



CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE OF LAGOS

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

Dear Sisters and Brothers in the Lord:

1. **The Month of January:** A warm welcome to the month of January. The first month of every year is no doubt, the month of new beginnings, new opportunities and a chance to start afresh. While the past year has been memorable in different ways, we hope and pray that as we step into the year 2022 with the joys of the season of Christmas still fresh in our hearts, it will be for each of us a year in which all that was short of our expectations in 2021 would be met.

In the first part of January, we continue to rejoice and celebrate the birth of Christ at Bethlehem and in our hearts. We have the wonderful feast of **Mary, Mother of God**, in which we honor Mary's highest title, and then we follow the Magi to the crib as they bring their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh on **Epiphany Sunday**. We reach the culmination of this season with the **Feast of the Baptism of Our Lord**. Reluctantly, we take down our Christmas decorations and enter into the liturgical period known as the **Ordinary Time of the Year** during which we devote ourselves to the mystery of Christ in its entirety. The liturgical colour changes from white to green — a symbol of the hope of reaping the eternal harvest of heaven, the hope of a glorious resurrection.

2. **Sunday Of The Word Of God (Sunday 23rd January 2022):** We recall that on September 30, 2019, the Holy Father Pope Francis established the 3rd **Sunday in the Ordinary Time** each year as the **SUNDAY OF THE WORD OF GOD**. With the letter, *Aperuit Illis*, the Holy Father invites all Catholics across the world to deepen their appreciation, love and faithful witness to God and His Word. That day is to be observed as a special day devoted to the celebration, study and dissemination of the Word of God.

The celebration of the Sunday of the Word of God for this year comes up on **Sunday 23rd January 2022**. On this day, all parishes in the Archdiocese shall have the

Enthronement of the Word of God. Hence, we direct that all priests should begin to sensitize the faithful about this special Sunday and the prominence of the Word of God in the Life of the Christian.

The Rite of Enthronement of the Bible shall be used. You will notice that the rite is embedded in the Mass of the day and it gives prominence to the Word of God. The Bible remains enthroned until **Tuesday, 1st March 2022**, the day before Ash Wednesday.

3. Archdiocesan Preparation for the 2023 Synod of Bishops: With the beginning of the preparations for the forthcoming Synod by our Holy Father and the opening of the Diocesan stage in our Archdiocese on 17th October 2021, we have begun the process of accepting and acting on the invitation of our Holy Father to pray, listen, share experiences and discern with the aim of offering advice and offering pastoral practices that would be guided by the will of God and the lived experiences of the People of God.

Every Deanery should by now have appointed three facilitators (priest, Religious and lay faithful) who will help to coordinate synodal sessions at Parish and deanery levels as well as prepare reports for the Archdiocesan Team. The synthesis of these reports will constitute our Archdiocesan contribution towards the 2023 Synod. The timeline for the activities for the phase were communicated during the webinar held last month for Priests and Religious and the seminar for facilitators. We enjoin everyone to pray for the success of this phase of the synod and to participate actively as required of them. The Synodal Prayer has been reproduced on the back of our **Archdiocesan Directory** and in the **Archdiocesan Liturgical Desk Calendar**.

4. The new Omicron Variant COVID-19: In one of our previous circulars, we did a review of some of the practices that we put in place in the heat of the COVID-19 pandemic. Since then, we have heard of the advent of OMICRON strain of the virus that is afflicting parts of the world. We know that it has arrived the shores of our country and so we reiterate the need for everyone to pay adequate attention and take all due precautions. We advise everyone to take the vaccine and all parishes to continue to observe the COVID-19 protocols and encourage the faithful to wash their hands or use hand sanitizers regularly, wear their face-masks, observe the physical distance required and keep attendance at large gatherings to the barest minimum.

5. Deanery Child Safeguarding Policy: With the approval of the Archbishop, the **Archdiocesan Child safeguarding Review Board** has asked that the **Deanery Child safeguarding Committee** be set up not later than the **end of January, 2022**. Kindly send the names of the members of these Committees to the Chancery as soon as this instruction is executed.

6. Reverence for the Holy Eucharist, JESUS in the Blessed Sacrament: The Holy Eucharist is at the heart of the life and worship in our Church. Being the Body and blood of Christ, the sacrament must be held with absolute reverence. The Eucharist is the presence of Christ, body, soul and divinity and it behooves us to ensure that we do not do anything that denigrates on the sanctity of the Eucharist especially when we receive Jesus in Holy Communion. As the present circumstance has imposed it upon us and obliges us to receive Holy communion on the palm, all are to ensure that we give due reverence and attention Christ in the Blessed Sacrament in the same way as when receive Him on the tongue.

Hence, effective catechesis must be continued in order to remind the faithful of this important aspect of our faith. If for any reason at all, the sacred specie falls on the ground, the priest or extraordinary minister concerned must ensure that they show due regret and take care of the specie with expected reverence and due decorum. Priests and Church wardens are to ensure that those who receive Holy Communion consume the sacred specie **immediately** and before returning to their seats.

7. Augustine University, Ilara (Aui) Offers New Courses: Our Augustine University has got NUC approval to enroll students for the following new courses:

B.Sc Mass Communication

B.Sc Political Science

B.Sc Biochemistry

B.Sc Cyber Security

B.Sc Fisheries and Aquaculture

B.Sc Information Technology

B.Sc Software Engineering

The University is still offering admission to new students for the 2021/2022 academic session. Please bring this to the notice of the faithful in your parishes and Associations of the lay faithful.

8. DISCLAIMER: Upon the information at our disposal at the time, we wrote a letter on 29th January, 2021 introducing a company, *Estabet Synergy Limited*, as a company that offered to enroll parishioners and obtain NIN for them in the premises of our parishes. We stated clearly in the letter that the service was going to be offered at NO COST to the parish or parishioners.

It has come to our notice that the representative of the company has been asking for money from youths that he promised to employ for the service, contrary to the assurances we received. We hereby inform everyone that we have withdrawn our introduction of the company for the said purpose. Please beware of any engagement with the said company.

9. ATTENTION: this is to notify MRS AGNES nee OMOCHERE in the case of LEEMON AGBONJAGWE IKPEA/AGNES OMOCHERE that her attention is needed by the Archdiocesan Marriage Tribunal. She is to contact the Archdiocesan Judicial Vicar as soon as possible.

10. ANNOUNCEMENTS:

a. Archdiocesan Curia Meeting: The first meeting of the Year of the Archdiocesan Curia comes on Wednesday **19th January, 2022** at the Chancery by 10am. All those concerned should please take note.

b. Archdiocesan Finance Council Meeting: The meeting of the Archdiocesan Finance Council for the first quarter comes up on Tuesday **25th January, 2022** at **10.00 am** in the Chancery. All those concerned should please take note.

c. Lagos Inter-Diocesan Tribunal: The meeting of the Tribunal comes up on Wednesday **26th January, 2022** in the **Chancery** at **10:00 a.m.** All those concerned should please take note and attend.

d. Orientation and Induction of New Priests: We have the tradition in the Archdiocese of giving an orientation programme on liturgical and pastoral practices in the Archdiocese to newly ordained priests as well as priests newly appointed to serve in the Archdiocese of Lagos. This will come up from **13th to 15th January, 2022**. The venue for the orientation is **Domus Fidei**, Eucharistic Heart of Jesus Generalate, Ikeja, Lagos. We notice that some of those who were supposed to have participated in the 2021 programme did not. All the priests posted to the Archdiocese but have not participated, no matter how long they may have been in the Archdiocese, are expected

to participate this year. We emphasize it again that only new priests and priests newly posted to the Archdiocese who duly take part in the orientation programme can be appointed Parish Priests in the Archdiocese. Everyone concerned should note that participation in this orientation programme is mandatory.

e. 2022 Day for Consecrated Life: The 2022 Day for Consecrated Life celebration comes up on **Wednesday, 2nd February, 2022 at Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church Orile at 10am.**

f. Laity Council Annual General Meeting: The General Meeting of the Archdiocesan Laity Council comes up on **Saturday 15th January 2022 at St. Ferdinand Catholic Church, Ipaja.**

g. 2022 VALENTINE'S DAY WITH THE ARCHBISHOP: This Archdiocesan Program organized by the Lay Apostolate Centre in conjunction with the Association of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Immaculate Heart of Mary and St. Jude Society will come up as follows:

DATE: Saturday, 12th February, 2022

TIME: 10:00 a.m. starting with the Holy Mass

VENUE: Catholic Church of the Ascension, Airport Road, Ikeja

Goodwill placement cost Fifty Thousand Naira Only (N50,000.00).

For more information, kindly call the Director's office on 08026156606 or 08077003036

h. 2022 Archdiocesan Directory: The 2022 Archdiocesan Directory is in circulation already. Kindly collect copies for your parishes from the Chancery if you have not done so yet. The Female Religious should also pick their copies from the Chancery.

i. Priests' Annual Leave-Roster: Priests are to submit months of preference for their annual leave for year, 2022 to the Priests' Welfare Committee not later than end of January, 2022.

j. Admission into Catholic Secondary Schools: This is to inform our parents that admission into JSS 1 for the 2022/2023 academic session in all Catholic Secondary Schools in the Archdiocese of Lagos is in progress. The Entrance Examination comes up on 19th March, 2022 at the schools. Forms can be obtained at the school of choice, all Catholic Primary Schools in the Archdiocese, selected parishes and electronically on

examcentre.ng or on any of the following 10 Catholic Archdiocesan Secondary Schools' websites:

1. St Gregory College, South-West, Ikoyi <http://www.stgregoryscollege.ng>
2. Holy Child Girls College, Ikoyi <http://www.holychildcollegeswikoyi.org>
3. St Finbarr College, Akoka <http://www.stfinbarrscollegeakoka.com>
4. St Kizito's College, Iju-Ishaga
5. Mater Ecclesiae College, Epe <http://www.materecclesiaecollege.com>
6. Sacred Heart College, Apapa <http://www.sacredheartcollegeapapa.com.ng>
7. Maryland Comprehensive Secondary School, Maryland <http://www.mcssmaryland.org>
8. Our Lady of Apostles Secondary School, Yaba <http://www.olassyaba.sch.ng>
9. Marywood Girls College, Ebute-Metta <http://www.marywoodgc-lagos.org>
10. St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic College, Okokomaiko

Sale of forms will close one week to the date of examination. Let us give our children the holistic advantages that Catholic education offers!

k. Quarterly Returns and Special Collections: every Parish is expected to fulfill the canonical obligation of giving an account of its income and expenditures to the Chancery and make the required financial returns.

Please be reminded that the returns from the following Special Collections are to be made in the first quarter of the year: **Epiphany Collection- 02/01/2022 AUI Collection- 09/01/2022, 13/02/2022, Laity Collection for Archdiocese, Deanery and Parish Laity Council- 30/01/202, NCWR Collection- 06/02/2022, Caritas Lagos Collection- 13/03/2022, Laity Week Collection-20-03-2022**

We reiterate instruction that Parish Priests/Priests-in-charge should use the **Pay-Direct** option or make **bank transfers** to forestall the challenges of returned cheques, irregular signatures and other problems that cause cheques to bounce. We emphasize again that when making returns, Parish Priests or Priests-in-Charge, should ensure that they attach the front page in the booklet that has the name of the parish and the appropriate quarter on it and fill all the pages of the Booklet.

l. Leading for Mission for Parish lay Readers: we are grateful to the Deans, Parish Priests, Deanery and Parish Laity Council Executives that have contributed to the successful launch of this MANDATORY training programme for ALL CURRENT Parish EXECUTIVE OFFICE HOLDERS and Council Members. Kindly be informed that all concerned persons are expected to complete this training in 2022. We also solicit the

assistance of all concerned in providing the conducive environment and facilities needed to enable us achieve our goal of empowering people to participate effectively and efficiently in the task of advancing God's kingdom in our Archdiocese

m. Mater Ecclesiae Monastery:

Monthly Retreat: Mater Ecclesiae Monastery, Sangotedo, Lagos organises a day of spiritual retreat for young girls from 15 years and above for the purpose of discerning their vocation. The retreat is scheduled to hold on the first Saturday of every month. **Time: 9:00 am – 4.00 pm.** Venue: Mater Ecclesia Monastery, Sangotedo, Lekki, Lagos.

Mater Ecclesiae Retreat Center: Mater Ecclesiae Retreat Center, located in the serene atmosphere of the Monastery, is officially open to everyone for personal and Group Retreats. Time for Public Adoration to the Most Holy Sacrament is **from Mondays to Saturdays** 9:00am to 8:30pm; on **Sundays** after 9:00am Mass to 12:15pm; and from 3:30pm to 5:00pm. Also, you can visit the Book Centre. **For more inquiries, call 09085648168.**

n. St. Gregory School of Pastoral Music: This is the Catholic School of Music of the Archdiocese of Lagos that offers choirmasters, choristers, and interested music lovers a Diploma Certificate in Pastoral Music after successfully completing a program of 3 years' part-time studies. It is aimed at training Music Directors for parishes, communities, schools and similar institutions as it helps to develop their interest in music and the relevant theological/pastoral knowledge required for making them into *Pastoral Musicians*. The school is currently in discussion with Augustine University, Ilara on affiliation for the award of the Diploma.

To join the preparatory class, please click the link below for registration: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/15wZ44SWIkvZ6BnpSxEL0itoBWk7pE1lZKA2oQ8icY/edit?usp=drivesdk>

The preparatory class is a 3-month study time geared towards preparing interested persons for the Entrance Examination to join the Diploma program. Interested persons can also visit the school's page on Facebook with the link below: <https://www.facebook.com/StGregoryDiplomaSchoolOfPastoralMusic>.

For more information about the school, please contact the: Mr. Simon Eze 07069289868 (Registrar) or Rev. Fr. Peter Osuntope 08023700587 (The Director)

o. CATHOLIC YOUTH ORGANIZATION OF NIGERIA:

i. Open Year Novena and Thanksgiving. (15th-23rd January 2022): The Open Year Novena to Sacred Heart of Jesus with Reflections on Qualities of Love and

Thanksgiving will run from the 15th - 23rd Jan 2022. The prayer can be done individually or in groups (Parishes/Deaneries) and in the most convenient of times.

ii. **Leadership Training for all Deanery Executives:** the leadership training/workshop is for all Deanery Executives of CYON. **Venue:** the CYON Secretariat, Yaba, **Topic:** Why leaving leadership position when the ovation is high? **Date:** 15th and 16th January, 2022. To be facilitated by the Youth Directorate

iii. **How much do you know about CYON:** the monthly interactive series titled, "What does CYON stand for? How much do you know about CYON?" continues this month on **Sunday, 16th January, 2022 at 7:30pm**. The link will be shared as the time approaches in the given month. We thank all participants at the last session in December and encourage more participation subsequently.

11. Priestly Ordination Anniversary: We congratulate, rejoice with and request your prayers for the following confreres, whose Sacerdotal Ordination anniversaries occur this month: Rev. Frs. Joachim Ochibili, Richard Ogedengbe (OP), Joseph Kandachamkunnel, Amosun Anthony, Babatunde Francis, Bastos Paul, Echefu Augustine, Ehiedu Emmanuel, Mensah Michael, Njorteah John. May God grant them lasting joy and the grace of final perseverance. *Ad multos annos!*

12. Bereavement: We announce, with deep sympathy the demise of **Ichie Ifedilichukwu Simeon**, the father of **Rev. Fr. Reuben Simeon**, and **Mrs. Mary Anyanwu** the mother of **Rev. Fr. Emmanuel Anyanwu**. They died on 26th and 28th December, 2021 respectively. Kindly celebrate Masses for the repose of their souls and the consolation of their family. May God grant him eternal rest. Amen.

+ **Alfred Adewale Martins**
Archbishop, Metropolitan See of Lagos