

**19, CATHOLIC MISSION STREET, P. O. BOX 8, LAGOS-NIGERIA**

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**Monthly Bulletin /Circular** May**, 2014/No. 020**

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

**Dear Brothers and Sisters in the Lord,**

1. **May:** We welcome you all to Mary’s month in the Season of Easter when we rejoice with the Blessed Virgin Mary whose Son rose triumphant from the dead and is seated at the right hand of the Father. During this month, Christians everywhere are encouraged to offer up to Mary from their hearts fervent and loving homage of prayer and veneration. Giving credence and veracity to this, Pope Pius VI in his Encyclical on the month of May wrote: ‘the benefits of God’s mercy come down to us from Mary’s throne in greater abundance during this month’.

Mary stands before us as an epitome of true witnessing to the Resurrection of her Son, our Lord Jesus Christ; right from the birth, to the death, resurrection and ascension of Christ, and on to the establishment and growth of the early Church. She contributed immensely to the spread of the faith which came down to us from the Apostles, to which you and I are witnesses. We therefore request you to organize special devotions in her honour. These devotions should include the recitation of the Holy Rosary collectively as a family or individually, the Litany of the B.V.M, Talks on Our Lady, and Visits to Marian Grottos. As we celebrate and pray in this Month of Mary, may She, the Mother of the resurrected Christ intercede for our Archdiocese and the Christian family. Mary, Queen of the Holy Rosary, pray for us.

1. **LAGOS ARCHDIOCESAN YEAR OF THE FAMILY:** As we continue our journey in this Year of the Family, we admonish Parish Priests and leaders of Lay Associations to ensure that they constantly refer to the programmes of the year as laid out in the **Year Planner** provided. This is necessary in order to ensure that we dutifully carry out all the activities outlined. The year is for the renewal of the family and re-awakening of the call to personal holiness. Parish Priests are to ensure that the proposed themes for reflection on Sundays are made use of so as to assist the faithful keep the ideals and objectives of the year in view.

 Copies of the Year Planner are available in the Chancery. ***Jesus, Mary and Joseph; make our families like unto Thine.***

1. **ENTHRONEMENT IN THE FAMILIES:** As part of our Year of the Family celebration, all families in the parish will be required to enthrone the Holy Bible and the image of the Holy Family as signs of the commitment of the families to reading the word of God and living by the word of God. It is also a sign of the dedication of the families to the Holy Family of Nazareth and commitment to live as they lived. This should take place on any day within the week of **4th to 10th of May, 2014.** A formula for the said dedication is in the Year Planner mentioned earlier. The pictures of the Holy Family can be purchased from Catholic Bookshops and from the Center for Media Development office in Ojota. They cost N200 each.
2. **LEAVE/HOLIDAYS:** This is the period when most people go on holidays. We hereby remind everyone that we are all entitled only to **approved leave allowances.** No one is expected to use any more resources of the Church than is permitted for buying flight tickets or any other form of transportation. More so, no one is to exceed the one-month period of Annual Leave without permission from the Archbishop.
3. **A CALL FOR MEMORANDA:** In the midst of present-day global and local happenings, what would you in your candid evaluation consider to be the biting problems and troubling challenges facing the **FORMATION** of candidates for the priesthood in Lagos Archdiocese? What would you recommend as the way forward? Secondly, what are those positive elements in priestly formation that should be emphasized and improved upon for the good of the candidates in formation and the Church at large? Kindly let us know your thoughts and comments on these questions. We would greatly appreciate it if your submissions could reach us on or before Saturday 10th May, 2014. Please send your reply to: vocarelag@gmail.com or send a hard copy to the Vocation Director, Holy Cross Cathedral, Lagos.

7. **“PRIVATE MINISTRIES”:** Our attention has been drawn to some so-called “Private Ministries” being organized and undertaken by some lay persons without the approval of the Church. Such ministries operate outside of the Church and are alleged to be involved in curious practices. We call upon operators of such “Private Ministries” to retrace their steps and be at peace with God and the Church.

We call upon Priests who engage the “services” of such private ministry operators to desist from such acts. We shall not fail in our duty to protect the faith and orthodoxy of the Church. The salvation of souls and protection of the faithful from the negative influences of the times will not permit us to condone any errant person, clergy or otherwise.

We have also observed some extraneous practices and abuses in our Parishes especially during the celebration of the Mass and other Sacraments, namely:

1. Distribution of Holy Communion by Priests without putting on the Stole.
2. Concelebrating priest(s) joining the Mass late or leaving the Sanctuary before the end of the Mass.
3. Prancing the central aisle and naves to and fro while giving the homily.
4. Adding choruses or words to the Prayers for Consecration of the bread and wine. Adding choruses or words to the Great Amen (which follows the final Doxology). Adding or subtracting from the Eucharistic Prayers.
5. Priest requesting during the Mass that members of the congregation should give money to God so that God will grant their requests, what is now known as “Seed Sowing.”
6. Exposing the Blessed Sacrament when nobody is present.
7. Sprinkling holy water with bowls or bare-hands.
8. Carrying the Monstrance in one hand and the microphone in the other.
9. And other arbitrary unorthodox practices.

We call on Priests who are involved in these kinds of a-liturgical practices and liturgical aberrations to desist from them henceforth. Our Church is blessed with tradition, Rubrics, Liturgical Rites, and Symbolic Rituals. Let us follow the guidelines provided in the Rubrics, Rituals, and Liturgical Rites of the Church in administering the Sacraments and performing our ministerial duties.

**8. Announcements:**

**a. LAY LEADERS’ SEMINAR/WORKSHOP:** The 2014 Lay Leaders’ Seminar/Workshop for members of P.P.C., Parish Laity Council, Executives of Archdiocesan Laity Council, Deanery Laity Council and Lay Organizations/Societies/Associations will come up on **Saturday, 3rd May, 2014** at the **Conference Hall, St Paul’s Catholic Church, Ebute Metta.** Parishes and Archdiocesan Lay Organizations/Societies/Associations are to send ten (10) delegates each, while Deaneries are to send (3) delegates each at **One Thousand, Five hundred Naira Only (N1,500.00)** per delegate, accreditation starts by 7:00 am prompt.

**b. TRAINING SESSION FOR CATECHIST/SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN NEW AND OLD PARISHES:** This will take place in **May 10 & 17** and in **June 7 & 14, 2014** at **EHJ Conference Centre, Ikeja.** Time: **9:00 a.m.** Cost per session is **N 1,000.** Topics are drawn to form and educate Catechists/Sunday School Teachers that will better equip them pastorally and make them more efficient in their ministry. Parish Priests should encourage stakeholders to attend.

**c. NEW BISHOP FOR ABEOKUTA DIOCESE:** His Holiness, Pope Francis has appointed **Very** **Rev. Msgr. Peter Odetoyinbo** of the Archdiocese of Ibadan as the new Bishop of Abeokuta Diocese. We congratulate him and pray for God’s blessings on him as he shepherds the flock entrusted to him. He will be ordained and installed on June 25th, 2014 in Abeokuta.

**d. CARITAS LAGOS COLLECTION:** Parishes yet to forward the Proceeds of the special collection for the charity works of the Archdiocese of Lagos under the management of ***CARITAS LAGOS*** should do so as soon as possible. This is to enable ***CARITAS LAGOS*** respond to pending appeals with minimum delay. The Cheque should be addressed as **Archdiocese of Lagos – Caritas** and “Caritas Lagos” written behind. Parish Priests and Priests-in-Charge should kindly take note of this and act accordingly.

**e. LAY APOSTOLATE CENTRE:**

1. **Tenure of Office of Executives of Associations of The Lay Faithful:** This is to inform all Associations of the Lay Faithful in the Archdiocese that the tenure of office for members of the Executive of their Associations has been restored to three (3) years in the first instance and renewable only according to the statutes of the Associations concerned. The circumstances that led to the decision of two (2) years tenure in the past years have been addressed. All priests, religious and laity should take note.
2. **STAKEHOLDERS:** The above name used for the lay faithful in relation to the Catholic Lay Apostolate Centre which comprises of executive members of Archdiocesan Laity council, Deanery Laity Council and Archdiocesan Lay Organisation/Society/Association refers. At the quarterly meeting held recently, it was agreed that the name **“Stakeholders”** be changed to **“COLLABORATORS”.** Hence, we will no longer have Stakeholders’ meetings but Collaborators’ meetings.
3. **2014 ARCHDIOCESAN LAITY HARVEST:** will take place on Sunday, 11th May, 2014 at St. Leo’s Catholic Church, Ikeja. We humbly ask our Deans and Parish Priests to give the Archdiocesan Laity Council the necessary support for the success of this event. More importantly, Parish Priests should kindly allow the distribution of the harvest envelops in their Parishes.

**f. GOLDEN JUBILEE OF BLESSED MICHAEL IWENE TANSI:** The celebration of the Golden Jubilee of the death of Blessed Michael Iwene Tansi will be celebrated on Sunday 11th May, 2014 at Christ the King Catholic Church, Ilasamaja. All the faithful are invited to join in the celebration of this illustrious son of Nigeria. May Blessed Tansi pray for us and our country Nigeria.

**g. FAMILY AND HUMAN LIFE UNIT (FHLU):** This is to bring to the notice of everyone that the training programmes of the Family and Human Life Unit (FHLU) for 2014 have commenced.

* **Training on Billings Ovulation Method –** one Saturday a month (for 5 months) starting on the 3rd of May, 2014; **Time:** 10am - 4pm; **Certificate: N2,500**
* **Training in Basic Christian Counselling Skills**: (one Friday a month for 3 months) stating on Friday, 16th May, 2014. **Time:** 10am – 4pm **Fee:** N 3,500 per month (including tea break and lunch) **Certificate: N 1,500.**
* **Introduction to Canon Law for the Laity** begins on **20th May, 2014**. **Facilitators** are: Rev Frs. Ogunsusi, Michael Banjo, Peter Okonkwo, Paul Ijasan and Charles Ukwe.
* **Full – Time course on Marriage Theology and Lived experience** starting from 15th – 19th September, 2014.

**Time**: 10am – 4pm. **Fee**: N3,500.00 per month. **Graduation and Certificate –N5,000.00.**

**Venue:** 19, Maye Street, off Commercial Avenue, Sabo, Yaba, Lagos. Interested persons should call 08033804494 or 08028489999 for more information. As this is the Year of the Family in our Archdiocese, we expect as many people as possible to take part in these programmes.

**h. WORLD SICKLE CELL DAY:** Do you know that Nigeria is the country with the highest number of persons with sickle cell disorder in the world? 150,000 babies are born with the condition every year in this country and Nigeria also has the largest pool of carriers of the sickle cell gene. The World Sickle Cell day comes up on **19th June, 2014** and in celebrating this event, the Archdiocese shall be collaborating with Sickle Cell Foundation Nigeria, (S.C.F.N) to organize a programme on the subject matter. Meanwhile, **all parishes are requested to Pray for people with sickle cell. People of good will are requested to support the Sickle Cell Foundation Nigeria financially. The Association has an office at Ishaga Road (opposite LUTH), Idi-Araba, Lagos. Tel: 08100002003. Email:** **info@sicklecellfoundation.com****.** Their activities include Clinical and Laboratory Services, Genetic Counselling services, Prevention of Strokes, Bone Marrow (stem cell) Transplantation and Prenatal Diagnosis.

**i. MARIE BALAVENNE’S CATHOLIC COLLEGE ENTRANCE EXAM:** is an institution established by the Daughters of the Holy Spirit Sisters. Admission into Jss 1, 2, 3 & SS. 1 for 2014/2015 Session into Marie Balavenne’s Catholic College in Ilogbo-Ota, Ogun State. The exam comes up as follows;

* 2nd Batch 24th May 2014
* 3rd Batch 19th July 2014. Time is 10:00am.

**j. PRIESTLY ORDINATION ANNIVERSARY:** We congratulate, rejoice and request your prayers for Rev. Frs. Godwin Eduke, Joseph Monye, Garber Leo, Anthony Odoh, Gilbert Thesing, Njugi A. Gichuki, Martin Aitsebaomo, OP, Alexander Isonga, Johnson Chacko and Michael Ogunniyi, whose sacerdotal ordination Anniversaries occur this month. May God grant them lasting joy and the grace of final perseverance. Ad multos annos.

**k. BEREAVEMENT:** We announce with a heavy heart the death of **Mrs. Joan Oguguo (Nee Opara)**, the sister of Rev. Fr. Hubert Opara, who died on the 19th of April, 2014. The funeral ceremony will take place on 8th May, 2014 at Christ the King Catholic Church, Orie Mbaise, Imo State by 11:00 a.m. Kindly celebrate Mass for the repose of her soul. May God grant her eternal rest. Amen.

**(Signed)**

**+ Alfred Adewale Martins**

**Archbishop, Metropolitan See of Lagos.**