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 DECEMBER: We thank the Lord for preserving our lives to the last month of the year 2019. The month of December is a month of expectation, joy and celebration. It comprises the Seasons of Advent during which we celebrate the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception and Christmas during which we celebrate not only the birth of Christ but also the Holy Family of Nazareth. The month is one of stock-taking, self-evaluation and thanksgiving to God.

2. Advent and Christmas Seasons: The Season of Advent is with us again. Advent starts the new Liturgical Year and is another opportunity to spiritually begin anew. There are particular themes in the Liturgy throughout Advent: a spirit of waiting, of conversion and joyful hope. It is a season of expectation and longing for the Messiah who is to come. We sing the song “O Come, O come, Emmanuel” with eager hope and longing, for our messiah who came to us first as a child in the manger and who has promised to come again. Let us therefore avail ourselves the opportunity that Advent provides to renew our relationship with the King who is to come so that we can reap the fruits of Christmas.

As we celebrate advent, we also await the Christmas Season which 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 traveling, shopping, partying, cleaning and other material preparations for Christmas we must not lose sight of its spiritual significance - the opportunity to encounter Jesus and embrace his offer of friendship and salvation.
3. DISCLAIMER! - TRIDENTINE MASS AT MODELE COMPOUND, TEJUOSO STREET, LAGOS: We wish to call the attention of all Catholics in the Archdiocese of Lagos to a group that meets to celebrate the Tridentine Mass at Modele Compound, Near Zenith Bank Tejuoso Street, Surulere here in Lagos. They mislead people to believe that they have authorization to celebrate the Tridentine Mass and that it is an alternative place to the group that meets for Mass that holds at St Gregory College every Sunday.

We hereby call on all Catholics to be aware that this group, to all intents and purposes, is a schismatic group and is NOT IN COMMUNION WITH THE CHURCH. We hereby call on Parish Priests and Priests-in-Charge to bring this information to the awareness of their Parishioners. Anyone who participates in the activities of this dissident group does so at a risk to the authenticity of his or her catholic faith and practice. We encourage everyone to be vigilant so as not to give wolves in sheep clothing a chance to lead people astray with all the consequences for our salvation.

4. Augustine University (AUI) offers Prelim Studies: We again ask Parish Priests and Priests-in-charge to inform their parishioners that having obtained her Permanent License, the Augustine University, in collaboration with the Government Body responsible for Preliminary Studies in Nigeria, is offering opportunities for Prelim Studies to students who are preparing to enter University. This opportunity is for young people who sat for JAMB Exam but did not secure admission or those who are awaiting their results. The advantage for those who do the Preliminary Studies is that they will be able to go on straight to 200 level of their Course of choice in the university. For more information about this, interested persons should contact the University, the University website or the Directorate of Education.

5. Operational Guidelines for the implementation on Archdiocesan Youth Policy: For some months now we have been calling attention to the need for study sessions on the Archdiocesan Youth Policy at the Regional level. We commend Lagos and Ikeja Regions that have conducted the session in their Regions. We hope that others would do the same soonest. The 3rd quarter of the year scheduled for it is close to an end but we still expect that the study session would still be done despite the reasons for not having done it yet.
We are aware that the Operational guidelines that were drawn up by the committee we set up has produced an approved operational guideline for the policy. We enjoin all parishes to use this much easier step by step guideline to ensure the implementation of the guidelines.

6. St. Augustine College of Education (Project Time) 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 2019/2020 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](http://www.sacoedng.com) or [www.sacoed.edu.ng](http://www.sacoed.edu.ng) or call 08034919553; 08065954493; 08033098523.

c. St. Augustine’s College of Education also offers Admission for **In-Service Master's degree in Education (M.Ed.)** in Curriculum Development and Educational Evaluation as well as **Post-Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE)** in the following:

- Curriculum Development in Arts and Languages
- Curriculum Development in Information Technology
- Curriculum Development in Mathematics
- Curriculum Development in Pre-primary and Primary Education
- Curriculum Development in the Sciences
- Educational and Evaluation Research
- Test Construction and Public Examining
- Development and monitoring of Curriculum
• Psychological Testing, Assessment Evaluation and Counselling
• Schools/institutions’ Accreditation and Evaluation
• Programme Evaluation
• Teaching etc.

7. ANNOUNCEMENTS:
   a. Archdiocesan Advent Pilgrimage: The Advent Pilgrimage for this year will be hosted by the Lagos Region and to be organized by Lagos Island Deanery.

       Date: 14th December 2019
       Venue: St. Gregory College, Obalende.
       Time: 8:00am

   All Priests and Lay Faithful are expected to attend and participate actively in this spiritual exercise. Parish Priests & Priests-in-Charge are requested to encourage their parishioners and arrange for their participation in large numbers.

   In view of the above, we expect that all Parish Priests/Priests-in-Charge would sensitize their parishioners using two Sundays of December 1st and 8th. We expect also that the information would not just be published in the Parish Bulletins, but that Priests would call attention to it at each of the Masses on the two Sundays before the 15th December.

   b. Annual Priests Retreat: The Annual Retreat of Priests in the Archdiocese for this year has been scheduled to hold from 2nd December to 13th of December 2019.

       First Batch: 2nd to 6th December 2019.
       Second Batch: 9th to 13th, December 2019.

   Venue: Eucharistic Heart of Jesus’ Domus Fidei, Ikeja, Lagos.

   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.

   c. Archdiocesan Novena for the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception: There shall be a Novena in preparation for the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception at the Archdiocesan Marian Shrine, Maryland:
Date: 30th November- 8th December, 2019.
Solemnity: December 9th, 2019.
Theme: As a mother comforts her child, so will I comfort you (Is 66:10-14)
Venue: Archdiocesan Marian Shrine, Maryland.
Time: 4:30 pm daily

Priests’ and Religious Get-Together 2019: This has been scheduled to hold on Friday, 27th December 2019. Venue: St. Agnes Catholic Church, Maryland. We expect all priests and Religious in the Archdiocese to be present for this interesting annual occasion for merry making and sharing.

d. Small Christian Communities’ Leadership Workshop: There shall be a Leadership Workshop for the leaders and facilitators of Small Christian Communities in the Archdiocese as follows:
   Date: December 7th, 2019
   Time: 10.00 a.m.
   Venue: Holy Cross Cathedral, Lagos.
The workshop is a continuation of a series aimed at improving the leadership skills of leaders in Small Christian Communities in the Archdiocese. Attendance is highly recommended.

e. 2019 End of the Year Get-Together for Male and Female Religious in Lagos Archdiocese: This is scheduled to hold on Thursday, 19th December 2019 by 10 am at the Catholic Church of Ascension, Airport Road.

f. Archdiocesan Christmas Carols: The Lagos Archdiocesan Music Commission (LAMCOM) in collaboration with Holy Cross Cathedral presents the Lagos Archdiocesan Christmas Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols themed THE WORD WAS MADE FLESH AND DWELT AMONG US, AND WE HAVE SEEN HIS GLORY (Jn 1:14). This event will feature the Holy Cross Cathedral Choir, the Archdiocesan Choir, the Ikeja, Badagry, Lagos, and Lekki Regional Choirs, the Musica Casa Chorale and the Cecilian Diploma Chorale.

   Date: Sunday, 22nd December 2019
   Venue: Holy Cross Cathedral
   Time: 3pm.
All are cordially invited. Together, let’s celebrate the birth of Christ in a musical grand style.

g. 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 between 9th and 11th January 2020. 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 2019 programme absented themselves. 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.

h. 2019 International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women: JDPC Lagos is organizing a colloquium in celebration of the 2019 International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women (IDEVAW), with the theme Orange the World: Generation Equality Stands Against Rape that will hold on Thursday, December 5th, 2019 at the Event Centre of Holy Family Catholic Church, Festac by 10:00am.

i. Official Launch of Network of Young Catholic Carers for the Environment in Nigeria (NYCCEN): You are invited to the Official Launch of NYCCEN, an initiative of the Archdiocese of Lagos to domesticate the demands of ‘Laudato Si’ especially with the youths. This is scheduled to hold as follows:

   **Venue:** St. Gregory College, Obalende, Lagos  
   **Date:** Friday, December 6th, 2019  
   **Time:** 10:00am

j. Valentine’s Day with the Archbishop: The Catholic Lay Apostolate Centre in conjunction with the Association of Friends of Jesus (FOJ) and Catholic Youth Organization of Nigeria (CYON) invites all to the annual Valentine’s Day with the Archbishop
**Theme:** God is the Foundation of True Love  
**Topic:** Living a Life of Love in a World Full of Hate and Strife?  
**Date:** Saturday, 8th February 2020  
**Time:** 10:00 a.m. prompt starting with the Holy Mass  
**Venue:** St. Finbarr’s College, Akoka, Yaba  
**Fee:** N 1,000 per participant  
**NB:** There will be renewal of marital vows for interested couples during the Mass.

Goodwill Advert Placement costs ₦30,000. For more information, contact, 08026156606 or 08077003036.

**k. Department of Social Communication:**

i. **Lagos Archdiocesan Communications Commission:** In view of rebranding the Communications apostolate in the Archdiocese, the Lagos Archdiocesan Communications Commission has been constituted. The Commission will be officially inaugurated by the Archbishop on **Wednesday 1st January 2020 at the of the Mass for the World Day of Peace which will hold at the Holy Cross Cathedral, Lagos by 10am.**

ii. **Conference of Catholic Media Practitioners with the Archbishop:** In view of expanding the scope of the communications apostolate of the Archdiocese, the Archbishop shall be meeting with all Catholic Media Practitioners from all the parishes in the Archdiocese. Among other reasons, this conference aims at bringing Catholics in the media industry on board to play their roles in the Church. This should result in the establishment of Parish Communications Committee in each parish. Details of date, venue and time will soon be communicated. For inquiries: Please call. The Acting Director of Social Communications on 08060572439 or Lady Neta Nwosu on 08023051444.

iii. **Archdiocesan Catholic Herald Newspaper:** As part of the efforts to widen the scope of the Archdiocesan Catholic Herald Newspaper, the Directorate of Social Communications hereby welcomes write-ups and contributions on matters of faith and morals as well as social issues from priests, religious (Male and female) as well as lay faithful. You can send your write-ups/ contributions to: thecatholicherald2007@gmail.com or tonygeee23@gmail.com for consideration.
We are also appealing to Parish Priests and Associates to please publicize the Catholic Herald Newspaper during Altar announcements. May God continue to bless and reward our apostolate. Amen.


THEME: "Christian Unity: A Response to Systematic Violence, Insecurity and Social Justice" (Is 2:4b)

Day 1(Sun)  Awareness in all Parishes
Day 2(Mon)  Christian Communities Face to Face with Old and New Division
Day 3(Tue)  Christian Communities Face to Face with Economic, Injustice, Poverty, War and Violence
Day 4(Wed)  Christian Communities Face to Face with Discrimination and Social Prejudice
Day 5(Thur.)  Christians’ Response to RUGA
Day 6(Fri)  Christians’ Call to God’s Intervention (Ps. 44:23)
Day 7(Sat)  Lagos Archdiocesan Ecumenism Day at St. Leo Catholic Church, Ikeja. (Two Talk Presentations)
   i. Christian Unity: A Response to Systemic Violence, Insecurity and Social Injustice (Is 2:4b) by Bishop Matthew Hassan Kukah
   ii. Inter-Religious Dialogue: A Panacea for Nation Building by CAN

We call on all Parishes to ensure that their programme of Prayers for the New Year does not clash with the Week of Christian Unity which is a Universal week celebrated all over the Catholic World. The Universal takes precedence over Particular Celebrations.

m. Priests’ Annual Leave-Roster: Priests are to submit months of preference for their annual leave for next year, 2020 to the Priests’ Welfare Committee not later than end of January 2020.

n. Admission into Lagos Archdiocesan Catholic Secondary Schools: This is to inform everyone that admission into JSS 1 for the 2020/2021 academic session in all Catholic Secondary Schools in the Archdiocese is in progress. The Entrance Examination comes up on 29th February 2020 at the selected schools. Forms can be obtained from the school of choice, all Catholic Primary Schools in the Archdiocese, selected parishes and electronically on
www.cmsslagos.ng or on any of the following schools' website. Sale of forms will close one week to the date of examination.

The 10 Catholic Archdiocesan Secondary Schools are:
1. St Gregory College, South-West, Ikoyi [http://www.stgregoryscollege.ng]
10. St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic College, Okomaiko

Let us give our children sound upbringing in the Catholic Faith.

o. 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 programme 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 begin in February 2020
For enquiries and registration, call Martina Ozegbe on 0813 028 5777 and 07030616170.

p. Admission into the Cecilian Academy of Sacred Music 2019/2020 Session: The Academy is calling for registration from prospective candidates who wish to acquire music knowledge to register, admission is still ongoing. Courses offered include: Rudiments/Theory of Music: Voice and Conducting, Basic Piano, Gregorian chant and Applied Music (any instrument of your choice). Instructional Centres are located in: Festac, Surulere, Lekki, Ikeja and Ejigbo. Tuition fee is very affordable. For further enquiries call or text: 09030905196, 08083036356, 08056526856 or send email to: directorceasam@gmail.com.

q. CYON APOSTOLATE:
   i. 5th Biennial Archdiocesan Youth Awards: This is scheduled to hold as follows: Date: 8th December 2019 Venue: Catholic Church of Transfiguration, VGC Time: 3pm
   ii. Introducing CatholicYouths.com: CatholicYouths.com is an online community of Catholic Youths with a focus on helping young Catholics/Christians grow spiritually and in the understanding of the Catholic Faith. Young Catholics and Christians now have the opportunity of asking questions on any area of the Catholic Faith they like. The website also has articles that are tailored to the challenges affecting the spiritual and moral life of young people. Visit www.catholicyouths.com to ask, learn and grow in the Catholic faith.

r. St. Raphael Divine Mercy Specialist Hospital, Ijede: This Archdiocesan Catholic Hospital calls the attention of the Priests, Religious and Faithful of the Archdiocese as well as the General Public to their World Class Standard health care services at the Archdiocesan 300-bed purposely built hospital. The hospital boasts of exquisite private and semi-private wards in a serene and safe environment ideal for complete recuperation. The hospital offers the following services:

   Diagnostic Services: which include, but not limited to; Complete Hormonal Profile, Full Laboratory Service, Scan, E.C.G, X-Ray. Well Equipped Theaters: for different specialized
surgeries for Eye, General, Obstetrics and Gynecology and Urology. St. Raphael also has dedicated Labour Ward, Children's Ward with Incubators.

Other Services available include: Circumcision, Childhood and Adult Immunization, Ambulance Services, Mortuary Services.

Available Clinics with Consultants Include: Obstetrics/Gynecology, Ophthalmology/EYE, Pediatrics, Dental, Cardiology, Urology and Nephrology.

N:B: All these are in addition to our round the clock Out-Patient, Pharmacy, and Nursing Departments manned by warm and friendly professionals. Also, St. Raphael is a recognized primary and secondary service provider by NHIS and other reputable HMO's. Call Us Now: 08093878456, 08122360765, 07050949223, 09054465257, 09097370915, 08162916669.

St. Raphael Divine Mercy Specialist Hospital... Caring with Compassion!!!

s. Application for Anthony Cardinal Okogie Foundation Scholarship: We wish to inform all interested applicants that the Application Form for the Anthony Cardinal Okogie Foundation Scholarship for the 2020/2021 can be obtained from the Archdiocesan Website. Applicants are requested to click on the following link: http://www.lagosarchdiocese.org/down/g14.pdf to download the forms, fill and submit them to the Chancery. Closing date for all applications is the 31st of March, 2020.

t. Quarterly Returns Collections: Please be reminded that the returns from the following Special Collections are to be made in the fourth quarter of the year: AUI Collection-08/12/2019, CIWA Collection-01/12/2019, Health Collection-8/12/2019, Laity Collection-29/12/2019, 15% of harvest for VUNA.

We reiterate our advice that Parish Priests/Priests-in-charge should use the Pay-Direct option or make bank transfers to forestall the challenges of returned cheques, irregular signatures and other problems that cause cheques to bounce. For those who insist on making their financial returns with cheques, kindly pay attention to your entries and signature. We emphasise again that when making returns, Parish Priests or Priests-in-Charge, should ensure that they attach the front page in the booklet that has the name of the parish and the appropriate quarter on it and fill all the pages of the Booklet.
u. Mater Ecclesiae Monastery:

**Monthly Retreat:** Mater Ecclesiae Monastery, Sangotedo, Lagos organises a day of spiritual retreat for young girls from 15 years and above for the purpose of discerning their vocation. The retreat is scheduled to hold on the first Saturday of every month. **Time:** 9:00 am – 4.00 pm. **Venue:** Mater Ecclesia Monastery, Sangotedo, Lekki, Lagos.

**Mater Ecclesiae Retreat Center:** Mater Ecclesiae Retreat Center is officially open to everyone for personal and Group Retreats. Time for Public Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament is Mondays to Saturdays 9:00am to 8:30pm and on Sundays from after 9:00am Mass to 12:15pm; and from 3:30pm to 5:00pm. Also, you can visit the Book Centre. For more inquiries, call 09085648168.

8. Priestly Ordination Anniversary:


Signed

*Alfred Adewale Martins*
Archbishop, Metropolitan See of Lagos