regional campaigns on climate change, land rights and resource management."

Moreover, the report shows that through the communications department, SECAM has been able to play "a crucial role in enhancing the visibility" and reach of SECAM through SECAM's Website and digital platforms, Partnership with APO Group and Media and public relations.

Challenges

The Bishops highlighted the lack of financial resources as one of the major challenges faced during the three-year period.

They said that the reduction in diocesan contributions, which were supposed to support SECAM, meant that the organisation was mainly dependent on aid from foreign partners, thus compromising the realisation of its essential activities.



AUCHI: Gunmen abduct Minor Seminarians, kill security personnel

By Emmanuel Eko, CSN Media

Unidentified gunmen have stormed Immaculate Conception Minor Seminary, Thursday night, killed a security guard and abducted some minor seminarians.

The incident occurred at about 9pm on Thursday 10 July, 2025 at the Immaculate Conception Minor Seminary, located along the Ivhianokpodi, Etsako East Local Government Area of Auchi, Edo State.

According to a press statement signed by the Diocesan Director of Social Communications, Rev. Fr. Peter Egielewa, "personnel of the Nigerian Security and Civil Defense Corp, Mr. Christopher Aweneghieme stationed at the Seminary was killed while three minor Seminarians were abducted and led into the bush. At this moment, the other Seminarians have been temporarily relocated to safe area until security measures around the Seminary are tightened. Unfortunately, no communication has been had with the abductors yet.

The Chief Shepherd of the Diocese, Most Rev. Gabriel Dunia, has appealed to security agencies to do more to intensify efforts to protect lives and property of the people. The Bishop has also directed all priests of the Diocese to organise a Votive Mass of the Precious Blood of Jesus to be celebrated in the diocese.

It will be recalled that the Rector of the Seminary, Rev. Fr. Thomas Oyode, was previously kidnapped by Fulani herdsmen on October 27 last year during Benediction with seminarians in Ivianokpodi, Edo State, Nigeria.

The Catholic Diocese of Auchi requests all people of goodwill to join the faithful of the Diocese to pray for the repose of the soul of Mr. Christopher Aweneghieme and for the speedy and safe



Caritas Nigeria

@

15

**The Secretary General,
Management and Staff of
Catholic Secretariat of
Nigeria heartily felicitate
with Caritas Nigeria @ 15.**

**We pray God to continue to
bless the good work you
have been doing for
humanity.**

Congratulations!!!



"We are here for the Church of Africa": SECAM President Lauds Continent's Endurance amid Hardships

By National Catholic Register

The President of the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM) has acknowledged Africa's resilience and ability to remain steadfast in the face of the numerous challenges confronting the continent.

In his welcoming remarks during the Holy Mass for the official opening of the 20th SECAM Plenary Assembly, Fridolin Cardinal Ambongo of the Catholic Archdiocese of Kinshasa in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) highlighted the host nation, Rwanda, as a great example of resilience and a symbol of hope.

"We are gathered as a Church in this part of Africa that is suffering, in this country of Rwanda that has scars of recent history, but which is also a country that opens perspectives for the future," said Cardinal Ambongo in his Thursday, July 31, remarks at the Regina Pacis Parish of the Catholic Archdiocese of Kigali.

He added, "Beyond our suffering in Africa, there are perspectives for the future, and there is hope. We are here for the Church of Africa."

The church in Africa has continued to witness cases of violence with the most recent incident being the killing of more than 30 people following the July 27 attack on Blessed Anuarite Komanda Parish of the Catholic Diocese of Bunia in Ituri Province of DRC.



The attack, believed to have been carried out by the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) rebel group, took place as parishioners were gathered for a prayer vigil at the church.

In his message of solidarity with the National Episcopal Conference of Congo (CENCO) following the deadly assault, Pope Leo XIV on Monday, July 28, called for the urgent need to "work for the integral development" of the people affected by wars.

The Holy Father said, "This tragedy calls us ever more urgently to work for the integral human development of the suffering population in this region."

Meanwhile in his July 31 remarks, Cardinal Ambongo also acknowledged with appreciation the hospitality of the Rwandan government and the Episcopal Conference of Rwanda for the adequate preparations of the Plenary Assembly.

"I extend my heartfelt gratitude to all the delegations, and especially to the Rwandan government, for the warm hospitality and generous support provided to all participants of this symposium," he said.



Migration Apostolate sparks hope for Migrants and Refugees in Ogoja Diocese

**Report by: Rev. Fr. Titus Armon
Coordinator, Migrants and Refugees Unit,
Ogoja Diocese**

The September 2024 UNHCR published data on registered Camerounian refugees in Nigeria puts the number at a staggering 69,475. Of these, over 45,000 are in Cross River State, with children between the ages of 0 to 17 making up 35,987.

The Catholic Diocese of Ogoja plays host to three of the biggest refugee settlements in Cross River State, namely: Adagom 1, Okende and Adagom 3.

Faced daily with the stark reality of the difficult plight of refugees, the Migrants and Refugees Unit of the Diocese has over the last one year continually made efforts to provide pastoral, humanitarian and social support for this vulnerable group. Led by the Bishop, Most Rev. Donatus Edet Akpan, the Church has sought to bring much-needed relief, restore the hope and preserve the fundamental human dignity of these our disadvantaged brothers and sisters.

Focusing on children in April 2025, the Unit



collaborated with the Congregational Sisters of the Missionaries of Love and Mercy, and with the support funding from the St. Patrick's Missionary Society, Nigeria, Divine Mercy Prayer Family and the Comfort foundation, organized and carried out an Easter children's event.

The event featured a "Back-to-School Spark" program, which was developed and piloted by the Missionaries of Love and Mercy and aimed at rekindling the desire for educational pursuit in the refugee children of Adagom 1 settlement. Climax of the event was an Easter celebration featuring awards to some especially talented children, as well as the distribution of food, clothing and cash envelopes to various participants and families. About 300 children participated in the program.

Through further support of the Divine Mercy

**SPECIAL FEATURE
ON IKOT EKPENE DIOCESE**



Most Rev.
Camillus Raymond Umoh:
The Bishop & his Diocese...

Most Rev. Camillus Raymond Umoh: *The Bishop & his Diocese...*

(By Fr. Michael Nsikak Umoh, Emmanuel Eko, Fidelia Angbalaga & Vincent Njoku)

The Beginnings...

Most Rev. Camillus Raymond Umoh was born on July 18, 1956, to Agnes and Raymond Umoh in Nto Ubiam, Okon, Essien Udim Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State. Raised in a devout Catholic family, his faith journey began at a young age. He attended primary school and later proceeded to Queen of Apostles Seminary Afaha Obong, Abak, where he finished in 1975. His desire to become a Catholic priest led him, on Dominic Cardinal Ekandem's recommendation, to Bigard Memorial Seminary, Ikot Ekpene Campus, where he commenced studies in Philosophy in the 1976/77 academic year. He later studied Theology at Bigard Memorial Seminary, Enugu, from 1980 to 1984.

Priesthood...

Bishop Umoh was ordained a priest of Ikot Ekpene Diocese on July 7, 1984. His priestly ministry began as an assistant parish priest from 1984 to 1985, and served as a parish priest from 1986. During this period, he was called to further his studies in Sacred Scripture and Theology. Upon completing his studies, he taught at St. Joseph Major Seminary, Ikot Ekpene, and later at the Catholic Institute of West Africa (CIWA) until 2010.





Episcopacy...

On July 16, 2010, Pope Benedict XVI appointed Bishop Umoh as the Bishop of Ikot Ekpene. He was consecrated and installed on October 9, 2010. As Bishop, one of his key pastoral priorities has been deepening the Catholic faith of the faithful, particularly the youth and young people, in an environment terribly influenced by Protestant and Pentecostal traditions. To achieve this, he has emphasised intensive catechesis for all pastoral agents, ensuring that priests and other pastoral agents receive adequate training to effectively carry out this mission. This initiative has been ongoing since his appointment as Bishop.

Ikot Ekpene Diocese: A Story of Faith and Challenges...

Ikot Ekpene Diocese, established on March 1, 1963, from the then Calabar Diocese, has a

unique history and makeup. The area was initially influenced by Protestant missionaries, who arrived before the Catholic faith. As a result, the city of Ikot Ekpene has a predominantly Protestant population, which has impacted the understanding and practice of the Catholic faith. However, the rural villages have strong Catholic roots, giving the diocese its numerical strength. This has shaped the diocese's disposition in Church life, with many vocations to the priesthood and religious life emerging from rural areas.

A Blessing of Bumper Vocations...

Priests and Religious from Ikot Ekpene Diocese have made significant contributions to the growth and development of the Church in Nigeria. This blessing is attributed to God's faithfulness, which the diocese does not attribute to itself or take for granted. God has been faithful.

Challenges Facing the Diocese...

Despite the blessings, the diocese faces challenges, particularly including the proliferation of Pentecostal Christian groups and emerging heresies that came along with them. Additionally, the migration of young people from village communities to bigger cities has left many village churches desolate. These challenges require the diocese to adapt and respond to the changing needs of its people.

The diocese remains committed to its mission, trusting in God's faithfulness and guidance as it navigates these challenges.

Hosting CBCN, A Great Honour...

Hosting the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria (CBCN) Plenary is a tremendous honor for Ikot Ekpene Diocese. The laity, religious, and clergy feel privileged to be entrusted with this responsibility, and even Protestant Christians in the area share in the joy and excitement. The people of the diocese view this as a great challenge, but they are determined



to host the Plenary successfully.

Pastoral Significance...

The diocese believes that hosting the CBCN Plenary will bring numerous blessings, including consolidating faith, unity, and peace. The presence of successors of the apostles, including the Pope's representative, will have a lasting impact on the diocese.

Unique Strengths and Challenges...

The diocese's cultural unity is a significant source of strength, with a single language, cultural values, and traditions binding the people together. Despite being a small diocese in terms of land mass, Ikot Ekpene faces grave economic challenges, including unemployment and poverty. However, the area has a low crime rate while the diocese

contributes immensely to the development of the state through its world class educational institutions and healthcare facilities.

The Church's Role in Society...

The Church in Ikot Ekpene Diocese plays a vital role in character formation, particularly among the youth, and serves as a moral compass. The diocese's educational institutions and healthcare facilities are among the best in the state, employing many citizens and providing essential services. By hosting the CBCN Plenary, the diocese is poised to showcase its strengths and demonstrate its commitment to faith, unity, and service.

You are heartily welcome to Ikot Ekpene diocese, the rafia city and the gateway of Legion of Mary into Nigeria!!!

NOTABLE INSTITUTIONS IN THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF IKOT EKPENE

1. THE GENERALATE OF THE HANDMAIDS OF THE HOLY CHILD JESUS (HHCJ), IFUHO, IKOT EKPENE

This is a female religious congregation. It was founded by Mother Mary Charles Magdalen Walker who came to Nigeria in 1929. The religious congregation took root in what is now known as the Ecclesiastical Province of Calabar with the profession of her first set of nuns (sisters) in the early 1930s. The religious in this congregation serve in various Archdioceses and Diocese in Nigeria, various countries in Africa and in other continents of the world. The current Superior General is Mother Germaine Ocansey, HHCJ.



2. HOLY FAMILY COLLEGE, OKU ABAK

This is a Catholic Secondary School College, established in 1942 by Bishop James Moynagh, SPS. Its abbreviation is HOFACO. The college was the first Catholic Secondary School within the shores of Annangland in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Over the past eight decades, the institution has produced alumni who have distinguished themselves in all fields of human endeavour. The present principal of the college is Rev. Fr. Dr. Columbus S. Archibong.



3. QUEEN OF APOSTLES SEMINARY, AFAHA OBONG, ABAK

Queen of Apostles Seminary, Afaha Obong has its early beginnings in 1948, where it operated in shared accommodation at Holy Family College and Teachers Training College, Ediene, Abak. Full academic programmes commenced in its permanent location at Ikwek, Afaha Obong in 1952 with His Eminence Late Dominic Cardinal Ekanem (then a young Priest) as its first Rector. As at 2025 QAS is seventy-three years old. Within these years, the institution has produced priests, bishops, archbishops and men who have singled themselves out in all strata of society. The present rector is Very Rev. Fr. Anthony Christopher Okon.



4. ST. MARY'S HOSPITAL, URUA AKPAN, ESSIEN UDIM

St. Mary's Hospital Urua Akpan was built in 1950 and was run for many years by the Medical Missionaries of Mary Sisters (MMM). St. Mary's has since inception been pivotal in health care delivery and especially stood out in maternal child health concerns for the people of the area and those in the neighbouring Abia State. The new College of Health Technology named after Bishop Camillus Etokudoh is located within its precincts. The present Hospital Administrator is Rev. Fr. Primus Ndifreke Umoh.



NOTABLE INSTITUTIONS IN THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF IKOT EKPENE

5. ST. COLUMBANUS SECONDARY SCHOOL, IKWEN, OBOT AKARA

St. Columbanus Secondary School Ikwen, was founded by St. Patrick Society (SPS) in January 1959. It was established with name St. Pius XII but changed to St. Columbanus two years later. Originally it was boys' school, but became co-educational in its later years. Many notable Nigerians from within and outside Akwa Ibom graduated from this institution in its early years. It was one of the schools taken over and run by erstwhile South-Eastern and Cross River States. In 2007, the government of His Excellency, Arc. Obong Victor Attah returned proprietorship rights to the Catholic Bishop of Ikot Ekpene. The present principal of the college as abbreviated SCOSI, is Rev. Fr. Dr. Gerald Emem Umoren.



6. LORETO GIRLS JUNIORATE, ERIAM, AFAHA OBONG, ABAK

Loreto Girls Juniorate, Eriam Afaha Obong was established in 1963 by the pioneer bishop of the Diocese, His Eminence, Late Dominic Cardinal Ekandem. The major focus was on the training of women to occupy various roles as religious and leaders in the church and nation. Late Sister Mary Elizabeth Umoh, HHCJ, was the first principal. The present principal is Sister Theresa Ashi, HHCJ.

7. MERCY HOSPITAL AND EYE CENTRE, ABAK

Mercy Hospital was built by His Eminence Late Dominic Cardinal Ekandem in 1965. The premises became a refugee camp during the civil war period (1967-1970). It was officially reopened in September 1971 to cater for the health and medical needs of the people of Abak, Uyo, and Ikot Abasi axis. The Eye Centre has remained a veritable contributor to the society, offering ophthalmological services from the 1980s to date. The present Hospital Administrator is Rev. Fr. Dr. Canice Ekpo.



8. ST. JOSEPH MAJOR SEMINARY, IKOT EKPENE

This foremost Catholic institution was established in 1976 by the bishops of erstwhile Onitsha Ecclesiastical Province as a philosophy faculty (campus) of Bigard Memorial Seminary, Enugu. The faculty of Sacred Theology was added to the studium in 1989. The first set of theology Senior Seminarians were admitted in 1989 for the 1989/1990 academic year. Following the institution's major landmarks, the bishops of the Province (Onitsha then) changed its name to St. Joseph Major Seminary, effective 1st March, 1991.

Over the years, the seminary had affiliated its philosophy faculty to University of Cross River State (1990), University of Uyo (1992) and later University of Calabar. However, the institution's affiliation with the Pontifical Urban University, Rome, from the beginning, has been maintained till date. The Late Bishop Gregory Ochiagha was the pioneer Rector from 1976 until he was appointed Bishop of Orlu in the early 1980s. The current Rector is Very Rev. Fr. Dr. Patrick Abem.



An exclusive interview with the Chairman of the Planning Committee (LOC) for the CBCN 2025 second plenary, Hon. Justice Pius Idiong (KSM)

Can we meet you sir?
I am Hon. Justice Pius Idiong (KSM).

Please describe your role as the Chairman of the planning Committee for the CBCN Plenary. What has it been like planning such an event?

My role as the Chairman of the Central Planning Committee has been that of identifying the areas of need and co-ordinating the realisation of the Diocesan plans for the successful hosting of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria (CBCN).

It has not been an easy duty planning event such as this, considering the quality of guests expected and the fact that it is a historic event that may not come back to us in the nearest future.

What is your committee strength like?

The strength of the committee is two hundred people comprising of Clergy, Religious and Lay faithful of our Diocese.

The members of the committee are sub-divided into seventeen sub-committees.

What major arrangements have been put in place for smooth and successful hosting of the plenary?

Major arrangements put in place for the successful hosting of the Conference include good accommodation, conducive halls for conferences, vehicles for movement, stand by generators for power supply and water, decent food, chapel for worship and liturgical needs.

What has been the most challenging aspect of preparing for this event, and how have you overcome them?

The major challenge encountered in the course of planning was finance.

We were able to overcome this through the generosity of our people.

What should the Bishops and all the guests look forward to in Ikot Ekpene?

The Bishops and guests should look forward to a peaceful stay in our Diocese.



An exclusive interview with the Ikot Ekpene Diocesan President of the Catholic Women Organization of Nigeria (CWO), Lady Rosemary Pius Idiong

Can we meet you?
I am Lady Rosemary Pius Idiong. I was sworn into office as the Diocesan President of CWO on 11th December, 2022.

Would you say that your membership strength is encouraging?

Yes, CWO Membership strength is encouraging.

What do you think could be some challenges regarding membership; and how can this be overcome?

What I think could be some challenges regarding membership are unemployment of some wedded couples, nonchalant attitude by some mothers to register in some pious organizations; poor financial status, lack of empowerment, and the prevention of some wives by some husbands from participating in church activities. There are some mothers who feel that they cannot tie wrappers and wear beads except gold trinkets and bracelets. I think these challenges can be overcome if some young CWO can be encouraged to learn one trade or the other through joining in acquisition groups. The CWO should organize empowerment programmes e.g. giving some token to the young mothers to start off a trade.

In what ways is CWO contributing towards the hosting of the plenary?

The CWO has contributed towards the hosting of the plenary in various ways. Some of the ways have been the provision of mattresses and beddings at the retreat and youth development centre; arranging of a digital kitchen and purchase of cooking utensils; praying and reciting the Rosary every meeting day for the successful hosting of the plenary; booking of Masses at all parishes in the Diocese; financial contribution to the Diocese to aid the successful hosting of the plenary; and agreement that CWON members will take care of the Bishops that will be visiting their different parishes.

What in your opinion does this event mean to the diocese of Ikot Ekpene, and to the CWO in particular?

In my opinion as president of the CWON in the Diocese, the 2025 CBCN means increase in our faith, consolidating our love for God and neighbor, and expressing unity and progress as one universal Church. It means this is our opportunity to express our gratitude to God for all His blessings. It means it is a period to contribute generously either in talents, treasures, and finances to the Diocese and show love to one another.



What are some significant contributions of the CWO toward the development of the Diocese?

Some of the significant contributions of the CWO toward the development of the Diocese include providing food apostolate for the bishop at Christmas and Easter period; giving of food to the priests and religious and providing for priests and religious during their parents' funerals. We also contribute by visiting orphanages with food items at specified times; organising seminars and workshops on relevant issues affecting the society in general and the church in particular.

How is the CWO helping in formation of the girl-child in the diocese and society?

Some of the challenges I think the diocese is facing at the moment include the formation of the girl-child in the Diocese and Society, Organising of seminars on ethical and attitudinal issues for the girl-child to aid in their moral growth. We face the challenges of empowering the girl child towards skill training, building of self-confidence and promoting independence. We face the challenge of mentoring the girl-child by providing valuable advice and support. We face the challenge of being good role models thereby inspiring girls to pursue education, career, and personal growth. We face the challenge of advocating and promoting girls' education, thereby helping to bridge gaps at home, in the church and the society at large. We also face the challenge of allowing them to register in pious societies like legion of Mary and Maria Goretti to prepare them to grow up as good and dedicated mothers.

An exclusive interview with the Ikot Ekpene Diocesan President of the Catholic Men Organization of Nigeria (CMO), Obong Godwin Michael Etokakpan (Esq)

C*an we meet you sir?*
My name is Obong Godwin Michael Etokakpan (Esq.) I assumed office on 20th November, 2022.

Would you say that your membership strength is encouraging?

CMON Membership strength: Going by parochial enrolment, the CMO has a total number of about 3,500 members from across the 61 parishes in the Diocese. The membership strength is encouraging.

What do you think could be some challenges regarding membership; and how can this be overcome?

What I think could be some challenges regarding membership are poverty, low income, retirement, sickness, unemployment and lack of meaningful means of livelihood. I think these challenges can be overcome if CMO at the parochial levels are organised into cooperatives and make grants available to them as start-up grants for them to begin investments. I also encourage creating interactive platforms for the men at parish and deanery levels. This is to encourage them to exchange business ideas.

In what ways is CMO contributing towards the hosting of the plenary?

The CMO has contributed towards the hosting of the plenary in various ways. Some of the ways include the financial support to the Bishop at the Diocesan level, deanery and parish levels. CMO members are also active members of various planning committees and sub-committees as well as being members of various Pastoral and Laity Councils.

What in your opinion does this event mean to the diocese of Ikot Ekpene, and to the CMO in particular?

In my opinion as president of the CMO in the Diocese, the 2025 CBCN means divine visitation first and foremost, to Ikot Ekpene regional area in general, and primarily, as the first local government in Nigeria as a country. Then, it means divine visitation to all the Catholics in Ikot Ekpene; it means a time for renewal; it means a time for retreat; it means a time for spiritual blessings on the people, families, institutions, the entire land and its crops and habitations.

What are some significant contributions of the CMO toward the development of the Diocese?

Some of significant contributions of the CMO toward the development of the Diocese include the upkeep of our minor seminarians and students at QAS, St. Joseph and Loreto.



What are some challenges you think the diocese is facing at the moment?

Some of the challenges I think the diocese is facing at the moment emanate from the negative life-styles of some of the priests. I think these negative life-styles are not in agreement with their vows of celibacy, obedience and chastity. I think that there are several priests outside the diocese on studies who have stayed away from the diocese for a long time. The benefits of further studies in Europe and America for the diocese are defeated if they don't come to work in the Diocese. I also think that the non-posting of priests to other places of pastoral assignments has affected several pastoral issues in these parishes and places, including spiritual and moral growth of many people in these places. There is need for the Chief Shepherd to carry out this long overdue exercise as he deems fit.

An exclusive interview with the Ikot Ekpene Diocesan President of the Catholic Youth Organization of Nigeria (CYON), Samuel Nelson Ibanga

The Catholic Youth Organization of Nigeria (CYON) in Ikot Ekpene Diocese is currently under the leadership of Samuel Nelson Ibanga, a dedicated, passion-driven and resilient youth. In this interview, He shares his experiences, vision, and the vital role of CYON in promoting spiritual growth within the Church.

Can we meet you sir?

My name is Samuel Nelson Ibanga. I took over as the Diocesan President of the Catholic Youth Organization of Nigeria, Ikot Ekpene Diocese, in November 2022.

Would you say that your membership strength is encouraging?

Our membership strength is indeed encouraging. We've seen a surge in young Catholic Christians eager to participate in CYON activities and contribute to the Church's growth and spiritual missions.

What do you think could be some challenges regarding membership; and how can this be overcome?

One challenge we face is engaging and retaining members. To overcome this, we plan to: Develop more youth-centric programs and activities; Improve communication channels to keep members informed and involved; Provide training and capacity-building programs to enhance our members' skills and competitiveness.

In what ways is CYON contributing towards the hosting of the plenary?

CYON is actively contributing to the hosting of the CBCN plenary by: Organizing youth-focused events and activities across parishes; Participating in planning and coordination committees; and providing logistical support.

What in your opinion does this event mean to the diocese of Ikot Ekpene, and to CYON in particular?

This event is a significant milestone for our diocese and CYON, as it: Fosters unity and collaboration among diocesan priests, religious, and lay faithful within and beyond the diocese; provides an opportunity for spiritual growth and renewal; showcases our diocesan hospitality, faith, and rich regional culture; expands our focus towards contributing meaningfully to building for Christ.

What are some significant contributions of the CYON toward the development of the Diocese?

CYON has made significant contributions to the Diocese's development by Engaging and supporting evangelization and catechetical programs; Participating in community service and outreach initiatives.



How is the CYON helping in formation of the girl-child in the diocese and society?

CYON in Ikot Ekpene Diocese is committed to helping in the formation of the girl-child through mentorship programs, promoting self-worth, and upholding female dignity.



**Welcome to
St. Columbanus Secondary School,
Ikwen, Obot Akara LGA of
Akwa Ibom State
(Diocese of Ikot Ekpene)**



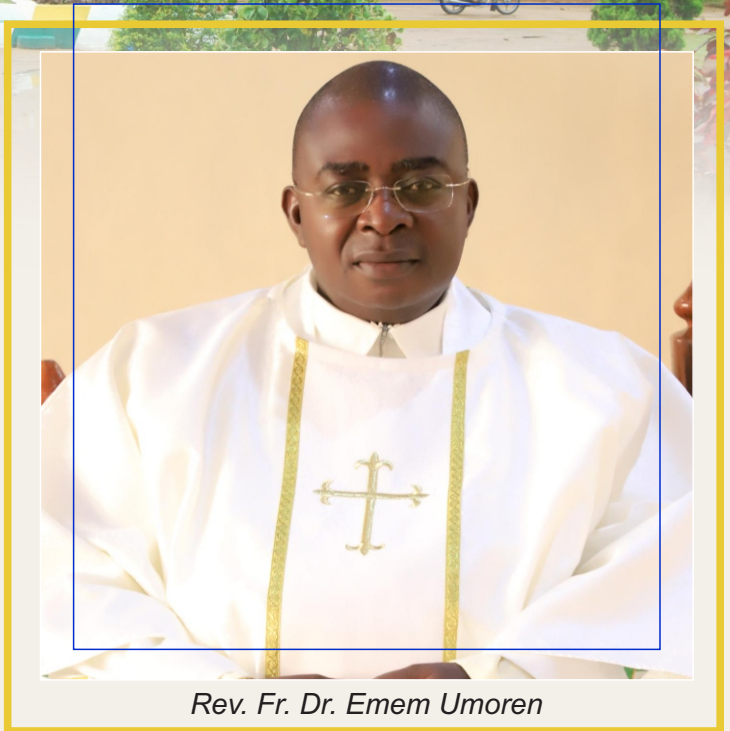


St. Columbanus Secondary School, Ikwen, Obot Akara LGA of Akwa Ibom State (Diocese of Ikot Ekpene)

St. Columbanus Secondary School, Ikwen, Obot Akara LGA of Akwa Ibom State, is a frontline co-educational Catholic High School, with a tested and proven track record of discipline and excellence in academic, moral and spiritual formation. Owned by the Catholic Diocese of Ikot Ekpene, SCOSI has an amazing heritage - midwifing, in her students, the priceless character of Catholic Education and guiding them uniquely to be the 'all-round-best' they are called to be in life. Ours is more than just a school, it's a family.

My name is Rev. Fr. Dr. Emem Umoren. I am a priest of the Catholic diocese of Ikot Ekpene. By the mandate of my Bishop and proprietor of the school, I have been privileged to serve as Principal of this unique institution since 2010. I am responsible for the day-to-day administration of the school under the supervision of the diocesan Education Commission. For the past 15 years I have passionately worked with a dependable team of formators to oversee the growth of the school from height to height.

Founded as a Boys Grammar school, by the St.



Rev. Fr. Dr. Emem Umoren

Patrick Fathers, Kiltegan, in 1959, St. Columbanus stood out as one of the prominent Catholic Mission schools in the 60s and 70s until it was taken over by the Government and eventually turned into a co-educational institution. It was in 2008/2009 that the Government of Akwa Ibom State handed it back to the Catholic Diocese of Ikot Ekpene and since then, with the support of our Bishops, Most Rev. Camillus Etokudoh and later, Most Rev. Camillus Umoh, it was like starting afresh. In the struggle of that re-identification, I was appointed to serve as Principal. I have always loved teaching. About 22 of my 29 years as a priest have been spent in teaching and school administration.

On resumption, with less than 50 students at the time, when many did not believe in the capacity of the church to sustain the school, we set up with determination and passion to make a difference. Our mission was to make St. Columbanus the first choice of parents who wanted to attain the most genuine and wholistic educational needs of their



treasured children in a Catholic school. The vision was to build a specially unique institution that mirrored the Catholic character of education. Today, we can look back and feel fulfilled that what started as a mustard seed has towered into a great and vibrant citadel of learning with an enrolment close to 600 and sometimes exceeding 700. Our school hinges on four pillars: High Academic standard with integrity, Discipline, Moral and Spiritual formation. With a sustained 100% credible performance in internal and external examinations including GCE, WASCE, NECO, JAMB, SAT, Cambridge Checkpoint, O'Levels Cambridge and Advanced Level Cambridge, the pride of St. Columbanus is in her products who are not only very successful, but very well behaved after graduation. Our students come out and stand out everywhere they go, thanks to our unique formation.

The uniqueness of our school lies in the resolve, determination, and success to chart a new course in education. We are not in any unhealthy competition. We have pioneered many initiatives which have been copied by other schools and yet the originality has not left SCOSI. While being very objective in curriculum, we are very unique in its implementation. Above all, SCOSI is unique in our outstanding results and we get our parents, staff and students to pride this uniqueness.



While ours is not a Seminary, the Catholic character of Education is not only invoked but enforced. We strive to balance academic excellence with moral and spiritual formation. First of all, we recruit and train our staff. The presence of Priests, Rev. Sisters and Seminarians helps complement the effort of other formators. There is serious supervision of staff to ensure maximum delivery. On the part of students, parents understand it is a Catholic school and that the choice of our school is the choice of our formation. It is compulsorily boarding. We have daily Masses, Rosary, Holy Hour, Morning, Afternoon and Night Prayers. Even though not all students are Catholics (we have 60% Catholics and 40% non Catholics), all prayers are said the Catholic way and we celebrate the Easter Triduum in school to the admiration and appreciation of staff and students.

The formation is so rich that we have almost become a 'rehabilitation center' for the 'challenging' ones and in most cases, SCOSI has always won them back to responsibility.



Caritas Nigeria's Immediate Past Executive Secretary Appointed 2nd Deputy Secretary General of SECAM

By Emma Eko, CSN Media

The immediate past Executive Secretary of Caritas Nigeria, Rev. Fr. Uchechukwu Obodoechina, has been appointed as the Second Deputy Secretary General of the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM).

His appointment was announced during the 20th Plenary Assembly of SECAM, in Kigali, Rwanda. The assembly brought together Catholic Bishops from across Africa and Madagascar to deliberate on pastoral, social, and development issues affecting the continent.

Rev. Fr. Obodoechina, a seasoned development expert and priest of the Catholic Diocese of Nsukka, Enugu State, served as Executive Secretary of Caritas Nigeria from 2017 to 2024, leading the Church's humanitarian and development interventions nationwide. Under his leadership, Caritas Nigeria strengthened its outreach to vulnerable communities, expanded partnerships, and championed social justice advocacy.

In his new role, Fr. Obodoechina will work closely with SECAM's leadership to promote unity among the Church in Africa, foster intercontinental collaboration, and support the mission of the African episcopate in responding to both pastoral and socio-economic challenges.

His appointment has been described by



Rev. Fr. Uchechukwu Obodoechina

Church leaders as a recognition of his dedication, leadership, and commitment to the service of the Church in Africa.

Fr. Banjo Meets with DAAR Communications Management, Commends Partnership in Evangelization

By Fr. Michael Nsikak Umoh, CSN

As part of his ongoing familiarization tour, Fr. Michael Banjo, the new Secretary General of the Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria (CSN), paid a courtesy visit to the corporate headquarters of DAAR Communications Plc in Abuja on Monday, February 10, 2025.

The management team, led by Chief Executive Officer, Chief Marcel Anyalechi, Director of Operations, Modupeola Oladeinde, and other senior executives, welcomed Fr. Banjo and his team.

In a closed-door meeting, Fr. Banjo, speaking on behalf of CBCN President, Archbishop Lucius Iwejuru Ugorji, expressed gratitude to DAAR Communications Plc for their long-standing support of the Catholic Church. He commended Africa Independent Television (AIT) for consistently promoting moral values through education, information, and entertainment in Nigeria and beyond.

Fr. Banjo also paid tribute to the late founder of DAAR Communications, High Chief Raymond Dokpesi, acknowledging his generosity and support to the Church. He specifically recalled



Chief Dokpesi's enduring gift of a weekly Sunday Live Mass, broadcast pro bono, as long as AIT is in operation. A moment of silence was observed in his honor, followed by a blessing.

Cecilia Agrinya briefed the DAAR Communications management on CARITAS Nigeria's humanitarian interventions across the country and called for collaboration. Chief Anyalechi assured Fr. Banjo of DAAR Communications' continued support and partnership.

The visit reinforced the strong partnership between the Catholic Church and DAAR Communications in promoting evangelization and moral values in Nigeria.



Rev. Fr. Michael Ayanleke Banjo



Lux Terra Organises Psycho-Trauma Healing Workshop for Reverend Sisters Supporting Victims of Human Trafficking

Recently, Lux Terra organised a Basic Psycho-Trauma Healing Skills workshop for Reverend Sisters from across Nigeria who are working with Trafficked women and girls.

These Sisters are often suffering from

Secondary Trauma, on account of the kind of issues they deal with everyday. The week-long programme involves general trauma awareness, psychological first aid skills, and a therapy session which helps them to process and properly integrate their own trauma experiences.



Rev. Fr. George Ehusani during the workshop with Reverend Sisters





JDPC Leaders Hold Annual General Meeting, Chart Path for Electoral Justice Ahead of 2027 Elections



Rev. Peter Babangida Audu addressing Coordinators, Directors and Provincial Secretaries of JDPC

Recently, Coordinators, Directors, and Provincial Secretaries of the Justice, Development and Peace Commission (JDPC) gathered at the Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria, Abuja, for their Annual General Meeting (AGM). The meeting, themed: "Towards 2027 General Elections: The Imperatives of Mandate Protection and Sustainable Development," was organised by the Church and Society Department under the leadership of Rev. Fr. Peter Babangida Audu, who serves both as its Director and as the National Secretary of the JDPC.

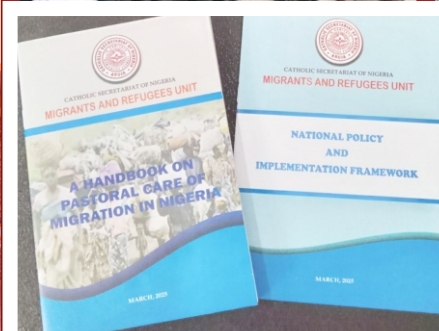
In his welcome address, Fr. Audu underscored that true democracy goes beyond casting ballots, insisting it must be reflected in policies that uphold human dignity, fairness, and sustainable development. He described electoral justice not merely as a political concern but as a moral and spiritual

obligation, emphasising the JDPC's role as the Church's most visible socio-political face—one that must awaken the national conscience and accompany citizens in demanding accountable leadership.

With the 2027 general elections just 18 months away, participants agreed on the urgency of early preparations to address Nigeria's electoral and governance challenges. They noted that the shortcomings of the 2023 elections—such as the failure of the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) and the INEC Result Viewing (IREV) portal—undermined credibility and eroded public trust.

The AGM resolved that the JDPC must be proactive and vocal in advancing a transparent and credible electoral process. Recommendations included intensifying voter education through parishes, markets, and community gatherings; training and deploying credible election observers; and pushing for electoral reforms, including real-time result transmission and punitive measures for electoral offences.





CSN Migrants And Refugees Unit Growing In Leaps And Bounds, Making Positive Impact

The pastoral care of migrants and refugees is an essential part of the Church's mission to support the poor, the marginalized and the vulnerable. This area of the socio-pastoral engagement of the Church was given much priority during the pontificate of Pope Francis, who brought it into universal focus. He established the Migrants and Refugees Section at the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development in 2017, setting the direction for the migration apostolate in the contemporary era.

Aligning itself with the efforts of the Holy Father, the Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria established the Migrants and Refugees Unit at the Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria in 2023. This office has the mandate to provide a more concerted, visible and credible response to the migrants and refugee crisis in the country.

Since its inception, the Unit has served as the mechanism of coordination for all pastoral agents working on behalf of the Church in the field of migration. It has facilitated the establishment of Migrants and Refugees Unit in Dioceses and

Religious Congregations across the country. The Unit has also embarked on capacity-building and institutional-strengthening initiatives as well as advocacy and assistance programs essential for promoting of the apostolate, resulting in greater efficiency and service delivery to migrants and refugees in the country.

In under two years of its existence, the Migrants and Refugees Unit has demonstrated the capacity to be a key organ for realising the overall mission of the Church in Nigeria to promote a civilisation of love. The work of the Unit is already receiving commendation and support from the Vatican's migration office and international pastoral and humanitarian organizations including missio-Aachen and Kirche in Not.

The operations of the Migrants and Refugees Unit were officially flagged-off by the Episcopal Chairman of the Unit, Most Rev. Yohanna Bulus in July 2024 with relevant stakeholders in attendance. Pastoral agents include priests, religious brothers and sisters as well the lay faithful across the country.

Departmental Reports

The Church and Society Department is comprised of four units.

The units consist of Education, Family and Human Life, Health, Migrants and Refugees, and JDPC. They are led by the Director of Church and Society, Fr. Peter Audu, who oversees the overall strategy and programme direction for these four combined units. Their main focus is advocacy.



**Rev. Fr. Peter Babangida Audu,
Director, Church & Society**

Education Unit

CSN Education Unit Finalises CST Curriculum for Catholic Schools Across the Country

The Education Unit of the Church and Society Department, Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria (CSN), has finalised the development of a comprehensive curriculum for the teaching and implementation of Catholic Social Teaching (CST) in Catholic Nursery, Primary, and Secondary Schools nationwide.

This initiative aims to deepen and broaden the understanding and practice of the core principles of Catholic Social Teaching among young learners, aligning with the Church's

mission of holistic education and moral formation.

The document, currently awaiting approval from the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria (CBCN), incorporates age-appropriate content that reflects the dignity of the human person, the common good, solidarity, care for creation, and other key CST themes.

The Unit has also finalised the programme for the celebration of the Jubilee Year of Hope in Catholic schools, which will commence on 3rd October 2025.

CSN to Initiate Scholarship Programme for Durumi Children

The Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria (CSN) is set to launch a scholarship programme for children in Durumi, the host community of the CSN premises in Abuja, starting in September 2025.

This initiative, led by the CSN Education Unit, seeks to broaden access to quality education for underprivileged children in the area, supporting the Church's commitment to social justice and inclusive growth.

The programme is expected to support dozens of school children in Durumi by providing tuition assistance and learning materials for the new academic session.

All necessary arrangements for the launch have been finalised and are now awaiting disbursement. Further details on application procedures and beneficiary selection will be communicated soon.

Dioceses commence implementation of Nigeria Education Compact following national summit resolution

No fewer than three Catholic arch/dioceses in Nigeria have taken significant steps towards implementing the Nigeria Education Compact—a local response to the Global Compact on Education—endorsed at the conclusion of the Fourth National Catholic Education Summit held in 2024.

The Archdioceses of Kano, Minna, and Kaduna hosted rollout events in recent months, signalling the official start of the initiative aimed at transforming Catholic education in accordance with global and national directives.

The Episcopal Secretary of Education, CSN, Rev. Fr. Dominic Umo, visited all three dioceses to offer support and witness the formal adoption of the Compact at the diocesan level.

Fr. Umo observed that the step-down implementation signifies a renewed commitment by the Church in Nigeria to deliver holistic, inclusive, and values-driven education in accordance with Pope Francis's



vision for a global educational alliance.

The Compact is expected to guide strategic improvements across Catholic educational institutions, focusing on values-based education, community engagement, and inclusive learning environments.

Further arch/diocesan-level engagements and monitoring activities are scheduled for the coming months, as the Catholic Church in Nigeria continues its mission of holistic formation of young people as agents of change through quality education.

Catholic Schools Face Mounting Pressures Across Several States

Catholic schools across the country are facing increasing challenges, as reports emerge of mounting government pressures, forced closures, and enforced participation in external associations.

Several diocesan education offices have expressed concerns about what they call "punitive taxation" by government agencies, which is imposing a significant financial strain on mission schools. School administrators contend that these levies are not only unsustainable but also threaten the ability of Catholic institutions to deliver affordable, quality education in underserved

communities.

In addition to financial constraints, Catholic schools in some states are reportedly under pressure to join the Private Schools Association—a move some see as an erosion of the Church's autonomy in managing its educational mission.

Perhaps most worrying are reports from some northern states, where Catholic schools were forced to close during the Muslim Ramadan holiday, despite not being Islamic institutions. Parents and school leaders voiced their concern, citing issues over religious freedom and educational disruption.

Family and Human Life Unit

5th World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly: 2025 Celebrated Nationwide

The Family and Human Life Unit of the Church and Society Department, Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria (CSN), successfully coordinated the nationwide celebration of the 5th World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly on Sunday, 27th July 2025, in accordance with the Vatican's directive to observe the day on the fourth Sunday of July.

With the theme: "Blessed are those who have not lost hope" (cf. Sirach 14:2), the celebration was observed across different dioceses and parishes, with special Masses, prayer sessions, and pastoral outreach programmes organised to honour the contributions and wisdom of the elderly in the Church and

society.

In various dioceses and parishes, the faithful gathered to give thanks for the gift of grandparents and elderly persons, recognising their role as keepers of faith and living witnesses to Christian hope and perseverance. In many parishes, elderly persons were given prominent roles during the liturgy, and moments of intercessory prayer were offered for their health, peace, and continued spiritual strength.

Established by Pope Francis in 2021, the World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly aims to uphold the dignity of older individuals and ensure they remain spiritually and pastorally

Health Unit

CSN Launches Quarterly Health Education Plan

The Health Unit of the Department of Church and Society, Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria (CSN), has introduced a quarterly Public Health Education Programme aimed at enhancing health awareness among staff within the CSN complex.

The maiden session, delivered during the morning prayer session recently, was presented by the Secretary of the Health Unit, Dr. Emmanuel Okechukwu, on the topic: "The Silent Killer: Dangers of

Herbal Concoctions." He highlighted the health risks associated with unregulated herbal mixtures. The session was warmly received by staff.

This initiative is designed to promote informed health choices and encourage preventive care through regular sensitisation sessions among staff members of the CSN and agencies of the Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria.

Migrants and Refugees Unit

CSN Initiates Capacity-Building Programme for Migration Pastoral Agents

The Migrants and Refugees Unit of the Department of Church and Society, Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria (CSN), has successfully carried out a nationwide capacity-building programme for pastoral agents working in the field of migration.

Funded through a mission-supported initiative, the programme expanded across Nigeria's national and sub-national levels, directly equipping 85 pastoral agents with vital skills to assist migrants and displaced

persons. In turn, the initiative has positively affected over 3,000 secondary beneficiaries through cascading training sessions, awareness campaigns, and pastoral outreach.

The programme strengthens the Church's dedication to dignified migration, community backing, and human development, in line with Pope Francis' call to "welcome, protect, promote, and integrate" migrants and refugees.

SOCIAL COMMUNICATIONS

Bishop Eluke flags off 4th ComWEEK, says “Everyone Needs Media Literacy to Navigate Today’s World”



The Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria (CBCN) has kicked off the 4th edition of the Communications Week (ComWEEK) in Port Harcourt Diocese, with a call for media literacy and effective communication.

On behalf of the Conference, the Apostolic Administrator of Port Harcourt Diocese, Most Rev. Patrick Eluke, in his homily at the Corpus Christi Cathedral on Sunday 25 May, noted that “In our world today, no one can be considered truly literate, irrespective of academic qualification, if he lacks media literacy. Everyone needs media literacy to navigate today’s world.”

Reflecting on the theme for this year’s ComWEEK, chosen by Pope Francis, “Share with gentleness the hope that is in your hearts”, Bishop Eluke emphasised that as Christians, we are ambassadors of Christ, called to spread the Good News of salvation to all nations. He added that this message must be shared with gentleness, kindness, compassion, and respect for others.

The Apostolic Administrator of Port Harcourt Diocese drew inspiration from the Acts of the Apostles, where the apostles and elders came together to resolve a disagreement between Jewish and Gentile converts. He noted that effective communication can bridge gaps and foster understanding, and that we should strive to communicate clearly, the undiluted faith that has been handed over to us, avoiding ambiguity. The homilist also emphasised the need for people to be mindful of their words and actions, both when online and offline. Citing James 1:19-20, he reminded the worshippers to be quick to hear, but slow to speak, and slow to anger. He also quoted Proverbs 10:19, which



Rev. Fr. Michael Nsikak Umoh
Director, Social Communications

says, “When words are many, transgression is not lacking, but whoever restrains his lips is prudent.”

The prelate further admonished Catholics to share their faith with gentleness, kindness, and respect for others and to be more present and available to others, especially children and the vulnerable. He also encouraged families and individuals to have media fasts and media diets.

The National Director of Social Communications, Very Rev. Fr. Michael Nsikak Umoh, on behalf of the CBCN Episcopal Chairman for Social Communications, thanked the Apostolic Administrator and the entire Diocese for generously hosting the second edition of the inauguration of ComWEEK. He also thanked the Communications Director of the Diocese, Rev. Fr. Ikoku Onwuchekwa, the Cathedral Administrator, Rev. Fr. Martin Amadi, and all those who have supported the media apostolate in the diocese, urging them not to relent.

Some supporters of the communications work in the dioceses were honoured, including the Bishop-emeritus, Most Rev. Camillus Etokudoh and Mrs Eunice Akwara, for her long service in the Directorate.

The ComWEEK programme is expected to run in all dioceses, parishes, and Catholic institutions in Nigeria, with the aim of promoting media literacy and effective communication at the grassroots level. The programme will culminate next Sunday with the celebration of the 59th edition of the World Communication Day.



2025 COMWEEK Public Lecture and Posthumous Award for High Chief Raymond Anthony Aleogho Dokpesi

By CSN Media

The 2025 Communications Week (ComWEEK) Public Lecture, organized by the Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria (CSN), served as a significant platform to honor the enduring legacy of the late High Chief Raymond Anthony Aleogho Dokpesi, a trailblazer in Nigerian media. Held on May 28, 2025, in Abuja, the event seamlessly blended a public lecture with a posthumous award ceremony, reflecting on the pivotal role of media in nation-building and commemorating Dokpesi's substantial contributions.

Honoring a Media Pioneer

High Chief Raymond Dokpesi, the founder of DAAR Communications, was instrumental in revolutionizing Nigeria's media landscape. He established Ray Power FM, the country's first private radio station, and African Independent Television (AIT), the first satellite TV station in Nigeria. His initiatives not only broke governmental monopolies in broadcasting but also championed African and Christian values, setting high standards for journalistic integrity and resisting sensationalism.

In recognition of his invaluable contributions, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria (CBCN) presented a posthumous award to Dokpesi during the ComWEEK event. Rev. Fr. Michael Banjo, Secretary-General of the CSN, lauded Dokpesi as a visionary who transformed the Nigerian media industry, emphasizing that his legacy continues to inspire responsible communication practices.

Thematic Focus: Media with Gentleness

The lecture, themed "Media with Gentleness: A Path to Being Narrators of Hope in a Distressed Nation," drew inspiration from Pope Francis' message for the 2025 World Communications Day. The theme underscored the necessity for empathy, civility, and truthfulness in media reporting, especially amidst Nigeria's current socio-political challenges. Bishop David Ajang, Chairman of the CBCN Committee on Social Communications, highlighted the Church's commitment to promoting responsible



communication, urging media practitioners to become agents of hope and unity.

Engaging Discussions and Call to Action

The event featured a keynote lecture by Dr. Musikilu Mojeed, Editor-in-Chief of Premium Times, who addressed the role of empathy in storytelling and the challenges of reporting on vulnerable communities. Other notable speakers included Dr. Shuaibu Hussein, Managing Director of the National Film and Video Censors Board (NFVCB); Fr. George Ehusani, Executive Director of Lux Terra Leadership Foundation; and Dr. Henry Nzekwu, public relations consultant and Founder of Bridge Radio, Asaba.



2025 World Communications Day & Posthumous Award to Dopkesi



Pastoral Agents Departmental Report, February to August 2025

The Pastoral Agents Department held its 2025 Annual General Meeting in Uyo, from the 20th to 23rd May on the theme, "Transparency and Integrity in Leadership of Church Organizations." Most Rev. John Ayah, the CBCN Chairman for Laity, both hosted and presided over the meeting. All Units – Clergy, Laity, Youth, Religious, Seminaries - were represented and presented their progress reports as well as their plans for the pastoral year.

The Pastoral Agents Department - in partnership with the Pontifical Society of St. Peter the Apostle (POSPA) and Caritas Nigeria - organized a seminar/workshop for Rectors of seminaries and Directors of formation in Religious Institutes in Nigeria from 14th to 17th July 2025, on the theme, "Leadership and Administrative Strategies for Effective Formation." It was a capacity-building programme aimed at equipping Seminary Rectors and Directors of Formation in Religious Congregations with some creative administrative skills and deeper understanding required to promote effective formation in the highly dynamic world of today.

UNIT REPORTS:

CLERGY UNIT

The Nigerian Catholic Diocesan Priests' Association (NCDPA) participated fully in the 2025 Annual General Meeting of the Pastoral Agents Department which held in Uyo and made the following contributions:

Some Priests are extending their tenures beyond four years as officials of NCDPA in their Dioceses/Archdiocese, a practice that goes contrary to the directives of the Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria.

Regarding the implementation of the 2022 ACTA of the 3rd National Pastoral Congress, some dioceses have gone into real investments in education and entrepreneurs thereby



Rev. Fr. Augustine Okochi
*Director, Pastoral Agents/Deputy Secretary
General, CSN*

creating jobs and empowering a number of young people.

The NCDPA made an appeal to Nigerian Bishops to allow the establishment of Pontifical Missionary Union (PMU) for priests and religious where they were not yet established. The body aims at animating the faithful for the Church's universal mission, serving as a spiritual apostolate that educates and inspires pastoral leaders and all baptized persons to better understand and engage in missionary work, thereby strengthening the mission of the entire Church.

SEMINARIES UNIT

The Rectors of seminaries were well represented at the PAD's 2025 departmental Annual General Meeting in Uyo. Some of the contributions they made were:

Encouraging painstaking sowing the seeds of scholarship in seminarians, helping them understand the mind of the Church that priests must be both spiritual and intellectual, men of prayer and men of learning.

In response to the challenges of moral relativism, permissiveness, sexual revolution, and the crisis of accountability, seminarians should be grounded in sound moral theological formation with the unequivocal definition of right and wrong. This should be complemented by exemplary leadership on the part of the formators, both within and outside the Seminary.

Young Nigerians Embrace SOUL Training Initiative 2025

From March 27 to 29, 2025, the Youth Unit, Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria (CSN), Abuja, hosted young people from across the country for the SOUL Training Initiative, a transformative program spearheaded by Rev. Fr. Boniface Idoko. The three-day training, themed Serving Others Under Love (SOUL), was designed to reshape the mindset of Nigerian youth and restore moral values in the society. The program featured inspiring talks, practical workshops, and community outreach activities focused on leadership, integrity, empathy, and selflessness. Participants engaged in discussions on pressing issues such as morality, the impact of social media, materialism, and ethical decision-making. The Facilitators emphasized values that equip young people to become agents of change and leaders committed to service for the common good. According to the organisers, the SOUL Initiative goes beyond a one-off event. It is envisioned as a movement and a call to action for Nigerian youth to live purposefully, serve selflessly, and transform their



Rev. Fr. Boniface Idoko
National Youth Animator



communities. "SOUL is about raising a new generation that will lead with integrity, inspired by love and service," Fr. Idoko said, stressing the importance of youth-driven moral renewal in nation-building. The participants left the training energized and determined to carry the spirit of SOUL into their families, schools, and communities, making the initiative a beacon of hope for Nigeria's future.

Report on the 2025 NFCS National Convention

The Nigeria Federation of Catholic Students (NFCS) held its National Convention from 30th April to 4th May 2025 at St. Joseph Major Seminary, Ikot-Ekpene, Akwa Ibom State. The convention was a spirit-filled and impactful gathering of Catholic students from across the country. The program featured daily Mass, Eucharistic Adoration, workshops, and talks on relevant spiritual and social issues, all aimed at deepening faith and strengthening the NFCS family. A key highlight of the convention was the National Election, conducted successfully in a peaceful and transparent manner. At the end of the process, Miss Vivian Ezekwe of Peter University, Achina emerged as the new National President of NFCS, alongside other elected executives who will serve in various



capacities. The convention was marked by active participation, fruitful deliberations, and a renewed commitment to the mission of NFCS.

Report on the 2025 YCSN National Convention

The Young Catholic Students of Nigeria (YCSN) held its National Convention from 12th to 16th August 2025 at Saint Peter and Paul Major Seminary, Bodija, Ibadan, Oyo State.

The convention was marked by moments of faith and learning, featuring the Holy Mass, lectures, workshops, elections, and an excursion.

A major highlight was the dissolution of the National Executive Council and the successful election of new leaders, in line with the directive of the CBCN, and the Church's vision of empowering secondary school students to take up leadership in the movement.

Newly Elected National Executives:

- President: Japhet Joy – Ijebu-Ode Diocese, Lagos Province
- Secretary: Maryann Elejo A. – Osogbo Diocese, Ibadan Province
- Assistant Secretary: Uku Martha – Warri Diocese, Benin Province
- Treasurer: Njoku Chioma M. – Ijebu-Ode Diocese, Lagos Province
- Public Relations Officer: Abiola Femi Francis – Osogbo Diocese, Ibadan Province.

Some positions were left vacant for provinces who



were not present to fill in subsequently through bye-election.

This marks a historic transition as the first set of secondary school students assume the role of National Executives of YCSN.

We entrust them to God's guidance and encourage all members to support them with prayers and cooperation as they lead the movement forward.

Viva YCS Nigeria!

Report on the Inauguration of the NOC for NYD Jos 2026

The National Organizing Committee (NOC) for the National Youth Day (NYD) Jos 2026 was officially inaugurated on 26th June 2025 by the Chancellor, representing the Archbishop of Jos, with Mr. Beji Benjamin Jibe announced as Chairman of the Committee. Following the inauguration, the Committee paid a courtesy visit to the Archbishop in his office. He warmly welcomed the team, assured his support, and emphasized that Bishop Charles Hammawa of Jalingo is the Bishop in charge of youth in the Province. He further pledged to engage other provincial Bishops in support of the mission. Key Resolutions:

- Registration Fee: ₦15,000 per delegate
- Registration Period: January 1 – May 31, 2026 (online)



- Subcommittees: Formed and mandated to submit their budgets before the next meeting
- Next Meeting:
 - Date: November 20 – 22, 2025
 - Venue: Shendam Diocese



ASSOCIATION OF PAPAL KNIGHTS AND MEDALISTS IN NIGERIA (APKMN)

GOODWILL MESSAGE

On behalf of the Association of Papal Knights and Medalists in Nigeria (APKMN), we write to felicitate with the Bishops of Nigeria as you converge for the Second Plenary Session of the Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria (CBCN) from 12th to 19th September, 2025 in the ancient town of Ikot Ikpenne.

This Conference is taking place at a time our dear Country is facing numerous challenges impacting greatly on the Citizens. As spiritual leaders, a lot is expected of you in giving directions to our leaders and speaking truth to power all geared towards a better Nigeria.

We wish you fruitful deliberations and a successful conference.

May the Holy spirit guide and direct your affairs.

Yours in Service to God, the Church & Humanity,

Rt. Hon. Comdr. Steve Adehi,
SAN, KCSS, FCI Arb(UK).
National President.

Hon. (Arc) Rosemary Azimi PM
National Secretary.

President

Sir Steve Adehi
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National Secretary
Rosemary Azimi,
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Secretariat

c/o Steve Adehi & Co,
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(Near shagari shopping
complex)

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CATHOLIC WOMEN ORGANIZATION NIGERIA (CWON)



Plot 191 Ladoke Akintola Boulevard, Access on Dutse Street, Via Wushishi Street, Garki 2, Abuja.

GOODWILL MESSAGE TO THE CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE OF NIGERIA (CBCN) 2025 Second Plenary Meeting – Ikot Ekpene Diocese

Your Lordships, Distinguished Chief Shepherds of the Catholic Church in Nigeria,

On behalf of the Catholic Women Organization of Nigeria (CWON), I warmly felicitate with you as you gather in the historic Diocese of Ikot Ekpene from September 12–19, 2025, for the Second Plenary Meeting of the Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria (CBCN). This assembly is more than an administrative exercise—it is a testimony to the unity, wisdom, and prophetic mission of the Catholic Church in our nation.

The choice of Ikot Ekpene Diocese as host is especially significant. This ancient seat of faith has long witnessed the transforming grace of God and has nurtured generations of believers who continue to enrich the life and mission of the Church in Nigeria and beyond.

This plenary also coincides with the Universal Church's celebration of the Jubilee of Hope (2025). At a time when our nation and world face uncertainty and hardship, the Jubilee invites us to renew our trust in Christ, our unfailing Hope. It is a sacred call for the Church to stand as a beacon of light, reconciliation, and renewal—bringing hope to the weary, justice to the oppressed, and joy to all God's people.

We thank God for your pastoral leadership and assure you of our unflinching prayers and support. May the Holy Spirit inspire your deliberations so that the Catholic Church in Nigeria may continue to grow in unity, holiness, and service. In the spirit of the Jubilee of Hope, may this plenary bring renewed strength, fresh vision, and abundant blessings for the good of the Church and for the entire Nigerian society.

With profound respect and prayerful solidarity,

Hon. (Mrs.) Elizabeth Sonubi
National President



National President : 09018199446



National Secretary : 09035625311



✉ cwon@csn.ng





CHIEF SIR LONGERS ANYANWU, KSG EBUBEDIKE OBOWO

19 August 2025

GOODWILL MESSAGE

On behalf of my family and as a Papal Knight of St. Gregory from Okigwe Diocese, I, Chief Longers Anyanwu, joyfully extend my heartfelt felicitations to the Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria, under the pastoral leadership of His Grace, Most Rev. Lucius Iwejuru Ugorji, President of the CBCN, and to His Excellency, Archbishop Michael Francis Crotty, Apostolic Nuncio to Nigeria, as you gather for your Second Plenary Assembly in Ikot Ekpene from the 11th to the 19th of August.

May the Holy Spirit accompany your deliberations, deepen the bonds of communion among the Shepherds of the Church, and inspire renewed zeal for the mission of Christ. I also wish to congratulate my own Bishop and the entire Church in Nigeria as we prayerfully look forward to the Jubilee of Hope celebration in the Diocese of Port Harcourt, Elele.

Be assured of my prayers and support as you continue to shepherd the People of God with faith, wisdom, and love.

God bless you all in your sacred mission.

Chief Longers Anyanwu, KSG

Papal Knight of St. Gregory

Okigwe Diocese



ebubeobowo@gmail.com 

+234 806 491 3353 

GOODWILL MESSAGE

On behalf of my family and household, I, **Samuel Imoh Umoh**, joyfully extend our heartfelt congratulations to the **Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria (CBCN)** on the occasion of their **2nd Plenary Assembly** holding in the historic **Diocese of Ikot-Ekpene**.

As a proud son of this diocese, I am deeply honored that my home has been selected as the venue where the Shepherds of the Church in Nigeria will gather to Prayerfully deliberate on matters of Faith, Hope, and the Future of our dear nation Nigeria.

With special joy, I salute my father in faith, **Most Rev. Dr. Camillus Raymond Umoh**, the Bishop of Ikot-Ekpene Diocese, for his visionary leadership, pastoral zeal, and hospitality in hosting this momentous assembly of the Shepherds of the Church.

May this plenary bring renewed grace, unity, and inspiration to the Catholic Church in Nigeria, and may the Lord continue to bless the Bishops in their ministry of shepherding the people of God.

SAMUEL UMOH, M.CIoD, FCAI



GOODWILL MESSAGE

We, the



SISTERS UNITED IN CHRIST

**Joyfully congratulate our dear
Chief Shepherds as you gather for your
2nd 2025 Plenary Assembly
in Ikot Ekpene Diocese
from 11th to 19th September, 2025.**

**We assure you of our prayers for fruitful deliberations
that will strengthen the faith, foster unity, and promote hope
across our Church and nation.**

**May the Blessed Virgin Mary, Queen of Apostles,
intercede for you always.**

Catholic Sisters United in Christ
Serving God with Love and Faith

•Sis. Chizoba Osamgbi
National President

•Sis. Beatrice Oghenejabor
National General Secretary

•Very Rev. Fr. Michael Umoh
National Chaplain

WHO WE ARE

**As a pious society of young women—both single and married—united
by our desire to serve God, uphold the doctrines of the Catholic
Church, evangelize, and carry out works of charity, we deeply
appreciate your pastoral leadership and unwavering commitment to
the mission of Christ.**

WHERE WE ARE:

**Lagos Archdiocese, Abeokuta Diocese, Warri Diocese, Abuja Archdiocese,
Bomadi Diocese, Minna Diocese, Nnewi Diocese, Iselle Uku Diocese.**



CATHOLIC ARTISTES AND ENTERTAINERS ASSOCIATION OF NIGERIA

(CAEAN)

CATHOLIC SECRETARIAT OF NIGERIA, ABUJA.

P.O Box: 6523, Garki Abuja

caean secretariat@gmail.com

Amb. Edith Isidahomen: 08157142061
OFFICE OF THE NATIONAL PRESIDENT

Goodwill Message

We, the Catholic Artistes and Entertainers Association of Nigeria (CAEAN), heartily congratulate our dear fathers in the faith for your

**2nd 2025 Plenary Assembly in Ikot Ekpene Diocese.
From 11th to 19th September, 2025.**

Be rest assured of our prayers for fruitful deliberations that will strengthen, foster unity, and above all promote hope across our Church in Nigeria and beyond.

May the Blessed Virgin Mary, Queen of the Apostles, intercede for you always.

**CAEAN Forever!
Arts and Entertainment for Christ!**

Signed:

Amb. Mrs. Edith Isidahomen
National President

Comrd. John Black Okeh
National Secretary

Rev. Fr. Dr. Michael Umoh
National Chaplain



- | | | | | | |
|--|--|---|---|---|---|
| National Chaplain
Rev. Fr. Michael Umoh
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Greg .O. Greg
08050516160 | General Secretary
John Black Okeh
07039658009 | Assistant Secretary
ESV. Ben Uche Nworie
07037430702 | TREASURER
Sir Dr. Peter Chiedu
09050756565 | Financial Secretary
Mr Dominic Akerele
07068948464 |
| PRO
Lady Betty Peter-Udeogu
08034730282 | Director Of Socials
Mr Ogaranya Uche J.
08136764913 | Welfare Officer 1
Princess Amaka Ugbor
08068526681 | Welfare Officer 2
King David Udeh
08064997221 | Ex-Officio
Dr. Charles Okwuowulu DGN
08036446689 | |

CAEAN forever! ... Art and entertainment for Christ!



PONTIFICAL MISSION SOCIETIES

2025 Pontifical Mission Societies' National Council Meeting

By Peter Adubi

MISSIONARIES OF HOPE AMONG THE PEOPLES

The Diocesan PMS directors from various dioceses had their PMS National Council meeting from May 6th-9th 2025 at the Resource Centre of the Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria, Durumi, Abuja. The meeting was designed to help strategise, plan, and to give reports of the PMS activities from the various Dioceses.

The meeting commenced with an opening Mass celebrated by the Deputy Secretary General of the Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria, Rev. Fr. Augustine Okochi. In his welcome address which was delivered on behalf of the Secretary General of the Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria he welcomed the Directors and enjoined them to continue to be missionaries of hope especially in these trying and challenging times. The PMS National Director Very Rev. Fr. Solomon Patrick Zaku in his welcome address, appreciated the diocesan Directors for their collaboration and missionary zeal towards the promotion of the kingdom of God. He noted that despite the trials of this present world, we are called to give hope to the hopeless as hope does not disappoint.

He told the director that the theme of the meeting was derived from the theme of Pope's message for world Mission Sunday 2025: MISSIONARIES OF HOPE AMONG THE PEOPLES. The theme was in line with the theme for the jubilee year. He called on all directors to make sure in planning their diocesan activities, they give room to the people of God to benefit from the jubilee year. Other Directors of the Catholic Secretariat also gave their goodwill messages aligning them to Jubilee year of Hope and the need to draw people to Jesus who is the center of our worship.

There was a presentation by the International Secretary General of Pontifical Missionary Union Rev. Fr. Anh Nhue Dihn Nguyen, who spoke on the theme "Missionaries of Hope Among the peoples". He dissected the message of Pope Francis which was based on how missionaries can bring hope to the people of God.



Rev. Fr. Patrick Solomon Zaku
National Director, PMS



At the closing Mass, the homilist Rev. Fr. Francis Agu encouraged the participants as they go back to their various dioceses on ways to maintain their missionary zeal which is Prayer, Holiness of life and Faith in God. He also encouraged those passing through one difficulty or the other not to worry, for the challenges they face now cannot be compared with the glory which is yet to be revealed.

The plenary ended with a mission orientation course for the new PMS Diocesan Directors to equip them better in their work.

Floating Institute of Missiology – Calabar and Kaduna Provinces

By Peter Adubi

Calabar and Kaduna Ecclesiastical Provinces hosted the Floating Institute of Missiology in collaboration with the Pontifical Mission Societies (PMS). The PMS National Director, Rev Fr. Solomon noted that: The Floating Institute of Missiology is a mission formation program approved by the Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria (CBCN) and entrusted to the Pontifical Mission Societies. Its purpose is to provide missionary formation for all the faithful in Nigeria — priests, religious, and laypeople alike. This program expands participants' understanding of mission and their personal responsibilities in the Church's missionary work.

The initiative supports the primary goal of the PMS: to foster a universal missionary spirit within the Church. Pope Francis reminds us that the Pontifical Mission Societies are called to awaken and deepen the missionary awareness of every baptized Christian. As stated in Ad Gentes Divinitus, the PMS nurtures a missionary spirit in Catholics from infancy through to the end of life.

Approved by the CBCN in 2009, the Floating Institute of Missiology was first implemented nationally in two phases — the first in October 2012 and the second in October 2013 — with over 100 participants from various dioceses across Nigeria.

Following that, participants were encouraged to replicate the formation at the provincial and diocesan levels. Each year, the national office of the Pontifical Mission Societies selects two to three provinces to organize the program. This year, Calabar and Kaduna provinces were chosen —

Throughout the period of this formation, participants explored various key themes, including:

- The meaning and foundations of mission
- Biblical and theological perspectives on mission
- Communication and mission
- New Evangelization
- Missionary spirituality
- Ecumenism and interreligious dialogue
- The structure and global work of the Pontifical Mission Societies



Floating Institute of Missiology, Kaduna Province. (HCA members who sang at the opening Mass).



The PMS National Director, Rev. Fr. Solomon Zaku during his presentation at the Kaduna provincial floating Institute of Missiology held in Kaduna.

The theme of this year's formation is "Missionaries of Hope Among the Peoples", which is also the theme for the 2025 World Mission Sunday. This theme aligns with the ongoing celebration of the Jubilee Year of Hope. It calls us to be men and women of hope — to be beacons of light and encouragement to those we serve, especially in a world marked by suffering and despair.

MISSION AND DIALOGUE

The Department of Mission and Dialogue coordinates the activities of the Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria in the areas of Mission, Ecumenism, Dialogue within the church and dialogue with other religious bodies. The department through its three units of Mission, Ecumenism and Inter religious Dialogue, has engaged in a number of activities recently. Some of these activities are as follows:

SEMINARY VISITATION

As part of this year's Seminary Visit program, the Department of Mission and Dialogue of the Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria (CSN), led by the Director, Rev. Fr. Lawrence Emehel, visited Christ the King Major Seminary, Kafanchan, Kaduna State and Spiritan International School of Theology (SIST), Attakwu, Enugu. The visit took place on 1 – 3 April, 2025 and 27 - 29 May, 2025 respectively. The department had the opportunity of engaging in an interactive sessions with the Formators, Seminarians, and the entire seminary community.

The Director of the Department of Mission and Dialogue, Rev. Fr. Lawrence Emehel, delivered presentations during both visits. He outlined the Catholic Secretariat's administrative structures and their role in interpreting and executing the Church's mandate through the Catholic Bishops Conference. He emphasized the significance of Interreligious Dialogue and Ecumenism in the life and mission of the Church.

During the session with the SIST community, Rev. Fr. Dr. Charles Ebelebe, CSSp, Chair of Missiology at SIST, delivered a keynote address titled "Nigeria and the Challenge of Mission as Prophetic Dialogue." In his presentation, he highlighted the urgent need for mission to be rooted in dialogue.

The visits concluded with vibrant and engaging interactions between the visiting team and the staff and students of both seminaries. These moments of dialogue fostered deeper understanding of the mission of the church and renewed commitment to the values of dialogue, unity and collaboration in building the kingdom of God.



Rev. Fr. Lawrence Emehel
Director, Mission and Dialogue



The visiting team with formators and lecturers at the Spiritan International school of Theology, Attakwu

2025 MISSION ORIENTATION PROGRAMME

In a solemn Missioning Mass to conclude the 2025 Mission Orientation Programme held on Sunday, July 6, 2025, 14 Nigerian priests from five Catholic dioceses were officially commissioned for missionary work in various countries across Africa, Europe and America.

The Mass marked the conclusion of the 2025 Mission Orientation Programme, a week-long formation organized by the Department of Mission and Dialogue, Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria (CSN), under the leadership of its Director, Rev. Fr. Lawrence Emehel. The programme, which began on Thursday, July 3, was designed to spiritually and pastorally prepare priests and religious for cross-cultural missionary service.

Presiding over the Missioning Mass was His Eminence, John Cardinal Onaiyekan, Archbishop Emeritus of Abuja.



In his homily, he emphasised the growing need for intentional missionary formation, especially for diocesan priests whose pastoral training is traditionally focused on local ministry. “These are not religious missionaries who have long been equipped for foreign evangelization,” Cardinal Onaiyekan observed. “These are diocesan priests who must now be trained intentionally for mission outside their dioceses and cultural zones. This is not something to take for granted.”

He strongly cautioned against viewing missionary assignments as opportunities for personal gain: “If a priest goes abroad in search of greener pastures, he is no longer a missionary but a mercenary. May God not allow our priests to become mercenaries.”

The Cardinal further encouraged the Nigerian Church to embrace its evolving role in global evangelization:

“Those nations that once sent missionaries to us now need spiritual help themselves. We must be bold to take Christ back to them.”

He also called on the faithful to continue supporting missionaries through prayer, encouragement, and solidarity.

The fourteen commissioned missionaries are: Rev. Fr. Nwode Godwin Oje and Rev Fr. Robert Saater Achiaga from the Archdiocese of Abuja are going on mission to USA and Chile respectively; Rev. Fr. JohnPaul Gabriel and Rev. Fr. La'ah Lawrence from Yola diocese and Rev. Fr. Samson Osagie from Uromi diocese are going on mission

to Ireland; Rev. Fr. Audu Dominic Elaigwu and Rev. Fr. Odo Peter Okopi from Otukpo diocese and Rev. Fr. Benedict Onakpoma from Warri diocese, going on mission to Italy; Rev. Fr. John Ikpochi Itodo, Rev. Fr. Ogbanje Elaigwu Edwin, Rev. Fr. Adebo Matthew Ocheola and Rev. Fr. Benjamin Sunday Entonu all from Otukpo diocese, going on mission to USA, Rev. Fr. Audu Oyine Peter and Rev. Fr. Matthew Onoja Gilbert going on mission to Kontogora diocese here in Nigeria.

CELEBRATION OF THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF NOSTRA AETATE

The Department in partnership with Ufuk Dialogue Foundation and the Catholic Caritas Foundation (CCFN) marked the 60th Anniversary of the declaration “Nostra Aetate” the landmark document on Interreligious Dialogue from Vatican II in grand style. The event with the theme: “60 years of Nostra Aetate: A journey of Discovery, Dialogue and Friendship” was marked in two phases on 4th and 5th June, 2025. The first day took place at the National Children's Park and Zoo where Christian and Muslim youths came together to interact, fostering mutual understanding, respect and peaceful coexistence. The grand celebration followed on the 5th June at the Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria, Abuja which brought together religious leaders, scholars and peacebuilders from across the country to reflect on the theme for the celebration.

In his Keynote Address, the Catholic Bishop of Yola Diocese, Most Rev. Stephen Dami Mamza, emphasized the significance of *Nostra Aetate* in fostering Muslim-Christian friendship. He stated, "We are gathered here not only to commemorate a milestone but to reaffirm a relationship; one rooted in shared values, nurtured by dialogue, and sustained by mutual respect and trust."

The bishop pointed out the document's impact on interfaith relations, noting that it "marked a significant turning point in the Catholic Church's relationship with non-Christian religions, particularly Islam and Judaism." He also acknowledged the challenges of their time, saying, "We live in an age when religion is too often manipulated to justify violence, and when fear of the other is fanned into flames of division."

In another Keynote Address, the Director of Research and Training at the Dawah Institute of Nigeria and the Assistant General Secretary of Islamic Education Trust (IET), Minna, Sheikh Dr. Muhammad Nuruddeen Lemu, praised the document, saying, "The *Nostra Aetate* is the first document by the Catholic Church that the Muslim community agrees to entirely." He emphasized the importance of understanding each other's perspectives, stating, "How we understand is critical to how we view each other."

The Catholic Archbishop of Abuja, Most Rev. Ignatius Ayau Kaigama, stressed the need for interfaith cooperation, saying, "Religion shouldn't be a barrier among us. Religion can do so much good and harm to Nigeria depending on how best we practice it." He added, "We need each other in Nigeria to grow."

The Father of the Day, John Cardinal Onaiyekan, noted that *Nostra Aetate* "turned the Catholic Church forward" and suggested that the document, which is mandatorily taught in all Catholic seminaries, should be extended to other training institutions for pastors and Islamic clerics. Welcoming all to the CSN premises for the celebration, the CSN Secretary General, Rev. Fr. Michael Banjo, warmly welcomed participants to the historic event. He highlighted the significance of *Nostra Aetate*, noting that it marked a turning point in the Church's relationship with people of other religions, emphasizing dialogue, mutual respect, and collaboration.



Rev. Fr. Lawrence Emehel and Sheikh Dr. Muhammad Nuruddeen share a warm hand shake

Report on the Synodal Peacebuilding Empowerment Course for Parish Priests in Africa

Report by Rev. Fr. Lawrence C. Emehel (Director, Mission and Dialogue, Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria, Abuja)

In July 2025 (precisely July 6th - 27th, 2025) about 40 priests from across 40 Archdioceses and Dioceses from 9 countries across Africa and Madagascar gathered in Mariapolis Piero, Juja in Kenya for a program in Peacebuilding to empower priests in handling conflict situations in the African continent. This is coming at the heels of the just concluded XVI Ordinary Synod of Bishops with the theme "For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation and Mission." The synodal synthesis brought up the consideration in the face of violent conflicts around the world. It was also considered that Christians have a great contribution to make to the rest of the world on managing conflicts. Participants from Nigeria were Rev. Fr. Lawrence Emehel (CSN/Diocese of Sokoto), Rev. Fr. Noel Katang (Maiduguri), Rev. Fr. Stephen Meseda (Abuja), Rev. Fr. Felix Gobi (Jalingo), Rev. Fr. Emmanuel Matthias (Yola) and Rev. Fr. Samaila Chibi (Katsina). Priests came from Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Cameroun, Burundi, Congo DRC, Ethiopia, Madagascar, Tanzania and Kenya.

Hence, the workshop was centred around African contributions to the Universal Church from the model of the Church Councils of the 1st four centuries of the church history in dealing with doctrinal and theological conflicts (ADR in context), practical forms of community peacebuilding through Regenerative Agriculture (RA - as different from synthetic modern farming - GMO foods) and waste management (Biogas and Clean Energy).

60th Anniversary of *Nostra Aetate*



REPORT OF ACTIVITIES FROM THE PASTORAL AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT

Construction of the Secretariat for the Canon Law Society of Nigeria

The Esama of Benin, Chief (Sir) Gabriel Igbinedion, has demonstrated remarkable generosity by sponsoring the construction of the Canon Law Society of Nigeria Secretariat in Okada, within the Archdiocese of Benin.

This initiative underscores his deep commitment to the Church and his dedication to promoting the study and application of canon law in Nigeria.

The secretariat building is nearing completion, and its establishment is poised to significantly enhance the operations of the Canon Law Society of Nigeria.

This development will likely provide a solid foundation for the society's activities, facilitating the advancement of canon law and contributing to the growth of the Church in Nigeria. Chief Igbinedion's contribution to this project is a testament to his enduring support for the Church and its mission.

Safeguarding Initiatives

The Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria's (CBCN) policy on safeguarding minors and vulnerable persons has received a positive response from the Vatican, highlighting the global Church's commitment to protecting the vulnerable.

Archbishop Lucius Ugorji's dedication and tireless efforts have been instrumental in advancing this policy, demonstrating the CBCN's commitment to creating a safe environment for all, especially children and vulnerable individuals.

Following the Vatican's review, some observations were provided, which have been carefully addressed by the Department of Pastoral Affairs CSN. The policy is now poised for final review and approval, marking a crucial step toward its implementation. Once approved, this policy will serve as a vital framework for safeguarding minors and vulnerable persons



Rev. Fr. Augustine Fasiku
Director, Pastoral Affairs

within the Catholic community in Nigeria, ensuring a safe and nurturing environment for all.

Canonical Review Process

The Dicastery for Legislative Texts, exercising its authority in accordance with Canon 30, has given a green light on its scrutiny of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria's (CBCN) Particular Complementary Norms.

This thorough examination ensured that the norms are consonant with universal Church law and aligned with the requirements of the sacred canons. Upon completion of the review, the Dicastery for Legislative Texts will transmit the Particular Complementary Norms to the Dicastery for Evangelization, which will then convey it to the CBCN.

Once received, the CBCN will proceed with the formal promulgation of the norms, thereby rendering them juridically binding within the territory of the conference, in accordance with Canon 455 §1. This marks a significant step toward the implementation of the norms, which will govern various aspects of Church life and governance in Nigeria.

Liturgical Celebrations

The Annual Seminar/Workshop of Directors of Liturgy and Masters of Liturgical Celebrations, held from May 6 to 8, 2025, at the CSN Resource Centre, proved to be a resounding success. This gathering of esteemed liturgical experts and coordinators provided a valuable platform for sharing best practices, deliberating on pressing

PASTORAL AFFAIRS

issues, and enhancing their skills in planning and executing liturgical celebrations.

The seminar's theme, "Liturgy and Pious Exercises/Devotions: In Accordance with Sacrosanctum Concilium 13," aptly guided the discussions and reflections, emphasizing the importance of harmonizing liturgical worship with devotional practices in a manner that is faithful to the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy.

The thoughtful exploration of this theme is expected to yield a deeper understanding and more vibrant celebration of the liturgy among the faithful in Nigeria.

Biblical Apostolate

The inaugural Bible Week 2025, held in January in conjunction with the Sunday of the Word of God, yielded encouraging outcomes, demonstrating the power of Scripture in renewing and invigorating faith.

As the Church in Nigeria looks forward to January 2026, there is a palpable enthusiasm to build upon this initial success, fostering a deeper love for the Word of God among the faithful and leveraging this momentum to achieve an even greater impact in the lives of individuals and communities.

Pilgrimages and Jubilees

As the Jubilee Year continues to unfold its blessings, the spirit of pilgrimage is radiating with renewed fervor, beckoning the faithful to embark on transformative journeys of devotion, prayer, and spiritual rejuvenation. Countless hearts have been touched by the profound experiences of three remarkable pilgrimages that have punctuated this sacred year.

The Jubilee of Families, Children, Grandparents, and the Elderly was a poignant celebration, uniting generations in a beautiful tapestry of love, faith, and mutual support, thereby strengthening the bonds of family and fostering a deeper sense of unity within the Church.

The pilgrimage to the Holy Land, a journey of profound devotion and anticipation, saw pilgrims traverse the sacred terrain of Israel and Jordan, walking in the footsteps of the Saviour.

Though their journey was unexpectedly extended

by six days due to regional unrest, the pilgrims returned home safely, their spirits enriched by the trials and triumphs of their odyssey.

And now, as the Church looks forward with anticipation, the Jubilee of Priests is poised to bring spiritual renewal and rejuvenation to those who dedicate their lives to the sacred ministry, rekindling their hearts with the fire of divine love and guiding them in their sacred vocation.

The countdown to a beacon of hope has begun! The National Celebration of the Jubilee of Hope, slated for September 19-21, 2025, at the International Sanctuary of Jesus the Saviour in Elele, Port Harcourt Diocese, Rivers State, promises to be a transformative experience for thousands of Pilgrims.

This extraordinary event, themed "Pilgrims of Hope," is designed to ignite spiritual growth, communal worship and renewal, bringing together Catholics and Christians from across Nigeria.

As the faithful converge on the sanctuary of Jesus the Saviour in Port Harcourt Diocese, they will participate in visits to holy sites, Masses, processions, sacramental confession and acts of charity, fostering a deeper connection with God and one another.

The Jubilee Year offers a unique opportunity for spiritual reassessment, forgiveness, and mercy, allowing participants to receive special graces for forgiveness of sins and strengthen their relationship with God.

With each diocese coordinating its own celebrations before the National event, this occasion promises unity and solidarity among Catholics worldwide, bringing hope and renewal to Nigeria and beyond.

NEW STAFF

Sr. Dr. Eke, Cor Jesu Maria Ijeoma, DMMM Joins CSN Management

Sr. Dr. Cor Jesu Maria Ijeoma Eke, DMMM was born on May 15, 1976, in Umuenyere Alayi, Bende Local Government Area of Abia State, Nigeria. She hails from Abia State and belongs to the Daughters of Mary Mother of Mercy (DMMM) Congregation.

A committed religious, scholar, and moral theologian, Sr. Dr. Eke has distinguished herself in academics, formation, and pastoral service.

Education

She began her primary education at Umuenyere Alayi Primary School (1981–1987), obtained her West African School Certificate (1993 & 1995), and pursued higher studies extensively.

Her academic qualifications include:

First School Leaving Certificate (1987) Bachelor in Theology (2011)
 Master's in Christian Religious Ethics (Moral Theology) (2013)
 Post Graduate Diploma in Education (2014)
 PhD in Christian Religious Ethics (Moral Theology) (2016)
 Diploma in Philosophy (2022)
 Licence in Divinity – Catechetical Sciences [STD] (2023)
 She studied in renowned institutions including the Catholic Institute of West Africa (Port Harcourt), the National Teachers' Institute (Kaduna), and the Maryvale Institute UK.

Career and Pastoral Work

Sr. Dr. Eke has served the Church and society in various capacities:
 School Principal, Mercy Model Secondary School, Aboh Mbaise, Imo State (2016–2020).
 Lecturer, St. Thomas Aquinas' Major Seminary, Makurdi (2019–date), teaching courses in Moral Theology, Bio-Medical Ethics, Missiology, Marriage and Human Sexuality.
 Online Lecturer, Eucharistic Heart of Jesus Sisters (2021–2022).
 Online Facilitator & Adjunct Lecturer, National Open University of Nigeria (2022–date).
 Spiritual Director, Catholic Women Organization (STAMS) (2022–date).
 Instructor, Marriage Course, STAMS Chaplaincy, Makurdi (2022–date).
 Teacher of Moral Theology, Dominican Novitiate, Makurdi (2022–date).
 Secretary, National Conference of Women Religious (NCWR), Makurdi Area (2024–date).
 Councilor, DMMM Congregation (Abuja Region) (Dec.

2024–date). Vice-President, Catholic Theological Association of Nigeria (CATHAN) (April 2025–date).

Publications

She is a prolific writer and researcher, with numerous journal articles, book chapters, and books to her credit. Her works focus on moral theology, ethics, family life, education, human dignity, and social transformation.

Books published:

Moral Ills of Child Abuse (Doctoral Thesis, St. Pauls Publications, 2024). Moral Upbringing: The Pivot in Pursuance of Quality and Holistic Education (2024). Her scholarly contributions appear in journals such as The Aquinas' Journal and international publications like TIJSSRA.





CSN Holds Memorial Mass in honour of Pope Francis recently



Sr. Nathalie Becquart Visit to CSN



Vatican

Appoints Africans to Key Dicasteries on Religious Life and Interfaith Dialogue



By Emma Eko, CSN

As part of an increasing recognition of Africa's vital role in the life of the global Church, Pope Leo XIV has appointed African clerics and religious to key positions within two important Vatican offices, the Dicastery for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, and the Dicastery for Interreligious Dialogue.

The appointments, announced in Rome recently, reflect the Holy Father's continued efforts to ensure regional representation and inclusivity within the Roman Curia, especially from continents experiencing rapid Church growth and vibrant spiritual dynamism.

To the Dicastery for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life are: His Eminence Cristóbal Cardinal, López Romero; His Grace Archbishop Jude Thaddeus Ruwa'ichi; His Lordship Bishop, Thulani Victor Mbuyisa; His Lordship Auxiliary Bishop Tesfaye Tadesse

Gebresilasie and Rev. Fr. Stanley Lubungo. While to the Dicastery for Interreligious Dialogue are: His Lordship, Bishop Sithembele Sipuka, His Lordship Bishop Olo Modeste Kambou and His Lordship, Bishop Wilybard Lagho.

According to a press statement signed by the President of SECAM, Archbishop of Kinshasa Cardinal Fridolin Ambongo, "Your appointments are a source of pride and hope for the Church in Africa. In a time marked by both challenges and opportunities in the areas of consecrated life and interreligious engagement, your voices and perspectives will be of immense value. We are confident that you will bring to the Dicasteries deep spiritual insight, rooted in the African ecclesial and cultural context, in service to the People of God and the wider world."

Please be assured of the prayerful support and fraternal solidarity of SECAM as you take up these important responsibilities. May the Holy Spirit accompany and inspire you in your service to the Church and to all humanity."





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