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 AUGUST: We welcome you to the month of August, a month during which the Church offers us some remarkable celebrations: the Transfiguration of Our Lord Jesus Christ (Aug 6) and the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Aug 15). As Catholic Christians, these two great feasts draw our attention to the profound mystery of the beatific vision and makes us crave the experience of having the vision after our sojourn here on earth. At the Transfiguration, Our Lord Jesus Christ revealed his Glorified Self to the three Apostles who were with him on Mount Tabor, giving them a foretaste of heaven. The Solemnity of the Assumption enlivens in us the hope that, like our Blessed Mother who was assumed into heaven with her glorified body, we too will one day attain heavenly bliss. Following on these two significant celebrations, there are some saints whose feasts we commemorate this month - St. Alphonsus Liguori (August 1) St. John Mary Vianney (August 4), St. Dominic (August 8), St. Lawrence (August 10), St. Clare (August 11), St. Maximilian Kolbe (August 14), St. Bartholomew (August 24), St. Augustine (August 28) and Beheading of St. John the Baptist (August 29). Let us embrace and practice the virtue of practiced by these saints and persevere in the faith, in spite of the COVID-19 problems, as we continue our life journeys in this second half of the year.

2. SOLEMNITY OF THE ASSUMPTION: on the 15th of August every year, the Church celebrates the Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. This Holy Day of Obligation is a celebration of one of the four Marian dogmas which teaches us that our Blessed Mother Mary, having been preserved from the stain of original sin and after completing her earthly life, was by the power of God assumed into heaven body and soul. This had to be because the justice of God would not allow her sinless body to suffer the corruption of the grave. The Assumption of Our Blessed Virgin Mary was declared a dogma by the Apostolic Constitution of Pope Pius XXII in the year 1950. Let us like Mary strive to perfection so that we may merit eternal happiness.
The COVID-19 pandemic would not allow us to have the usual Novena in preparation for the feast at the Marian Shrine this year. We however, encourage all our faithful to do this novena individually and as families so that we can obtain the graces of the Solemnity and receive God's answer to our individual requests. I ask that we pray in particular during the novena for the restoration of Mass in public. We have been suffering from the effects of the suspension for far too long. So we need divine intervention to bring the novel coronavirus pandemic to an end and the restoration of our rights to gathering for public worship.

3. As we approach the celebration of the Assumption, we recall again that our Holy Father, Pope Francis, has approved the inclusion of three additional invocations to the Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary. They are: “Mother of Mercy,” “Mother of Hope” and “Comfort of Migrants.”
In this new arrangement of the Litany, “Mother of Mercy,” comes after “Mother of the Church”; then comes “Mother of Divine Grace” to be followed by “Mother of Hope.” Further down after invoking Mary as “Health of the Sick” and “Refuge of Sinners,” we then add “Comfort of Migrants.” May our blessed Mother intercede for us at this most difficult time in the history of humanity.

4. Vatican issues new Guidelines for Parishes on Mission and Evangelization: The Congregation for Clergy on Monday, July 20, 2020, published new Guidelines for parishes all over the world, which aims at encouraging Parishes to think of themselves as missionary communities of evangelization. The guidelines encourage Catholics to begin to think prayerfully about what their parishes are, and what they should be as the primary places of evangelization. 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.

5. DISCLAIMER: Beware of Wolves in Sheep Clothing: We hereby call attention of the faithful of the Archdiocese to a dissident group called: "Marian Awareness APOSTOLATE" that is operating in the Archdiocese. Under the guise of providing opportunity for Tridentine Mass, this group has been misleading the people of God in our Archdiocese. Before suspension of Public Mass in Lagos State, they used to attend the approved Mass at St. Gregory College, Ikoyi after which they ferry people in buses to No. 4C Ruxton Road, Ikoyi and under the guise of providing food for attendees, they indoctrinate the people and feed them with heretical teachings.

This group is harming the faith of people in a number of ways: by i. denying the authenticity of the teachings of the 2nd Vatican Council; ii. Claiming that the Novus Ordo Mass i.e. the Mass that the Pope celebrates every day and is celebrated all over the world is not valid; iii.
distributing misleading books under the title "Marian Awareness and Jesus to Mankind Apostolate". The preface or foreword to the books are often written by Mr. Patrick Oke in whose house the illicit Masses are being celebrated; iv. the group also shows disobedience to the age-long regulation of the Archdiocese of Lagos that Masses shall not be celebrated in private homes; v. they invite priests, the ecclesiastical approval of whose Religious Congregation is doubtful, to celebrate Masses and without due permission. This group has shown direct disobedience to the law of Lagos State government on gathering for worship since the COVID-19 pandemic started and thereby putting the health of people at risk.

We urge the faithful of our Archdiocese to be careful and vigilant in guarding our faith in these truly difficult times. In 1Pet. 5:8-9, St Peter admonishes us to "be sober and watchful because the adversary is prowling around like a roaring lion looking for those to devour. Resist him steadfast in faith."

6. CHANCERY OFFICE: The Chancery office is open for business and we remind everyone again that due to the COVID-19 challenges, visiting the Chancery would be strictly by APPOINTMENT. Visitors who wish to see the Archbishop need to secure 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 arclagos@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 hands before entering the office; 4. Observe the required physical distance as directed.

7. THESE DIFFICULT TIMES: We continue to call attention to the fact that what is gaining currency and is described as the new normal concerning liturgical celebrations, 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 Eucharistic celebrations as gatherings 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 the gathering in community to worship God.

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 eagerly look forward to when we can sing and pray under the same roof, go to confession in the usual way: receive Holy Communion on our tongues again, 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.

8. LIVE TRANSMISSION OF MASSES: For a while now, we were not able to have Masses transmitted on GOTV being the channel that most people have access to. We have been able, by the grace of God and the generosity of Mr. Greg and Mrs. Debbie Odutayo, owners of R2TV to get Mass on GOTV again on Channel 112. Even if it is not live transmission, it helps to supplement the services being offered by Lumen Christi Television Network. We are therefore happy to announce that people can now participate at Mass on GOTV channel 112 at 12noon every Sunday only. The Lumen Christi transmission on DSTV Channel 350 will continue as usual at 8:30am on Sundays and 12noon on weekdays.

We continue to express our gratitude to the Founder of Lumen Christi Television Network (LCTN), Prince Soji Olagunju, the Management and staff for their good work. We renew our thanks to Mr. John Ugbe, this time for arranging the installation of three new cameras that would enhance the transmission of Masses from the Cathedral, even post COVID-19. We also thank Mr. Greg and Mrs. Debbie Odutayo for making their TV station available for transmission of Sunday Masses also. We pray God to reward their generosity richly from His abundance.

9. 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.

10. 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.

11. ANNOUNCEMENTS:
a. Anniversary of the Archbishop’s Installation: The 8th anniversary of the Installation of Archbishop Alfred Adewale Martins as the 4th Archbishop of Lagos comes up on Tuesday 4th of August, 2020. We thank the good Lord for the graces bestowed upon him in these past
seven years as the Chief Shepherd of the Archdiocese. Kindly continue to pray for his intentions and for the growth of the Archdiocese.

b. **Consultors Meeting:** This comes up on **Wednesday, 26th of August, 2020.** All those concerned should please take note.

c. **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.

d. **Economic Initiatives Post Covid-19 Reality:** 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](http://www.paulinefoodspeb.org) or their Instagram page: @paulinefoods. Write to the email address: paulinefoods@gmail.com

This is an initiative that could be taken up by others in order to empower the many young and unemployed persons in our parishes. After undergoing required training, such persons would
be gainfully employed in making products of hygienically processed and well packaged natural food items available for public consumption.


13. Bereavement: With deep sympathy but with thanksgiving to God, we announce the demise of Pa. Boniface Emiri the father of Rev. Fr. Emmanuel Emiri. He would be buried on the 8th August, 2020. With much regret, we also announce the death of Sir. Gregory O. Deinde KSS, a very resourceful and committed lay faithful in our Archdiocese. He died on July 23rd 2020 and will be buried on 13th August 2020. 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