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

1. The Month of May: I warmly welcome you all to the month of May, 2021. In this month, the Church specially draws our attention to the mother of the risen Lord who stood beside Her Son in His Passion and on the Cross but now shares in His glory as She has been conferred with the title: Regina Caeli. In the whole of the Eastertide, the Church echoes the Regina Caeli in her prayers as we pray: "O! Queen of Heaven rejoice…… Alleluia … for the Lord has risen indeed". By adoption, we are made partakers of the joy of the Resurrection like Mary our mother, as we participate in the fullness of life that Christ offers. May Christ's resurrection which wedded heaven to earth and reconciled the human race with God be our eternal hope and reward.

2. Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord: This comes up on Thursday 13th of May 2021. The solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord marks the day when Christians commemorate Our Lord's glorious bodily ascension to heaven. It is traditionally celebrated on the 40th day of Easter. Forty Days after the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Acts of the Apostles records Jesus' ascension into heaven. St. Augustine says that the feast has an Apostolic origin. In some parts of the world, the celebration of the feast is transferred to the Sunday after the day itself. The Ascension attests to the reality of Jesus Christ as true God and true man; He returns to the Father in order to come again at the Second Coming. Our faith teaches us that He sits at the right hand of God the Father until He comes again to judge the living and the dead. By the feast of the Ascension, may our eyes be turned to heaven where our true treasure lies.

3. HOLY SEE MAKES CHANGE IN WORDS OF OPENING PRAYER: You will recall that in recent special circular, we announced that the Holy See has given a directive effecting a change in the formula concluding the Collect in the Roman Missal as the definitive approved
English translation. Hence, the words “ONE God, for ever and ever” are simply replaced with “God, for ever and ever.” This modification changes the conclusion of our prayers from being simply an affirmation of the Holy Trinity (‘in the unity of the Holy Spirit’) to being also an affirmation of the divinity of Our Lord, Jesus Christ, (‘God, for ever and ever’). The CBCN has directed that the change would take effect from Sunday 30th May 2021, the Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity. So, the Collect will now conclude thus: “We ask this in the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with You in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever. Amen.”

4. ON THE COVID-19 VACCINE: We are all aware that different Covid-19 vaccines have been discovered and are in circulation now. We see the vaccines coming out in record time as an indication that our prayer for an end to the coronavirus pandemic has not been in vain. We know that there are controversies concerning the vaccines at this time. We urge everyone to carefully consider receiving the vaccine and take their own wise decisions looking at the example of such personalities as our Holy Father, the Pope. We pray the Lord to guide us as we go through the challenges of the time.

Meanwhile, we must continue to take the precautions of wearing of face masks, regular washing of hands, the use of sanitizers, maintaining physical distance, resisting the urge to touch our eyes and faces and observing the basic rules of hygiene. The virus is still with us even if it is not as virulent or as widespread as in other parts of the world and so we cannot afford to relax on the safety measures.

5. AUGUSTINE UNIVERSITY, ILARA (AUI) OFFERS NEW COURSES: our Augustine University has got NUC approval to enrol students for the following new courses:

- B.Sc Mass Communication
- B.Sc Political Science
- B.Sc Biochemistry
- B.Sc Cyber Security
- B.Sc Fisheries and Aquaculture
- B.Sc Information Technology
- B.Sc Software Engineering
The University is also offering JUPEB, so students can now gain entry into 200 Level in the University after completing the JUPEB programme. Please bring this to the notice of your parishes and Associations of the lay faithful.

6. St. Augustine College of Education (Project Time), Akoka affiliated to the University of Ibadan:
   a. We call on Parish Priests and Priests-in-Charge to inform their Parishioners that the above-named College has commenced admission procedures for its 2020/2021 session. With a minimum JAMB Score of 200 and above for Degree programs and 150 and above for NCE programs, St. Augustine College is the place for you. Our programs and their Requirements include:
      - B.Ed. degree (Full-Time and Distance Learning Center) - 5 Credits at one sitting.
      - NCE (Full- Time and Part-Time) - 6 Credits at two sittings.
      - PDE (PGDE) - First Degree or H.N.D. From any recognized tertiary institution.
      - Catechesis - practicing and intending Catechist OR O’Level Certificate.

   For further enquiries, call – 08065954493; 08024582945; 08034919553.

   b. Parish Priests are requested to send their Catechists, Catechism Teachers and Marriage Counsellors for Advanced Diploma in Catechetics at St. Augustine’s College of Education (Project TIME) Akoka, Yaba, Lagos. For more enquiries, visit www.sacoedng.com or www.sacoed.edu.ng or call 08034919553; 08065954493; 08033098523.

   c. For a few months now, we have been publishing the courses available. Kindly refer to the immediate past circulars for courses leading to In-Service Masters Degrees in Curriculum Development and Educational Evaluation as well as Post Graduate Diploma in Education (PDGE)

7. ANNOUNCEMENTS:
   a. Feast of Mater Ecclesia: The Blessed Virgin Mary under the title of “Mother of the Church, Mater Ecclesia,” is venerated in our Archdiocese on the Saturday that precedes Pentecost Sunday. The celebration on Saturday before the Pentecost is particular to our Archdiocese because of our special devotion to her as the Patroness of our Archdiocese. The feast day this year comes up on Saturday 22nd May, 2021. We remind all faithful of the opportunity to obtain Plenary Indulgence on the said day by visiting the Holy Cross Cathedral
and the Mater Ecclesiae Monastery, as well as fulfilling the conditions for receiving the indulgence: going to Confession, receiving Holy Communion and praying for the intentions of the Holy Father.

In our Holy Cross Cathedral, Lagos, there are a number of activities lined up to celebrate this Feast day beginning at 9am. We have: Rosary procession, Confessions, Exposition and Adoration and Holy Mass. We are invited to join the celebration physically or via Lumen Christi TV.

b. Archdiocesan Consultors Meeting: This comes up on Wednesday 26th of May, 2021 at the Chancery by 10:00am. Those concerned should please take note.

c. Lay Leaders Seminar: the 2021 Archdiocesan Lay Leaders' Seminar for members of the Executives and representatives of Archdiocesan and Deanery Laity Councils and Lay organizations, societies and associations comes up as follows:

**Date:** Saturday 15th May, 2021  
**Venue:** St Jude Catholic Church, Mafoluku.  
**Theme:** Accountable Stewardship, a Criterion of Judgement for Christian Leaders (Jas 3:1)  
**Accreditation:** begins by 8:30am.  
**Delegates:** as contained in the letter to the Deanery Laity Councils, as well as Lay organizations, societies and associations  
**Seminar fee:** #5,000 to be paid into the lay Apostolate Fidelity bank Account: 4110028140. Depositor should be Deanery or Society names. Please do not use personal names. Deadline for payment is Thursday 29th April, 2021. For more information, kindly contact the Director of the Lay Apostolate Centre, Rev Fr Hyacinth Ibe.

d. MCA Children’s Day Celebration: The Missionary Childhood Association will be having her Children’s Day Celebration on **Sunday 23rd of May, 2021** in all parishes in the Archdiocese.

e. 120th Anniversary of St. Paul’s Catholic Church, Ebute Metta: St. Paul’s Catholic Church, Ebute Metta, celebrates her 120 years’ anniversary as the “Mother Parish” of all parishes on the Mainland of Lagos. This historic event will be commemorated with a solemn
Thanksgiving Mass on **Saturday 26th June, 2021**, at 10:00am. All priests and Religious who have served in the parish or originated from the parish, parishioners and friends of the parish are cordially invited. For adverts, sponsorship of projects and confirmation of attendance, please call; **09021094816** (Parish Priest), **08058921555** (Parish Office).

**f. Catholic Action-Nigeria:** we have inaugurated the *Catholic Action-Nigeria* and authorized them to function in our Archdiocese. The leaders have been asked to visit Deans and Parish Priests who would assist them to create awareness about the ideals and workings of the body, and then form the *Catholic Action-Nigeria* at parish levels. There shall be a meeting of parish nominees on **Saturday, 26th June, 2021.** Deans and Parish Priests should kindly assist. For more information, please contact Sir Godwin Nosa Ehigiator on **08033024982**.

**g. Quarterly Returns and Special Collections:** Please be reminded that returns from the following Special Collections are to be made in the second quarter of the year: **AUI Collection** - 09/05/2021, **Holy Childhood Collection** - 11/04/2021, **Communications Collection** - 16/05/2021, **Laity Collection** - 30/05/2021. All Parish Priests and Priests-in-Charge are reminded to follow the new system of Quarterly returns remittance as directed in the seminars held in the month of March.

**h. Salus Trust Limited (National HMO):** Salus Trust is our national Catholic Health Maintenance Organisation (HMO), owned by the CBCN. Apart from the regular health insurance programs that the HMO markets across the country, it has now improved in its operations by collaborating with State-owned Health Insurance Agencies in Nigeria. The Salus Trust, our HMO, has been appointed by the Lagos State Government to market a very robust and affordable health plan, which is as low as **#8500 per person, per year**. The officials have been authorized to enroll willing faithful of the Archdiocese of Lagos on this robust health plan to the benefit of all. We ask you to cooperate with the officials of Salus Trust and the Lagos State Health Management Agency as they visit your parishes to sensitize, mobilize and enroll the Catholic Faithful.

**i. Caritas Lagos Collection:** We hereby express our appreciation to all those who participated and contributed generously towards the *Caritas Lagos Collection* in February. Your contributions will go a long way to help the Church to grow and develop in places outside the Archdiocese that are less endowed financially. May God continue to bless and reward you for
your generosity. Donations can still be made directly to the bank account with details as follows: **FIDELITY BANK, 4110033795, CARITAS-LAGOS.**

In the same vein, we strongly urge all Parish Priests and Priests-in-charge, to kindly ensure that the proceeds of the Caritas Sunday Collection from their parishes are immediately paid into the above Caritas-Lagos Account or forwarded to the Chancery. We count on your cooperation.

**j. St John Paul II School for Marriage and Family:** This Archdiocesan School is offering Learning opportunities and Skills development for Marriage Facilitators, Married Persons, Singles/Widowed, Parents, Lay/Youth Leaders

List of courses/trainings
1. Marriage Theology and Lived Experience.
2. Teaching Sexuality Education in the Family
3. Theology of the Body Made Simple for Youth Teenagers and Adults
4. Natural Family Planning (NFP) Instructors Course Managing Couple Fertility Naturally (Love & Life Method)
5. Basic Christian Counselling Skills
6. Formation of Children (one day courses)
   i) Parenting Skills for parents of children Ages 1-10
   ii) Training a Child to love
   iii) Steps to Building Character and Developing Core Values
7. Holidays at FHLU for Students (July/August)

This program encompasses a range of interesting activities and information for positive youth enhancement and leadership.

- How to improve Relationships with Parents and other Adults.
- Teenagers, Love & Relationships

Courses already began in February 2020. **For enquiries and registration, call Martina Oziegb on 0813 028 5777 and 07030616170.**

**k. Antioch Pastoral Institute:** The Antioch Pastoral Institute of the Archdiocese of Lagos offers a programme that leads to the award of a certificate in **Theology of the New Evangelization.**
Duration: 6 Months
For Whom: Parish Pastoral Assistants, Parish Evangelization Commission members, Faith Formators, Group Facilitators, Catholics who desire to grow and share our faith.
REQUIRED: Participants are to receive recommendations from their Parish priests, practicing/confirmed Catholics, possess a minimum of SSCE or equivalent, a very good grasp of English Language, ability to use the relevant technology and handle the required level of work/assignments and keep to the Institute’s rules.
Commencement Date: March 20, 2021.
Forms available for #1,000
Enquiry/contact: Religious Education Department, 19, Maye Street, off Montgomery Road, Yaba

I. FROM THE YOUTH DIRECTORATE
i. Become a Trained Catechist, Marriage Counselor: The CYON is calling on interested and passionate youths who will like to contribute their quota to the expansion of God’s Kingdom and the growth of their Parishes. We invite such youths to collaborate with their Priests in teaching Catechism and functioning as trained and certified marriage counsellors in Parishes. We therefore encourage sincere, interested and passionate youths to make themselves available for this service. Kindly get in touch with Rev. Fr. Gabriel Odunaiya, the CYON Chaplain.

ii. Youth Empowerment On Videography Training: This Empowerment Programme of the Catholic Archdiocese of Lagos through the Directorate of Social Communications is for ALL Deanery Coordinators & Secretaries, Presidents and Secretaries of Youth Based Groups, and representatives from each deanery earlier chosen after screening. Date: May 22nd 2021; Venue: Holy Cross Cathedral; Time: 9am Prompt. All Covid-19 Guidelines for public meeting would be held strictly.

iii. Novena to St. Charles Lwanga & Companions 2021: As it has become our tradition, the Novena to St. Charles Lwanga & Companions will have Daily Reflections on “The Attributes of Mary” shared to all members in the Archdiocese of Lagos. Date: May 25th – June 3rd 2021. All Parishes in the Archdiocese of Lagos are encouraged to join in the Prayer. Check our Social Media @cyonadclagos (Instagram & Twitter) for daily reflections.

Hosts: Ikorodu Deanery. **Time:** 10am -4pm. Registration ends on 30th June 2021. Click [https://bit.ly/AYD_2020](https://bit.ly/AYD_2020) to register after delegate payment of ₦800.00 has been made through the respective Deaneries.

v. Lagos Ecclesiastical Province (LEP CYON) Youth Convention/Election 2021: The Youth Convention / Election of the Lagos Province takes place tentatively in July 2021. With the theme of the year being, “Stand Up, I Appoint You as A Witness to What You Have Seen (Acts 26:16)” the venue is at the Louisville Retreat Centre, Ijebu Itele, in Ijebu Ode Diocese. Participants are Youth Leaders from the Arch/Dioceses, Deaneries and Parishes within the Ecclesiastical Province of Lagos.

8. Priestly Ordination Anniversary: We congratulate, rejoice with and request your prayers for Rev. Frs. Eduke Godwin, Garber Leo, Monye Joseph, Sebastian Ukwuandu, Anthony K. Odoh, Josh Nunez, Leonard U. Ogbanufe, Anthony Babafemi Ogunsanya, Agapitus Tobechukwu Okoye, Anthony Oche, Augustine Okeke, Ifeanyi Ogboh and Elobuike A. Asogwa, as they mark their Sacerdotal Ordination anniversaries this month. May God grant them lasting joy and the grace of final perseverance. **Ad multos annos!!**

9. Bereavement: We announce, with sincere sympathy, the demise of Nana Agyenim Boateng Kete, the father of Rev. Fr. Anthony Boateng who died recently. We also announce with profound sympathy the death of Rev. Sr. Edith Abebe EHJ who died on 29th April 2021. May the Lord console her family and the sisters of the Eucharistic Heart of Jesus in particular. Kindly celebrate Mass for the repose of the souls of the departed and the consolation of all who mourn their death. May God grant them eternal rest. Amen.

+ Alfred Adewale MARTINS
Archbishop, Metropolitan See of Lagos