Dear Brothers and Sisters in the Lord:

1. THE MONTH OF DECEMBER: It goes without saying that the year 2020 has been a most challenging, unusual and difficult year but we nevertheless thank the Lord for keeping us safe and secure till this last month of the year. We are indeed grateful for His many graces, benevolence and sustenance as we went through the challenges and difficulties of the year. As a people and as Church, we have had to bear the brunt of the Covid-19 pandemic, and the disruptions it has brought to our lives. We have also had to watch the destructions created by the hijacking of the #EndSars protests. We, however, get encouragement from the assurance of Scriptures that in all things, we are more than conquerors (Rom. 8:37). The month of December is, therefore, a month of hope, expectation, joy and celebration. It is also a month of retrospection, stock-taking, self-evaluation and thanksgiving to God.

In this month, marked mostly by the Season of Advent during which we celebrate the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, we also celebrate the birth of Christ at Christmas and the feast of the Holy Family of Nazareth. During the four weeks of Advent, we prepare ourselves spiritually and materially for commemorate the coming of the Child Jesus at Christmas. The liturgical colour for this season, purple, paints a spiritual portrait of hope and expectation, of longing and waiting, of conversion and penance in preparation for Christmas. Christmastide begins with the First Vespers (Evening Prayer) of Christmas on December 24th and ends on the Sunday after Epiphany.

The Christmas Season expresses the boundless love of God; a love that heralds hope, inaugurates peace, engenders faith, and establishes the triumph of justice. While we busy ourselves with the much that we can do of the traditional traveling, shopping, partying, cleaning and other material preparations for Christmas let us not lose sight of its spiritual...
significance - the opportunity to encounter Jesus and embrace his offer of friendship and salvation.

**I wish you all a merry Christmas and a happy New Year in advance**

2. **Advent Season:** The Season of Advent is with us again. With the first Sunday of Advent we begin the new Liturgical Year. This new year should be seen as another opportunity to begin our spiritual journeys anew; with new vigour and vitality. Let us pay attention to the themes that are presented to us in this season: waiting with eager longing for the Lord to come again; conversion in preparation for the coming and joyful hope in anticipation of the coming. As we sing the hymn; "O Come, O come, Emmanuel" with eager hope and longing, for the Lord to come again, let us avail ourselves of the opportunity that Advent provides to renew our relationship with the King who is to come. Go to confession, get absolution, make a firm resolution not to fall into sin again and do your penance so that you can reap the fruits of Christmas and remain watchful so that the master would meet you prepared, whenever He comes again.

3. **COVID-19 and Religious Activities in Parishes:** As we eagerly await the announcement of government concerning COVID-19 restrictions especially as they affect our children and their participation in Church activities, we urge everyone to continue to take the required precautions to stem the spread of the pandemic. We must still continue the washing of hands frequently, use of face masks, keeping the required physical distance and generally keeping rules of hygiene are practices must still continue. 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 on the extraordinary measures that we have been on since March this year: Mass-on-television and the acceptance of spiritual Communion in place of physically receiving the Holy Eucharist etc. We ask everyone to prepare their minds 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. ANNOUNCEMENTS:

a. Archdiocesan Priestly Ordination: To the glory of God, our deacons will be ordained priests on Thursday, 17th December, 2020 at St. Leo Catholic Church, Ikeja. The time is 10.00am. As this would be taking place during the COVID-19 pandemic, there would be restrictions to the number of persons that can be physically present. We ask those who would not be physically present to join the celebration and prayers for the deacons virtually. More information about participation would be communicated by the Ordination committee in due course. Let us keep them in our prayers as we continue to pray for all our Clergy.

b. Archdiocesan Advent Pilgrimage: The Covid-19 pandemic and the safety regulations have made it impracticable for us to gather for our Advent Pilgrimage this year. We ask that Associations of lay faithful should pray in their different groups for their intentions as we know that God would not fail to listen to us even as we are not able to gather for pilgrimage. We look forward to a better 2021.

c. Annual Priests Retreat: The Annual Retreat of Priests in the Archdiocese for this year has been scheduled to hold from 29th November to 11th December, 2020.
Venue: Domus Fidei, Ikeja.

To this end, all priests are requested to promptly fulfill their financial obligations through Rev Fr Stephen Akinsowon of the Priests Welfare Committee. Please note that the retreat is obligatory and NOT optional. Hence, ALL must attend.

d. Priests’ and Religious Get-Together 2020: This has been scheduled to hold on Tuesday, 29th December, 2020. Venue: St Agnes, Maryland. Kindly endeavor to be present.

e. 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.
f. 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 14th to 16th January, 2021. The venue for the orientation is Domus Fidei, Eucharistic Heart of Jesus Generalate, Ikeja, Lagos.

We notice that many of those who were supposed to have participated in the 2020 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 next 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.

g. 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.

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


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/assignments.

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.

i. NaProTechnology now in Badagry: The faithful of the Archdiocese is hereby informed that Our Lady and St Francis Catholic Hospital, Badagry now offers Fertility care Services with Naprotechnology. The hospital is located near Badagry and it helps in the management of Infertility, Miscarriage, Irregular Cycles, Premenstrual Syndrome, Ovarian Cyst, Tubal blockage, Unusual Bleeding, Chronic discharge, Endometriosis, Polycystic ovarian disease, Postpartum depression, Menstrual cramps, as well as advanced scientific and natural family planning methods of achieving and avoiding Pregnancy in marriage.

Anyone who has need for these services should kindly contact Sr. Cecilia Adache OSF: 08100118006; 07084210005; Email: cessiemary@yahoo.com; osfhospital@yahoo.com; franciscanfertilitycare.org

7. Priestly Ordination Anniversary:

We congratulate, rejoice with and request your prayers for the following confreres, whose Sacerdotal Ordination anniversaries occur this month: Anthony Cardinal Okogie, Msgri. Christopher Boyo, Bernard Okodua, Philip Hoteyin, Francis Ogunmodede, Gabriel Osu, Frs. Christopher Chindo, Benjamin Bello, Jerome Akinyemi, Michael Umoh, Francis Opara, Gabriel Iheanacho, Felix Onomeghie, Eugene Oguzie, Justin Obuka, Agor Paschal, Joseph Anyanwu, Wilfred Nwachukwu, Gasper Olanrewaju, Anthony Aderibigbe, Paul Anyasi, Innocent Chiamaka, Francis Ike, and Augustine Okhuelegbe. Others are; George Anubuike, Augustine Ikuomola, John Okoro, Charles Orekoya, Emmanuel Ayeni, Anthony Godonu, Simeon Irabor, Martin Iwueze, Longinus Ogbede, Anthony Orioh, Stephen Akinsowon, John-Paul Ale, Damian Alozie, Raymond Anoliefo, Melvis Mayaki, Hyginus Nwanze, Eric Onyeoziri, Abatan Peter, Philip Sosu-
Mobee, Anthony Nwosu, Gabriel Odunaiya, Paul Adekoya, Robert Oji, John Nutayi, Philip Uchendu, Anthony Okoro, Michael Omughele, Joseph Nwokeforo, Paul Amenaghawon, Houesou Leon, Bankole Vincent, Onuoha Dominic, Peter Azagba and Ugochukwu Collins. May God grant them lasting joy and the grace of final perseverance. *Ad multos annos!*

Signed

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