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 November: Welcome to the penultimate month of the Year. During this month, the Church celebrates the Solemnity of All Saints (Nov. 1) and commemorates the Souls of the Faithful departed (Nov. 2) to remind her faithful of the universal call to holiness of life and the reality of human mortality. These twin celebrations give due expression to our faith in the Communion of Saints i.e. the link among the faithful who have already attained the joys of heaven (Church Triumphant), the faithful departed who are still undergoing the pains of expiation for their sins in Purgatory (Church Suffering) and the faithful who are still on pilgrimage in this world, working out their salvation amidst the vicissitudes of life (Church Militant). “In this wonderful exchange, the holiness of one profits others, well beyond the harm that the sin of one could cause others....” (CCC, 1475).

a. All Saints’ Day: All Saints Day is a Holy Day of Obligation set aside to remember and celebrate all the Saints and Martyrs throughout Christian history, known or unknown, from all parts of the world, whose holy and virtuous lives have earned a beatific place in our heavenly home. The feast inspires tremendous hope and reminds us of the universal call to holiness (Lumen Gentium, 40) but also our individual personal call to be holy as our heavenly Father is holy. We rejoice with the Saints and hope that their prayers will bring us God’s love, mercy and forgiveness. All Saints; Pray for Us.

b. All Souls’ Day: directly following the Feast of All Saints is the Commemoration of All Souls. This reminds us of human finitude and mortality. On this day, the Church remembers and prays for the Souls of the Faithful Departed especially those who are atoning for their sins in the purifying fires of Purgatory waiting to join the league of the saints. The Sacred Scripture declares that “it is a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they
may be loosed from their sins.“ (2 Macc. 12: 46). The Church mandates all Priests to celebrate three (3) Masses on this day: one for the faithful departed, one for the priest’s intention or any person, and one for the intention of the Holy Father.

The entire body of the faithful is encouraged to express our solidarity with the souls in purgatory and bring about their freedom from the pains of purgatory through public and private prayers, and by obtaining plenary indulgences through the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, visiting a church or cemetery, giving alms to the poor, going to confession and communion. Before now, the Plenary indulgence for the souls in purgatory was available only for 8days beginning on the day itself but this year the Church has decreed that the indulgence shall be available throughout the entire month of November. Fulfilling the usual conditions, (even if one cannot physically fulfil the condition of going to a Church or a cemetery, it is accepted that even mentally making the journey is adequate in this year of coronavirus pandemic), we can obtain plenary indulgence for the souls in purgatory throughout the whole month of November 2020.

c. Solemnity of Christ the King: The celebration of the Solemnity of Christ the King comes up on Sunday, 22nd November, 2020. It is the last Sunday of the 2019/2020 Liturgical Year. On this day, Eucharistic Processions are normally held throughout Nigeria. However, due to the present circumstances, we shall consider carefully whether we would have the usual Corpus Christi procession or not and inform the faithful accordingly.

3. Full Resumption of Religious Activities in Parishes: As the other aspects of life are gradually coming back to normal in our state, we are engaging government so that the Church and her activities can also go back to normal even as we bear in mind that the pandemic is not yet over. If markets and schools are opening in full, we believe that the children who are able to go to school every day of the week to receive formal education should also be able to receive spiritual nourishment and religious education that takes only a few hours every week. In the same way, the elderly should also be able to share in the joy of physically coming to Church again. We are optimistic that our State Government would listen to us.

Nevertheless, we urge all the faithful to realize that the COVID-19 pandemic is not over yet and we must therefore continue to take the required precautions and not let down our guards. Places where they let down their guards too early are bearing the pain of a resurgence of the
pandemic. Washing of hands frequently, use of face masks, keeping the required physical
distance and generally keeping rules of hygiene are practices that we must still continue to
keep. God has been good to us and we must not take Him for granted.

4. As we gradually come to the end of the so-called NEW NORMAL concerning liturgical
celebrations, we must begin to brace up for rounding up the extraordinary measures that we
have been on since March. Mass-on-television and the acceptance of spiritual Communion in
place of physically receiving the Holy Eucharist and on the tongue would soon be brought
to an end. So, we ask everyone to prepare and eagerly look forward to the resumption of the
REAL NORMAL.

5. 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.

6. Day of Contemplative Life (Pro Orantibus Day): The Day of Contemplative Life was
instituted by Pope Pius XII on 21st November 1953 and from then on, November 21st every
year was set aside as a day for all the faithful to thank God for the gift of the enclosed
religious life to the Church. The faithful are to also thank God for the numerous brothers and
sisters who have embraced the hidden life of the Contemplative Religious in monasteries all
over the world. These sons and daughters of the Church embrace that state of life to edify
the faithful and pray for the sanctification of all those in active life so that there would be
growth of the Kingdom of God on earth. The Day of Contemplative Life was set aside so that
those in the active life may also recognize and appreciate the sacrifice of monks and nuns who
have given their whole life to God, to use as He pleases.

Our Archdiocese has been blessed with a Monastery, the Order of Mater Ecclesiae, an oasis
of prayer and perpetual adoration of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament not only for the Church
in our Archdiocese but for the whole world also. The contemplative life of the nuns in our
monastery is modeled after the example of the Blessed Virgin Mary, hence they are in perpetual Eucharistic adoration,

For those who do not know, the monastery is of Archdiocesan Right and was erected on 22nd February 2004 by our emeritus Archbishop, Anthony Cardinal O. Okogie with the nulla osta of the Holy See. We urge Parishes and Pious Associations in the Archdiocese to arrange for retreats, visits/pilgrimages to the monastery in order that they might get to know about its life. Such visits may be the seed bed for vocations to the monastic life in our own Monastery, the Mother of the Church Monastery.

So, as 21st November this year is a Saturday, we urge all Parish Priests to ensure that they take some time on the day after, to inform their parishioners about the life and existence of the Mater Ecclesiae Monastery and to encourage vocations to the monastic life. We hope that as we celebrate the Day of Contemplative Life, many of our young people would be encouraged to embrace the contemplative way of life and others would support vocations to the monastic life. In today’s hectic life, those in monastic life remind us of the need to place Jesus Christ at the center of our lives. Let us therefore support the monastery and encourage vocations to Mater Ecclesiae Monastery.

7. ANNOUNCEMENTS:

a. Consultants Meeting: This comes up on Wednesday, 18th November, 2020, 2020. All those concerned should please take note.

b. Archdiocesan 2021 Directory: The year 2021 is around the corner. Kindly go through the Directory for this year 2020 again so as to identify and point out errors, omissions, amendments and suggestions for the improvement of our Directory. Please, send your comments to the Chancery on or before 7th November, 2020. You may also reach the Chancery through her e-mail address: arclagos@yahoo.com.

c. SCC/BCC Leaders Online Seminar: the online/Zoom seminar for Leaders and Facilitators will take place on Saturday 5th December 2020 by 10 am. The meeting ID and the password will be posted on the SCC leaders WhatsApp platform a week to the meeting.
e. Quarterly Returns: every Parish is expected fulfill 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 was a 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 to be remitted.

f. 2020/2021 ANTIOCH TRAINING SESSION: the Antioch Pastoral Institute, Catholic Archdiocese of Lagos commences admission into its 18months E-learning Online Certificate course in Catechetical Studies.

Resumption: November 7, 2020. Orientation and Registration
Time: 10am. Please come with your forms.

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

Requirements:
• Recommendation by the Parish Priest or School Administrator/Superior
• Practicing/confirmed Catholic
• Possess a minimum of SSCE or its equivalent
• A very good grasp of English
• Ability to cope with relevant technology/applications necessary and with level of work/assigments.

Forms are available for N1000 @ 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 form earlier at any of the proposed centres should kindly call or visit the office for more updates.

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 since returned to hard copy production with an improved news
delivering features, highly professional interviews with powerful voices in both the Church and society, and articles for the enlightenment of soul as well as body.

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.

For your generous donations and support, please find below the Catholic Herald Newspaper Account details: Catholic Herald Newspaper. 0006067514. Access Bank.


8. Bereavement: We announce, with deep sympathy with the family concerned, the demise of Mr. Anumba the father of Rev. Fr. Peter Anumba. He would be buried this month. Kindly celebrate Mass for the repose of his soul and consolation to the family. May God grant him eternal rest. Amen.

Signed

+ Alfred Adewale Martins
Archbishop, Metropolitan See of Lagos