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 June:** *Come O! Holy Spirit and fill the hearts of your Faithful and enkindle in them the fire of your love,* with these words of prayer, dear brothers and sisters in Christ, I welcome you to the month of June, 2020. This month leads us from the joys of Easter to an atmosphere of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, a revival of the Spirit of God which we all received at our Baptism and Confirmation. Aligning our voice to that of St. Paul to Timothy, we remind ourselves once again to fan into flames the gifts of God which we have received at Baptism and Confirmation. Having come to the second half of the year in this month, we are inclined to re-evaluate the resolutions we have made at the beginning of the year and to indeed ask ourselves if we have truly hearkened to the promptings of the Holy Spirit through the proper use of the gifts he has given us.

During this month, we shall have some remarkable celebrations which include: Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity 7/06/2020, Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ 14/06/2019, Solemnity of the Birth of Saint John The Baptist 24/6/2020 and the Solemnity of Ss. Peter & Paul 29/06/2019. May these celebrations edify us and draw us closer to God.

2. **GRADUAL RESTORATION OF PUBLIC MASS:** For far too long, we have not been able to gather together for Public Mass due to the coronavirus pandemic that has been creating unbelievable disruption to normal life. We are glad that we are beginning to see the light at the end of the tunnel as we look forward to a gradual restoration of Public acts of worship in our state.

As we expect government to announce the date of restoration of public worship, we have provided the guidelines that would ensure that we are able to worship and at the same time
keep ourselves safe and healthy. The life and well-being of every one is important and cannot be put at risk in any way. We expect all the faithful- Priests, Religious and lay faithful to keep strictly to the guidelines and obey the directives. We pray that God will grant us the wisdom to know what to do and the grace to do it in order to bring this pandemic to an end.

However, we remind everyone that even though public worship is restored, the pandemic is still with us. We are still hearing of rising numbers of new infections every day and some deaths. This means that as we gradually experience relaxation of the restrictions, we must not forget that the virus is still as easily communicable as it has ever been and that infections can still spike up. Yes, we thank God that we are recording the recovery of some of those infected with the virus but we must ensure that we do not let down our guards and continue to take necessary precautions still.

3. CHANCERY OFFICE RESUMPTION: Please be informed that with the gradual easing of the lockdown in the State, the Chancery office is reopened for activities. However, given the need to observe the safety precautions due to the COVID 19 Pandemic, visiting the Chancery would be strictly by appointment. Visitors who wish to see the Archbishop should kindly book an appointment through the Chancery line: 07025128843 either by making a call, sending an SMS or a WhatsApp message. In the alternative, people may send an email to arclaqos@yahoo.com.

Kindly note that all visitors are expected to do the following:

1. Wear a face Mask.
2. submit to the taking of body temperature
3. Wash and sanitize your hands before entering the office
4. observe the required physical distance as directed.

4. WHAT IS NEW NORMAL? We cannot overemphasize the fact that what has been the new normal concerning liturgical celebrations in the last two months is in fact an aberration brought about by what could be described as a war situation. 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 on the Cross in a bloodless manner. What we have been doing is merely an effort to worship as best as we could and at the same time stay alive and healthy in
anticipation of when we can go back to our normal gathering as God’s People to worship and praise the Lord. So, while we participate at Mass on TV the best way we can, we must know that this does not and **CANNOT** replace in any conceivable way, the gathering as a community of people to worship.

Inasmuch as we cannot afford to relax our vigilance especially with regards to taking 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**; we look forward dearly to when we can sing and pray under the same roof, go to confession and receive Holy Communion on our tongues again and carry out our acts of worship, meeting in societies and continuing our different societal programmes of the year. May the Lord see us through to the end of these difficult times. Amen.

**5. LIVE TRANSMISSION OF MASSES:** The liturgical celebrations for weekdays and Sundays shall continue to be transmitted live on Lumen Christi Television Network. The services on DSTV Channel 198 is being rounded up and so we shall be able to participate at Mass only on Lumen Christi Television as from this month onwards.

We continue to express our gratitude to the Founder of Lumen Christi, Prince Soji Olagunju, the Management and staff for the good work that they are doing in transmitting Mass Live and daily from our Cathedral since the present problems of COVID-19 disrupted the way we celebrate normally. We also thank Mr. John Ugbe, the CEO of Multichoice, Nigeria as well as the Management and staff of the Company for bringing the excellent services of DSTV to use for live transmission of the Paschal Triduum, the Easter Sunday and all Sundays till now. We pray God to reward their generosity richly from His abundance.

**6. PASTORAL PRESENCE TO THE FAITHFUL:** We continue to acknowledge the efforts of the priests and leaders of Associations of lay faithful who have found ways and means of keeping the line of communication with their parishioners and members open in these past months that we have not been able to come together in worship and meeting. Many parishes have been live-streaming Masses for the benefit of their parishioners where possible and Associations of lay faithful have been meeting through various means electronic and/or social media networks. May God bless you as we urge you not to rest on your oars.
8. ANNOUNCEMENTS:


   Date: June 4, 2020
   Time: 11.00am
   Venue: Zoom Online Platform

   We encourage especially Parish Priests to participate in order to acquire knowledge about the benefit of NACL to the Parish & Church.

   To participate, please send a request to nacllag@gmail.com & a link/code/password will be sent to you. All requests must come in before June 1st.

b. 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.

Joseph, Oviemuno I. Obi, Timothy Inok, Vincent Ukoma, Osbert Egbe, Jude Kanu, Prayer Odede, Cletus Onwudiwe and George Erumetse whose sacerdotal ordination Anniversaries occur this month. May God grant them lasting joy and the grace of final perseverance. Ad multos annos!

Signed

+ Alfred Adewale Martins
Archbishop, Metropolitan See of Lagos