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 March: Welcome to the month of March, a month in which we are called by our Lenten observance to deepen our relationship with God through prayer, fasting and almsgiving. This month presents us with these important feast days: St. Patrick (17th March), St. Joseph, the Husband of Blessed Virgin Mary (19th March), Annunciation of the Lord (25th March).

2. A Few Thoughts on Lenten Observances: As we continue the season of lent, we hereby remind everyone of the following regarding the season:
   a. Abstinence: All the faithful who have reached 14 years of age and above are required to abstain totally from meat or favorite dish or drink on Good Friday (April 10) and all the Fridays of Lent.
   b. Fasting: All the faithful between the ages of 18 and 60 years are obliged to fast. In practice, fasting involves limiting oneself to a single full meal or two smaller meals a day. Those who are sick, pregnant or nursing or whose health would adversely be affected by fasting should not consider themselves bound by this norm.
   c. Parents and teachers are responsible for helping young persons, who are not bound by the norms regarding fasting and abstinence to recognize the value of genuine acts of penance and self-denial.
   We are also required to pray fervently for the catechumens who will receive the Sacraments of Initiation during this period.
   d. Please find below some of the other ways we can observe this period of Lent in order to receive the graces of the season in full:
      i. Avoid Sin: Keep yourself away from all occasions that could lead to sin. If you fall into sin, repent and return to God by receiving the Sacrament of Reconciliation, doing appropriate penance and making a firm resolution not to fall into sin again.
ii. **Practice Charity**: be more generous especially in giving to the poor and needy and in contributing to the works of the church, remission of debts and payment of just wages.

iii. Pursue and achieve **reconciliation** with anyone with whom you are not at peace or with whom you have a quarrel of misunderstanding.

iv. **Read the Scriptures** in order to deepen your intimacy with God, spread the kingdom of Christ and help others to know and return to Christ.

v. **Pray before the Blessed Sacrament**, go to Mass often, if possible, daily.

vi. Be regular at the **Stations of the Cross** on Wednesdays and Fridays and do it every day if you can.

vii. Take part in the **Lenten programmes and retreats** that will be organised in your parish. Take full part in the **Holy week ceremonies**.

viii. Pray your **Rosary** daily.

Bear in mind that all other Fridays of the year remain Days of penance in prayerful remembrance of the passion of Jesus Christ.

**3. 40 DAYS OF LENT WITH THE ARCHBISHOP**: Dear friends in Christ, we are all invited to join the Archbishop, Most Rev. Alfred Adewale Martins for daily Lenten Reflections on:

NTA 2, DSTV Channel 369 @ 6:55pm

Lumen Christi, DSTV Channel 350 @ 12:50pm

Radio: Metro 97.7FM @ 6am & 9:05pm

**All our Social Media Platforms**: Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram: Catholic Archdiocese of Lagos. God Bless you as we are all encouraged to tune in to this frequency and listen to the reflection. May the Word of God nourish our souls. Amen.

**4. THE CORONAVIRUS EPIDEMIC**: In December 2019, a cluster of Pneumonia cases was reported in the City of Wuhan, China. Investigations found out that this was caused by previously unknown virus now named 2019 novel Coronavirus (ncoV). The outbreak has now become a global concern as it keeps spreading at an alarming rate. Therefore, while we hope and pray that the government does everything to ensure that this virus does not find its way into the country, it is however important that information about the virus and its risk of spreading should be brought to the attention of everyone.
• **How is Coronavirus Transmitted?**
  A person can carry and transmit COVID-19 without showing the symptoms. Coronaviruses are circulated in a range of animals and can be transmitted to humans, though the exact dynamics are yet to be determined. In general, respiratory diseases are usually transmitted through droplets created when an infected person coughs or sneezes or through something that has been contaminated with the virus.

• **People most at risk:**
  - Those in close contact with animals
  - Live animal market workers
  - People caring for those with infection
  - Family members or health care workers.

• **Common Signs of Coronavirus**
  - Respiratory infection symptoms
  - Fever
  - Cough
  - Shortness of breath
  - Breathing difficulties

• **In severe cases:**
  - Pneumonia
  - Severe acute respiratory syndrome
  - Kidney failure
  - Death.

• **Treatment**

  There is no specific medication; treatment is supportive care and treatment of symptoms.

  No vaccine, treatment and vaccines are in development.

• **Standard Recommendations to Prevent Infection Spread**
  1. Regular washing of hands with soap and water
  2. Cover your mouth and nose when coughing and sneezing
3. Cook your meat and eggs thoroughly before consuming.

4. Avoid close contact with anyone showing symptoms of respiratory illness such as:
   - Coughing
   - Sneezing

5. Avoid contact with animals and people who associates with live animals.

6. Appropriate use of mask in health care centers

7. Wash your hands thoroughly after having contact with live animals and animal products

8. Stay at home when you feel unwell

Visit your health care center early if you have fever, cough and difficulty breathing

7. 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 or www.sacoed.edu.ng or call 08034919553; 08065954493; 08033098523.

c. St. Augustine’s College of Education offers Admission in-Service Masters in Education (M.Ed.) in Curriculum Development and Educational Evaluation and Post Graduate Diploma in Education (PDGE) 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.

8. ANNOUNCEMENTS:

a. 2020 CARITAS SUNDAY COLLECTION (8 March): For the past 6 years, our Archdiocese has been reaching out to support many Dioceses, Parishes, Seminaries, Convents and other Institutions in need through the assistance of CARITAS LAGOS. This kind gesture has been made possible by the generosity of Catholics in the Archdiocese. In order to continue this noble cause, Sunday 8th of March, 2020 is Caritas Sunday Collection. A special collection will be taken in all parishes on this day and Parish Priests are directed to sensitize their parishioners beforehand and ensure that THE TOTAL COLLECTION is immediately paid into the Caritas Account on or before Thursday March, 12, 2020. Account details are as follows: FIDELITY BANK, 4110033795, CARITAS LAGOS. We count on your cooperation.

b. Archdiocesan Lenten Pilgrimage: The annual Archdiocesan Lenten Pilgrimage will be organized by the Archdiocesan Evangelization Commission and hosted by the Lekki Region.
   - Date: Saturday 7th March, 2020
   - Venue: Ave Maria Grotto, Lekki
   - Time: begins at 8:00am.
   - Theme: “Your word is a lamp to my feet” – Psalm 119:105

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 and arrange for the participation of their Parishioners to come in large numbers. In view of the above, we expect that all Parish Priests/Priests-in-Charge would have organised Confessions for the Lay Faithful in their various parishes so as to ensure that the time spent at the pilgrimage is maximally utilized.

A 5 DAY PROGRAMME OF PRAYERS IN PREPARATION FOR THE 2020 LENTEN PILGRIMAGE
Please read and meditate on the Scripture passage for each day and pray for the intentions for the day. Memorise the memory verse and use it for prayer (e.g spontaneous or ejaculatory prayer) throughout the day.

**Monday, 2\(^{nd}\) March, 2020**
- Meditate on: Isaiah 1:10-20
- Memory Verse: Isaiah 1:16
- Prayer Intentions: for the conversion of pilgrims, our civil leaders in Nigeria (Federal and State); Nigerians as whole and for God’s forgiveness.

**Tuesday, 3\(^{rd}\) March, 2020**
- Meditate on: Psalm 51
- Memory Verse: Psalm 51:11
- Prayer Intentions: for your personal conversion; conversion of your spouse/family; for an appreciation of the Sacrament of Reconciliation and the Holy Eucharist among Catholics.

**Wednesday, 4\(^{th}\) March, 2020**
- Meditate on: Acts 1:5-8 and 2:1-8
- Memory Verse: Acts 1:8
- Prayer Intentions: for a new Pentecost in the Church; the renewal of the Clergy, Religious and Laity; for a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit on pilgrims and yourself.

**Thursday, 5\(^{th}\) March, 2020**
- Meditate on: Matt 7:7-11
- Memory Verse: Matt 7:7
- Prayer Intentions: for your special intentions, family intentions and the intentions of the Archbishop.

**Friday, 6\(^{th}\) March, 2020**
- Meditate on: Ps 119:105-109
- Memory Verse: Ps 119:105
- Prayer Intentions: for the success of the Lenten Pilgrimage; God’s special intervention in the lives and situations of the pilgrims and the ecological crisis.

c. **JDPC LENTEN CAMPAIGN FOR 2020**: The Annual Lenten Campaign for the JDPC will take place on the First Sunday of Lent (1st March, 2020). All Parish Priests and Priests-In-charge are required to lend their support to the JDPC personnel who will come around the parishes to solicit for support to further the cause of Justice, Development and Peace in the Archdiocese and the nation at large.

d. **Seminar for Priests Deanery Facilitators on Marriage Courses**: This is scheduled to hold from 11\(^{th}\) to 13\(^{th}\) March, 2020 at Domus Fidei, Ikeja. Please note that the Seminar is for both old and new Facilitators. The cost of the Programme is ₦ 25,000.00 per participant and this is to
be borne by their respective Deaneries. Kindly make your payments to Lagos Inter-Diocesan Tribunal Fidelity Bank A/C No. 6220040166

e. Small Christian Communities' Leadership Workshop: there shall be a Leadership Workshop for Leaders and Facilitators of the Small Christian Communities in the Archdiocese on 14th March 2020 by 10.00am at Holy Cross Cathedral. This workshop is aimed at improving the Leadership skills of Leaders and Facilitators of the Small Christian Communities in the Archdiocese. We expect all concerned to attend and participate actively.

f. Laity Week Celebration- The annual Laity week celebration comes up from the 15th - 22nd March 2020 in all Parishes in the Archdiocese. We are all encouraged to participate actively.

g. 2020 Archdiocesan Directory: The 2020 Archdiocesan Directory has been out for a couple of months now. Kindly pick up copies for your Parishes from the Chancery if you have not done so yet. The Female Religious should please pick their copies from the Chancery also.


i. Parish Guidelines (Revised Edition): This is to inform all Priests and Lay faithful that the Revised Edition of the Parish Guidelines is out. Kindly pick up copies for your Parishes and Lay organizations from the Chancery.

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 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.

k. Archdiocesan Catholic Herald Newspaper: As part of efforts to widen the scope of the Archdiocesan Catholic Herald Newspaper, the Directorate of Social Communications hereby requests for 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.

l. The Antioch Pastoral Institute: The Antioch Pastoral Institute, Catholic Archdiocese of Lagos begins its Catechetical training program for full-time and voluntary Catechists. The resumption dates are scheduled as follows:

1a. CENTRE ONE
   Date: 3rd Saturday of every month beginning from May 16, 2020
   Venue: Cardinal Okogie Hall, Holy Family Parish, 22 Road, Festac Town
   Time: 10:00am - 3:00pm.

1b. CENTRE TWO
   Date: 2nd Saturday of every month beginning from May 23, 2020
   Venue: The School Block, St. Dominic Parish, Herbert Macaulay Way, Yaba, Lagos
   Time: 10:00am - 3:00pm

1c. CENTRE THREE
Date: 4th Saturday of every Month beginning from May 23, 2020
Venue: SS. Philip and James Catholic Church, New Road Bus Stop by Chevron Round-About, Lekki
Time: 10:00am - 3:00pm

**Note:** Forms are available at the Holy Family Catechist Office, Festac Town: Ss. Philip & James Parish Catechist Office, Lekki and Religious Education Department, Yaba.

The Liturgical Workbook for Sunday School/Children Mass - Year A is on sale. Order your Copies from Religious Education Department, YABA @ N500 only.

**m. Admission into Alberione Institute of Communication Education, Iju, Lagos:** AICE-Iju, Lagos is a media training Institute in Nigeria with core objective of training value-based, socially conscious and responsible media professionals in the Church and society at a large.

Admission for 2019/2020 Batch 'C' session is on for those who desire to specialize in the following: 1 Year Professional Diploma in Print, Broadcast and Online Journalism (Full/Part Time): 3-4 Months Certificate Course in Creative Writing, Video Editing, Cinematography, Film-making, Creative Arts & Designs, Web Design, Graphics, Photography, Theatre Art, Make-up Artistry.

Our maiden **Film-making 7-day workshop** for acting, directing, screen writing, producing, cinematography, and for new entrance into film-making comes up February 10-17, 2020.

The Institute is affiliated to the Nigeria Union of Journalists and offshoot of S.P.I.C.E-St. Paul Institute of Communication Education, Mumbai, Bangalore, Brazil, and Mexico.

For more information, visit [www.aicestudy.com](http://www.aicestudy.com), info@aicestudy.com or Tel: 08066938408, 08101806352

**n. Admission into the Cecilian Academy of Sacred Music 2019/2020 Session:** The Academy is calling for registration from prospective candidates who wish to acquire knowledge of music to register as 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
o. CYON APOSTOLATE:


- **ARCHDIOCESAN YOUTH DAY (AYD) IKORODU 2020/35TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION**: The Archdiocesan Youth Day 2020 marks the 35th Anniversary celebration of the CYON in Lagos. The event begins with the celebration of the Holy Mass at 10am by our Chief Shepherd, His Grace Alfred Adewale Martins DD, Catholic Archbishop of Lagos, and followed by a Grand Reception.

  **Date**: the 26th of April 2020.

  **Venue**: Strong Tower Academy Ikorodu opposite Musical Village Ota Ona, Ikorodu.

  **Time**: 10am - 4pm.

  Registration closes on **30th March 2020**. Click https://bit.ly/AYD_2020 to register after delegate payment of ₦800.00

- **Introducing CatholicYouths.com**: CatholicYouths.com is an online community of Catholic Youths with a focus on helping young Catholics/Christians grow spiritually in the understanding of the Catholic Faith. Young Catholics and Christians now have the opportunity to ask questions on areas of the Catholic Faith. 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.

p. St. Raphael Divine Mercy Specialist Hospital, Ijede: This Archdiocesan Catholic Hospital calls the attention of the Priests, Religious and lay Faithful of the Archdiocese as well as the general public to their World Class 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!!!

q. Quarterly Returns Collections: Please be reminded that the returns from the following Special Collections are to be made in the first quarter of the year: AUI Collection-08/03/2020, Caritas Lagos Collection- 08/03/2020, JDPC Collection- 22/03/2020, Laity Collection- 29/03/2020.

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.

r. 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 to the Most Holy Sacrament is from Mondays to Saturdays 9:00am to 8:30pm; on Sundays 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.

9. Priestly Ordination Anniversary:
We congratulate, rejoice with and request your prayers for Rev. Msgr. Obanla Anthony & Frs. Paul Hardy, Akhidue John, Adegun Francis, Lawrence Nwaneri, David Cheruiyot, Chikezie Wisdom, Ekpo Benjamin, Ideawor Kingsley, Martinos Theodore, Okpala Melchizedek and Gilbert Thesing as they mark their Sacerdotal Ordination anniversary this month. May God grant them lasting joy and the grace of final perseverance. Ad multos annos!!

Signed

+ Alfred Adewale Martins  
Archbishop, Metropolitan See of Lagos