



CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE OF LAGOS

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**TO ALL PRIESTS AND RELIGIOUS WORKING IN THE ARCHDIOCESE OF LAGOS, AND
THE LAY FAITHFUL**

Dear Brothers and Sisters in the Lord:

1. The Month of September: We welcome you all to the month of September, the ninth month of the year and ushers us into the so-called "ember" months that remind us that the year is gradually coming to an end. This should help us to examine the progress we have made thus far particularly in our Christian journey. In our Archdiocese, the month of September normally leads us into a period of Harvest Thanksgiving celebrations were it not for COVID-19. The harvest period offers us the opportunity to thank God for His abiding love, providence and faithfulness with the best of the fruits of our labor. We pray that the Lord of the Harvest will bless us for whatever we are able to offer in thanksgiving during these pandemic times.

In this month, the Church in her wisdom presents to her faithful a number of feasts which assist them to understand and appreciate the paschal mystery of Our Lord Jesus Christ. These feasts include; the **Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary** on September 8 and the **Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross** on September 14. The Nativity of Mary marks the beginning of the unraveling of God's plan of salvation for his people, while the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross, which is the feast day of our Cathedral, brought to completion the mission of God's plan for his people on the Cross.

2. We bring to the fore again the new Guidelines issued for Parishes on Mission and Evangelization by the Congregation for Clergy which aims at encouraging Parishes to think of themselves as missionary communities geared up for evangelization. The guidelines encourage Communities of Catholics to begin to think prayerfully about how their Parishes operate now and how they should be organized as the primary places of evangelization and for evangelisation. We encourage Priests, Religious and Associations of the lay faithful to reflect

on this challenge using their different platforms and discuss how to bring the Holy Father's vision for our Parishes to reality.

3. Catholic Bishops' Conference requests prayers for an end to insecurity in Southern Kaduna: The Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria (CBCN) is inviting all Catholics to raise our voices to heaven in prayers against the spate of insecurity and terrorism especially in Northern Nigeria. The CBCN is asking us to pray as follows:

A. Starting from **Saturday, 22nd August, 2020 to Wednesday, 30th September, 2020**, all Catholics are to pray: **One (1) "Our Father"; three (3) "Hail Mary" and One (1) "Glory be to the Father" EVERY DAY** after the **Angelus** for the next **Forty (40) days till 30th September, 2020**.

B. On **October 1st, 2020**, Nigeria's Independence Day, we shall all join in praying **the Five (5) Decades of the Sorrowful Mysteries** starting at **12 noon**.

We urge all the Faithful of our Archdiocese to actively take part in prayers for our dear nation as requested by the Bishops' Conference of Nigeria. Parish Priests and Priests-in-Charge should bring this information to their parishioners and actively encourage them to take part in this spiritual exercise. May Our Lady Queen of Peace continue to intercede for our country, Nigeria.

4. Reception of Holy Communion during Covid-19: the resumption of public Masses amidst the Covid-19 reality has thrust upon us, new ways of doing things. Even in our liturgy, we have to learn some new adaptations in our way of worship. We now call attention particularly to the reception of Holy Communion and the need for us to guard against any form of disregard or contempt that may creep in when receiving Holy Communion. The expected practice of receiving Holy communion is thus: **the communicant approaches the Sanctuary, stretching out the arm, he/she places the left hand on top the right hand. Then the Priest shows him/her the Holy Communion, he/she says "Amen" pulls down the face mask, reverently picks up the Holy Communion with the right hand and places in the mouth, wears the face mask before returning to their seat.** At all times let us go about this sacred action with the proper decorum and reverence that is due.

5. OUR SENIOR CITIZENS: You will recall that those who are over 65years of age had been asked to stay back at home and participate at Mass on Lumen Christi but the State Government has given an update on the earlier directive to the effect that they may begin to go to Sunday Masses again. Parishes are to make provision for them either by creating special

places for them at the Masses they choose to attend or else set a particular Mass aside for them depending on the number involved. We hope that those who are able and in good health would take advantage of this leeway.

It bears repeating again that what is called **NEW NORMAL** concerning liturgical celebrations, is in fact **extraordinary** and is a coping strategy which cannot be elevated to *normal*. We continue saying this in order to affirm that **Mass on television and Spiritual Communion can never and will never replace Mass as a gathering of God's People to offer the sacrifice of Christ and receive His Body and Blood in the Holy Eucharist**. So, we eagerly look forward to when we can go back to the **REAL NORMAL** again.

We however urge all the faithful to realize that COVID-19 pandemic is not over yet and we must therefore continue to take the required precautions: **washing of hands regularly, keeping a physical distance of two meters from one another, wearing of face masks in public, resisting the urge to touch our faces and staying at home to reduce contact with crowds of people**. May God help us to bring the pandemic to an end.

6. TRANSMISSION OF MASSES and ADORATION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT on TV: We are happy that the transmission of Masses live can still continue due to the generosity of the owners of **Lumen Christi Television Network on DSTV Channel 350 and R2TV on GOTV Channel 112**. The Masses as usual are on **LCTN at 8:30am on Sundays and 12noon on weekdays** while on **R2TV** it is at 12noon on Sundays alone.

Many of us already know that there is one hour of **Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament** transmitted on Lumen Christ Television on **Sundays and Thursdays** beginning at 7pm. We encourage all the faithful to tune in and join in the Holy Hour. We pray God to bless you all and keep us faithful to the end.

7. SAFEGUARDING POLICY FOR CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE PERSONS: You will recall that there have been various discussions of the drafts of the policy at different fora for a while now. The clean copy has been submitted by the Committee that has been working on it. We take this opportunity to thank members of the Committee for the hard work that they did in getting it ready. Soft copies of the document shall be sent to all priests and we expect everyone to study the documents in view of the set of seminars and trainings that would take place towards the end of this month. These seminars were earlier scheduled to take place in March but for the lockdown.

The seminars are now scheduled to hold in two batches for priests: **21st and 22nd September 2020** for the first batch; **24th and 25th September 2020** for the second batch. The third seminar for Female Religious working in the Archdiocese will hold **28th September 2020** DV. Details would be communicated at a later date on all related matters. Participation at these seminars is compulsory for all priests. At least the Female Religious who are engaged in Education, Health and related apostolates would also be required to participate in the seminars.

8. Dealing with Possible Fallouts of COVID-19 Pandemic: while we are still contending with the pandemic, it is necessary that we begin to examine and identify the fall-outs that we can expect from this scourge. We, therefore, charge the Deaneries and the Associations of the Lay Faithful to devote some time to discussing the challenges that may arise from the pandemic and propose solutions that may be used to deal with them.

9. Online Interview for Augustine University (AUI): We wish to inform the Catholic faithful that our Augustine University, Ilara has commenced **online interview** for candidates seeking admission into the University for the 2020/2021 Academic Session starting in October 2020. Candidates are advised not to come to the campus for the screening exercise owing to the COVID-19 Pandemic. We urge Parish Priests and Priests in-charge to kindly inform their parishioners about this development using their various means of communication with their parishioners.

10. ANNOUNCEMENTS:

a. Annual Leave for priests: given the present circumstances brought about by the Covid-19 reality, priests cannot proceed on the normal one-month leave for this year. However, priests who have needs may proceed on a short break (during the week) after arrangements have been concluded for the care of the faithful and with due information of the Dean and his expressed approval.

b. Anthony Cardinal Okogie Foundation Annual Lecture: This event is being organized in conjunction with the Association of Papal Knights and Medalists and is scheduled as follows:

Date: Thursday, 15th October, 2020

Venue: McGovern Hall, St. Agnes Catholic Church, Maryland (tentatively)

Time: 10:00 a.m. prompt

Topic: "Nigeria: A Nation in need of Redemption: Spiritually, Socially and Politically"

Guest Speaker: Prof. Pat Utomi

Delegate card: ₦ 5, 000.00 per person

We implore Parish Priests and Priests-in-Charge of Parishes and Chaplaincies in the Archdiocese to kindly place Goodwill Messages at a minimum of ₦ 30,000.00 and also send three (3) participants at ₦ 15,000.00. Archdiocesan Lay Organization/Society/ Association are to kindly place Goodwill Messages at ₦ 10,000.00 and also send two (2) participants at ₦ 10,000.00.

Kindly write Cheques in favour of **Catholic Lay Apostolate Centre** with "ACOF" written at the back **OR** Direct payment into **Fidelity Bank Account No. 4110028140**. Please send the soft copy of the goodwill materials to catholiclayapostolatecentre@yahoo.com and call the Director's office on **080261566066** or **08077003036** for further information. Thank you for your generous support.

NB: Delegate cards can be purchased at the Catholic Lay Apostolate Centre, Ebute - Metta or at the venue.

c. Quarterly Returns: every Parish is expected fulfil the canonical obligation of giving an account of its income and expenditures to the Chancery and make the required financial returns. We are all aware that there has been suspension of public Masses since the middle of March due to the Covid-19 pandemic. This does not excuse the parishes from giving an account of their income and expenditure, no matter what they may be. To this effect, we expect not just the paper work but also the financial returns at least for the 1st and 4th Quarters of this year as well as the Special Collections.

d. 2020 Family Week: The Archdiocesan Family Week 2020 holds from 30th August to 6th September, 2020. With the theme: **"The Impact of Good Parenting on Children: the Benefits of Nurturing Children's Integrity in the home"**. Despite the challenges of the pandemic, the Family and Human Life Unit of the Archdiocese is organizing three Online Conferences to celebrate this year's Family Week. The Online Conferences to be held on Zoom Platform are scheduled as follows:

Date: 3rd September, 2020

Time: 4pm - 6pm

Topic: Learning Contentment: Finding balanced in Life

Zoom meeting ID: 8828599184

Date: **4th September, 2020**

Time: **6pm - 8pm**

Topic: **Parenting for Character Development: What works?**

Zoom meeting ID: **8828599184**

Date: **5th September, 2020**

Time: **11am - 1pm**

Topic: **Parents Transformative Role: Raising Children of Peace in Situations of Conflicts and Displacements**

Zoom meeting ID: **8828599184**

We urge us all to attend and participate actively.

e. Antioch Pastoral Institute: The Antioch Pastoral Institute, Catholic Archdiocese of Lagos commences admission into the following training programs:

1. **Catechesis and Faith Formation (1year)**
2. **Theology of the New Evangelization (5 months)**

For Whom: Catechists, Catechism/Sunday School Teachers, Parish Pastoral Assistants, Faith Formators, Catholics who desire to grow in and share the faith.

Requirements:

- Recommended by the Parish Priest
- Practicing/confirmed Catholic
- Possess a minimum of Senior Secondary School Cert. or Equivalent
- A very good grasp of English
- Ability to cope with relevant technology/applications necessary and cope with the required level of work/assignments.

Forms available for **₦1000 @ Religious Education Department; 19, Maye Street, off Montgomery Road (opposite Lebanese School), Yaba.**

For Further Inquiries: Call or SMS; **08033574050, 08066224284**

Those who have obtained the forms earlier at any of the proposed Centres or Department should kindly call or visit the office for more updates.

f. Economic Initiatives Post Covid-19 Pandemic: The Covid-19 experience has thrust upon us the need to think outside the box in order to ensure our sustenance as individuals and as Parish communities. Novel initiatives at generating income for the parish has become more necessary than ever before.

St. Paul Parish, Ebute Metta has taken the initiative of empowering interested parishioners through seminars on the huge opportunities available in the Food Processing and Packaging industry. This has given birth to **Pauline Foods** which engages in the processing and packaging of local food products such as Beans flour, Plantain flour, Yam flour, Cassava flour, Corn flour, Palm oil, Honey, different kinds of food spices to mention a few.

These products are available for orders from the parish. For more information on **Pauline Foods**, kindly call or text: +2349044946744; +2347037673899. You may visit their Website: www.paulinefoodspeb.org or their Instagram page: @paulinefoods. Write to the email address: paulinefoods@gmail.com

g. A Plea to Support Catholic Herald Newspaper: As part of the efforts to widen the scope of the Archdiocesan Catholic Herald Newspaper, the Directorate of Social Communications has gone online and has been delivering news, features and articles since the pandemic began. The inability to publish as normal has affected the running of the Herald and hampered the logistics. We hereby appeal for generous donations towards keeping our Catholic Herald alive. The newspaper has been kept alive since 1924 and we cannot allow the pandemic to kill it. The Publisher and management have been rediscovering and renewing the newspaper and so we call on Parishes, individuals, Associations of lay faithful and corporate institutions to support the Catholic Herald and help to see it through these difficult times. May God continue to bless and reward our apostolate. Amen.

11. Priestly Ordination Anniversary: We congratulate, rejoice and request your prayers for our Archbishop and his classmates: Msgri. Edmund Akpala and Jerome Oduntan, Rev. Frs. Peter Oke, and Alphonsus Ania, as they mark their 36th priestly ordination anniversary in the Lord's vineyard. Also, we are requested to pray for Revd. Frs. Adekoya Francis, Anyanwu Emmanuel, Azubuinye Patrick, Emeneogu Samuel, Fatoye Gabriel, Hunkokoe Michael, Ijasan Paul, Mautin Simeon, Monye Joseph, Oboh Alexander, Ogunmola Francis, Okhiria Victor, Olagbemi Christopher, Ugoje Gabriel, Elias Nwaodu, Boniface Okafor, Gabriel Ysasi, John Paul Taberner, Paulinus Uju-Echemnu, James Arebiyi, Philip Obasi, Arua Ethelbert, Ukwuani Leo, Magnus Onyeulor, Atoyebi Christopher, Emiri Emmanuel and Vitalis Ezeigwe, Emmanuel Avoseh, Vincent Chukwujekwu, Kenneth Mereh, Matthew Nugbode, Mark Okojie, Paul Ariole, Joseph Okafor, Harrison Okoli Emmanuel Onyia and Reuben Simeon whose sacerdotal

ordination Anniversaries occur this month. May God grant them lasting joy and the grace of final perseverance. *Ad multos annos!!!*

12. Bereavement: With deep sympathy but with thanksgiving to God, we announce the demise of **Late Prince Celestine Nwajim Ugbome** the father of Rev. Fr. Jude Ugbome, **Late Mr John Onasanya** the elder brother of Rev Fr Sylvester Onasanya; **Late Pa Fidelis Okafor**, the father of Rev. Fr. Boniface Okafor; **Late Sir George Anionye**, the father of Rev. Fr. Paschal Anionye, OFM, Cap.; **Late Sir Anthony Adeleke**, the father of Rev. Sr. Augustina Adeleke. With much regret, we also announce the death of **Sr. Francisca Oladunni Ajayi, HH CJ**. Burial arrangements would be communicated to us as soon as possible. We ask that Masses should be celebrated for the repose of their souls and the consolation of their families. May their souls and the souls of all the faithful departed rest in peace. Amen

Signed

+ Alfred Adewale Martins

Archbishop, Metropolitan See of Lagos