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Spreading the Gospel

AMIDST CRISIS AND VIOLENCE



Also in this issue...



Cardinal Onaiyekan's Letter to the nation "Let Not Evil Prevail"



Cardinal Arinze visits MSP Seminary in Abuja.



Eleven new priests for MSP

Sober Inebriety



Love goes up to release from on high
To the souls below gazing with awe-struck eyes.
Power from above, Peace from the sky
Depth of wisdom the sages can't surmise.

The florescence of the Trinity we you acclaim
Illumine the earth; send darkness to exile.
All upward- directed hearts do set aflame
Let the roars of Truth purge every lie.

Oh Spirit Divine, make us drunk with you
Make us feel the effervescence of your descent.
Incinerate every sin, every weakness eschew
That bars us from giving your truth a fitting assent.

By Father George Okoro, MSP
Liberia Mission

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Cover

**Fr. Stephen Ojapah, MSP with
children in Northern Nigeria**

Violence Never the Way for Peace

When we turn on our televisions and radios, all we hear and see are horrific stories of violence, terrorism, hunger and poverty spreading all over the world. People are worried and anxious of their security and survival. In Nigeria's North-Eastern State, members of the radical Islamist group called Boko Haram, which means, "Western education is sinful" have killed thousands since 2009. According to the BBC, they have killed 1,500 in 2014 alone. The U.N. estimates that the attacks have led to more than 470,000 internally displaced persons, some 57,000 refugees and over 200 innocent school girls and women have been kidnapped and held hostage. The Nigerian government has come under great criticism from the international community and Human rights advocacy groups for being slow to react and curtail the excesses of the insurgents. The question is, where do we go from here?

As a country, it is obvious to all that violence in all its forms, no matter our political, religious and tribal affiliations, is inimical to socio-economic development. Archbishop Ignatius Kaigama of Jos, President of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria said recently that, "It is no longer about north or south, or about Muslims or Christians. It is about human beings." And that, "Nigerians are standing up together for freedom and dignity; a common voice is growing up, a voice that says: 'violence is never the way.'"

In this edition, Fr Stephen Ojapah, MSP having lived and worked in Northern Nigeria shares his personal and pastoral experiences and challenges of spreading the gospel and educating the youths. Also published here is the touching letter of His Eminence, John Cardinal Onaiyekan of Abuja Archdiocese on the state of the nation "Let Not Evil Reign", where he encourages all to see the grave danger facing our nation, so that together we can pull back from the brink of chaos.

I enjoin on all Catholics to pray for peace in our country Nigeria. For only God can move the heart of these terrorists to realise the sacredness of human life and that violence is never the way to achieving peace.

The missionary plant seeds of vocation wherever they go. This was the case with our brother, Fr. Anthony Mbanefo, MSP who went back to the Gambia recently for the priestly ordination of one of those whom he nurtured as altar server when he worked in the Gambia years ago. We also have the mission story of Chad in this edition.



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A Missionary Disciple is an Ambassador of Joy

Emotion is an important part of human life. One needs to ask oneself from time to time: *Do I nurture my emotional self enough? Am I able to laugh and even at myself?* According to some psychologists, a child laughs about 400 times per day while an adult laughs for about 20 times per day. If one's laughter has drastically reduced or one no longer laughs at all, one needs to ask oneself: What is going on? Who is taking away one's laughter? What is taking away one's laughter?

Capacity to laugh sustains life. Things that bring about laughter are humour and playfulness. Along this line, one should be able to relax. One should have the capacity to care for others and to love others. One should be sensitive to others, have time for self as well as for others.

Laughter can be used as a therapy. Gentle dolphins can soothe under supervision the emotional problems of children. I recall an incident on the plane on 4th of April 2014 as I was travelling from London to Houston. A little boy squeezed his fingers in between two seats and they got stuck. As he was struggling to bring them out, he felt sharp pain and began to cry: *Daddy, daddy!* As soon as his father came, he smiled at his son, took the fingers and kissed them. The smile and the kiss from the father brought about instant healing to the boy and the boy stopped crying and smiled back at his father. That is the power of smile!

On the contrary, negative emotions can lead to destruction, murder, depression, despair and war. Negative emotions shorten life. If we had no emotions, we would have little drive to get out of bed in the morning. A German friend of mine once sent me this email. *Ein Lächeln kostet nichts und bringt viel ein* (A smile costs nothing but it brings in a lot). *Es bereichert den Empfänger ohne den*

Geber ärmer zu machen. (It enriches the receiver without diminishing the giver).

Along the same line, an Italian friend of mine once sent the following message on Facebook. *Donare un sorriso rende felice il cuore, arricchisce chi lo riceve senza impoverire chi lo dona. Rendi qualcuno felice oggi donando un sorriso.* (A smile gladdens the heart, enriching the receiver without impoverishing the giver. Make someone happy today by giving that person a smile).

Pope Francis in his apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* invites the whole Church to become a joyful Church. He invites every Christian to become a joyful missionary disciple. Yes, we are Easter people. According to the Holy Father, there is joy in the heart of everyone who encounters Christ. He underlines the fact that our life should not be like Lent without Easter.

Different parishes organise harvest and bazaar with different themes. For instance, some have *Harvest of transformation*, *Harvest of Divine Encounter* and so forth. Last year, Fr John Oluoma, the parish priest of Tungan Maje in Abuja Archdiocese, Nigeria organised a harvest with the theme *Harvest of Laughter*. It was meant to teach people to live with some humour. One should not take life too serious. Everything must not have its logical conclusion. We must not follow every trouble to the end. If one lives this way, one will squeeze out every humour out of life. This can be stifling and unhealthy.

Pope Francis in his *Evangelii Gaudium* again exhorts all of us to rekindle that joy inside us. He said we should not be like people returning from a funeral. In fact, the obstacles to the new evangelization are precisely a lack of joy and hope among people, caused and spread by various

By: Very Rev Fr Victor Onwukeme, MSP



situations in our world today. When there is lack of joy, this is accompanied by a lack of zeal, enthusiasm and excitement. If this is the case, the Gospel message becomes cold and dry, lacking life. At times, this lack of joy and hope is so strong that it affects the very tenor of our Christian communities. Joy does not take away from the sober solemnity of the Eucharistic celebration. Not at all! Every Christian should radiate the joy of Christ, says the Holy Father. Paul knew how to rejoice even in the most difficult situations. Paul's letter to the Philippians was written in prison and yet this is the most joyful letter of Paul (Phil 4,4).

There are many in the Church today who have difficulty in the image of a smiling happy Jesus. They would prefer a stern figure to a happy Jesus. There is the other extreme of people who want the cross out of public squares because it looks horrifying. There is a Latin adage which says: *Virtus in medio stat* (Virtue stands in the middle).

Whatever the situation, a Christian ought to be joyful because it is in 'our DNA' as Christians to be bearers of joy! As missionary disciples, we bring news of great joy to people. We do this by the way we live, the work we do and the words we speak. May the risen Lord grant us that joy which only He can give!

Eleven New Priests Added to the MSP Family

by Kelvin Ugwu

"You have received gold, deliver gold"

The weather is always very hot and dry within the first four months of the year in Gwagwalada-Abuja where the National Missionary Seminary of St Paul is located; green grasses turns brown, the trees shed their leaves. The birds, insects, and other living things appear lifeless. Obviously, everyone yearns for the first rain. With the coming of the rain, the contrast is amazing; the difference is like that of light and darkness. Seemingly dead plants springs to life with green leaves and flowers, birds build nest to lay eggs expecting new ones, and there is life and activities. It is also within this period in the month of June that the Missionary Society of St Paul ordain new priests after years of training them in the seminary.

The 2014 Priestly Ordination of the Missionary Society of St. Paul (MSP) on June 21 saw the elevation of eleven deacons to the order of the presbyterate by his Grace, Most Revd Alfred Martins, the Archbishop of Lagos Archdiocese. The ordination was witnessed by priests, religious, friends and relatives as well as the Associate



The ordinandi in procession to the ordination grounds for their ordination.

Missionaries of St Paul (AMSP) who travelled from different parts of the country for the celebration. The ordination ground was colored by myriads of people in their different and beautiful attires. Notable among those present were Most Rev. Anselm Umoren, MSP the Auxiliary Bishop of Abuja, and Very Rev. Fr. Victor Onwukeme, MSP the Superior General of the Missionary Society of St Paul, who was attending the priestly ordination for the first time as the Superior General after his election in September 2013.

The Archbishop in his homily charged the ordinandi that anyone who becomes a priest becomes a bearer of a dignity that surpasses his person. He stressed to them that the task that they are undertaking is not theirs but one that is given to them by Christ and his Church as such they should preserve in violet and spotless the talent, teachings, and traditions of the Catholic faith. *"What was entrusted to you, you should keep and you should hand over. Teach the same thing as you have learnt. Though you may say things in a new way, do not say new things."*



The laying on of hands on the newly ordained priests

This year marks the 30th annual priestly ordination since 1985 when the first MSP priest was ordained for the missions. The eleven newly ordained priests are **Rev. Frs. Francis Agada, Cornelius Umoren, Modestus Ugwushie, Joseph Ibiwoye, Anthony Udoh, Isaac Shemang, Patrick Nnamani, Stephen Ganga, Peter Okpetu, Gabriel Ekpe, and Franklin Achionye.** One remarkable thing about this class is that the eleven began their journey together the same day and all of them were ordained as priest the same day. A rare feat indeed!

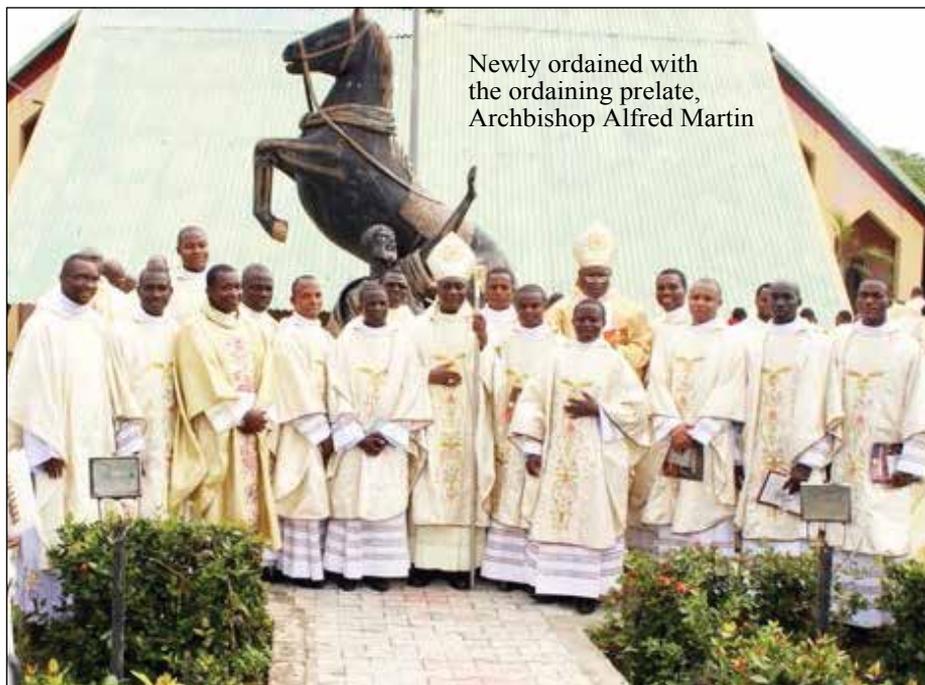
As the newly ordained priests shook hand with friends, taking photographs with families and praying and laying hands over

the people of God, one could sense the joy flowing in their hearts and the readiness to go out and witness for Christ.

In 1986 when our first missionaries were sent out, there

was the enthusiasm as well as the skepticism on mission. While many celebrated the birth of African missionary endeavor, many were skeptical if truly these "black" missionaries could really do much.

The Missionary Society of St Paul has ordained 266 priests, its missions are expanding. MSP priests are now known in the world. It is our prayers that the words of Archbishop Alfred Martins will continue to re-echo in the hearts of all MSP priests: *“you have received gold, deliver gold, do not shamefully replace the gold with lead.”*



Newly ordained with the ordaining prelate, Archbishop Alfred Martin

SPREADING THE GOSPEL *Amidst Crisis and Violence in Northern Nigeria*

by Fr Stephen Ojapah, MSP

Fr Stephen recounts his mission experiences in Gidan Mai Kambu Pastoral Area of Sokoto Catholic Diocese of Nigeria. Being in the North, he faces great challenges of spreading the gospel and providing the basic necessities of life in a place ravaged by religious crisis, poverty and illiteracy.

WHERE WE ARE

There are several ethnic groups such as the Jarawa, Fulani, Hausa, Duguza, and Sanga in Bauchi State in the Northern part of Nigeria. These ethnic groups have coexisted peacefully for years, although, recently crises have engulfed the Sayawa ethnic group living in the area. Why then is



there crisis with the Sayawa ethnic group only? The answer is obvious. All other ethnic groups in Northern Nigeria have since become Muslims, while the Sayawa ethnic group has, to a very large extent adamantly remained Christians. It is among this ethnic group that we live and work.

CHALLENGES OF BEING A CHRISTIAN

Gidan Mai Kambu pastoral area was, by the arrival of Rev Fr Stephen Achi, MSP and I carved out of Malumfashi Parish.

Located in Katsina State in the Catholic Diocese of Sokoto. Mai Kambu pastoral area has seven outstations and these areas are generally inhabited by the indigenous Hausa Christians from Katsina State. There is little or no government presence at all and indigenes are denied opportunity in the public service basically for choosing to remain Christians. Being a Christian in this area is really a big cross and a challenge. One of our Catechist named Tanimu once

courageously confronted the Local Government Employment Agency and inquired why Christian Hausas were not given admission into the state School of Nursing located in the local government. He was bluntly told, “Arne bai kamata ya kula da musulmi ba” in Hausa language meaning “An infidel

is not supposed to look after a Muslim on a sick bed.” It is assuredly disheartening to hear



Fr. Stephen ministering to a senior citizen.

this in the 21st century. Christian students who have always proven to be better off academically are not always given the opportunity to compete fairly with other students.



A church destroyed during the crisis.

In the 2011 post-election crisis, most of the villages in Gidan Mai Kambu were raided by their Muslim neighbours. Very recently, St Theresa's Catholic Church, Funtua, which is a nearby parish, was razed alongside the school and the Priests' residence.

We inherited a community that has practiced the Christian faith for over 50 years, but there is very little to show in terms of structures and active faith. Structurally, most buildings here are devoid of any modern architectural design. Basic social amenities like water, road, and health care are few and far between.

THE ROUGH AND DIFFICULT TERRAIN

Pastoral visitation to our numerous outstations (mission churches) has always proven to be a real test of one's missionary commitment and the appreciation of someone sent by God through the instrumentality of the Missionary Society of Saint Paul. Once, we left the parish center at exactly 7:20am to visit two of our outstations.

We got to one of them (Gidan Musa) at 9:45am. The rough and difficult terrain to these two stations was excruciating as we drove slowly to avoid deep pot holes on the road that are capable of damaging one's car. Our journey was completed with a trek across the dry river since it was not motorable. And certainly once it rains, it becomes almost impossible to access our churches. It is only natural to desire rest after such a tedious journey, but we went ahead with the sacrament of reconciliation and Mass.

OUR PASTORAL CHALLENGES

Among the many challenges faced here is getting the people to see, think and act like Catholics. For example, the Evangelical Church of West Africa (ECWA) has membership strength, and has a practice that other Christians including Catholics imitate. The concept of church elders in the ECWA is very strong as they constitute the final authority. The absence of Catholic priests, religious and catechists, makes the local Catholic faithful to structure the church like the ECWA. There are Church elders, who are very powerful and are independent of laity council. Once in a neighbouring station, the villagers brought their annual "Zakka" in



Fr. Stephen and the Catechist with Zumunta mata (Women's Group)

Hausa language meaning “some percentage of their farm produce” to the Church. The Church elders shared some among themselves and decided the percentage to be given to the priest. This is the standard in virtually all the outstations.

Due to the limited educational opportunities and the illiteracy level here, there is no desire for post-secondary education by the youths. The most anticipated moment in the life of teenage boys and girls is marriage. I see husbands and wives, at age sixteen and seventeen. The oldest couples I wedded were in their twenties. This according to them curbs promiscuous life style. It is noteworthy that they attach great significance to Sacramental Marriages. No girl dares to live with a man without fulfilling the proper traditions of the land and of the Church. Thanks to the Missionaries who have laboured in this part of the diocese.

Yet, the understanding of Sacramental Marriages in the Catholic Church is not completely without misunderstanding. I once asked a question in one of the outstations before the homily in Hausa language, “*Menene, babbanci tsakanin auren katolica da wani aure daban?*” meaning “What is the difference between a Catholic wedding and any type of wedding?”. One smart looking young man stood

up from the back and answered in Hausa, “*Fada, Aure, aure ne, ko anyi a gidin itace, ko a hanya, ko a lambu, ko a chuchi*” meaning, “Wedding is wedding, whether; it was done, on the street, or under the tree, or in the Church.” For them, there is no difference between what I am doing here and what happens elsewhere. Just as I was trying to absorb such a misunderstanding, a woman accosted me after the Mass to demand why she was stopped from receiving communion simply because the catechist officiated her wedding. The aberrations are innumerable.

BY YOUR SUPPORT, WE SUCCEED

Our working conditions are really posing a huge challenge to our mission here. We cover numerous kilometres and hours on the road to get to our churches and reach out to the people of God. Until recently when the bishop provided us with a vehicle, in order to catch up with my official assignments and activities in villages, I had to borrow vehicles and motor bikes from people.



Fixing the car tyre before driving to the mission church.

The mission here is one of great sacrifice but demands a great deal of financial support and encouragement from the Associate members (AMSP), Sponsors and friends of the Missionaries of St. Paul. This is our opportunity to impact positively the lives of Christians here and make their lives worthwhile. We can do to Gidan Mai Kambu what Ireland did to the Nigerian church. We all are beneficiaries of this great missionary sacrifice of the Irish people. Please continue to support our missionary work to bring about God’s kingdom. Remember, ‘some give to the mission by going, while others go to the mission by giving.’

School Apostolate in Northern Nigeria

by Fr. Stephen Ojapah, MSP

I have lived in the Northern part of Nigeria all my life, and as many have observed, the educational level of many in northern Nigeria is quite low. What we are suffering here is simply the effect of ignorance and illiteracy. The stories are so enormous. But I will mention the most recent, as a basis for this article. At Saint Theresa's Catholic Church Funtua, the Priests' residence and the School in the church premises that has over a hundred Maguzawa children of both Muslims and Christians were burnt down to ashes.

Why? You may ask.

A Nigerian Youth Corp member serving in a nursery and primary school in this area, who teaches English Language, decided to set an

exams for his students. The examination was meant to test the pupils' ability to make correct and sensible statements. The Corp member used the names "Mohammed and Amina", as names that are common to the locals here. The questions were certainly interpreted as blasphemous to Islam and the Holy prophet.

The Corp member was hurriedly whisked out of the town, and the Catholic church and school there had to pay the price for such 'blasphemy.' The saddest twist to this story is that the Muslim council in Funtua forcefully demanded the closure of the nursery and primary school and proposed the building of a Mosque there instead.

As stated earlier, such stories here are common. But the greatness of a people is determined by their ability to stand in the face of pain, horror, and even death. Christians here have always demonstrated their resolve. The Church must remain here in Northern Nigeria and her impact must be felt. Indeed, it will be story someday, for generations to come. School apostolate is what can change a generational bias and preconceived prejudices, especially from the angle of religious sentiments. Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Sokoto are educating a great number of Christian and Muslim children. The process is slow but sure. Thanks to all the religious congregations here who are into school apostolate. The Catholic School in Mai Kambu Pastoral area is a strong weapon of evangelization, because young Muslims and Christians are nurtured.

But we are centuries behind because of the poor funding and lack of government presence. A child trained and educated here, Muslim or Christian can be the Constantine (a great leader for change) our nation is waiting for.

I am very optimistic because so many have shed their blood just because they loved education, The Coliseum in Rome reminds us of those who shed their blood just because they professed Christ. The burnt schools and churches in northern Nigeria will stand to remind our great grant children what their ancestors suffered in the name of going to school and being Christians.





AMSP Owerri/Orlu/Mbaise Zones on Good Friday Charity Walk at Motherless Baby's Home, Imo State



AMSP Lagos Zone on Good Friday Charity Walk at Modupe Cole, Lagos State

Ambas Peo

AMSP Walk



AMSP Warri Zone on Good Friday Charity Walk At Leper Colony



AMSP Afikpo Zone on Good Friday Charity Walk At Nigeria Prison Service Afikpo, Ebonyi State



AMSP Lagos Zone on Good Friday Charity Walk at home for the aged

ambassador people

Charity 2014



AMSP Calabar Zone embarked on a charity walk on Good Friday to infant Jesus Orphanage and Pope John Paul II Good Samaritan Home for the Poor, Aged and Needy, Calabar.



Good Friday Charity Walk
Eku, Delta State



AMSP Nnewi Zone on Good Friday Charity
Walk at Rehabilitation Centre Ozubulu, Anambra State



Good Friday Charity Walk
Mushin, Lagos State



AMSP Onitsha Zone on Good Friday Charity
Walk at Motherless Baby's Home, Anambra State

The Vocation Seeds We Sowed Have Matured in Gambia

My visit to the Gambia for another ordination of my altar server

by Rev Fr Anthony Mbanefo, MSP

I had every reason to be filled with a profound sense of excitement and immense gratitude to God when I visited the city of Brikama in the Diocese of Banjul, Gambia to attend the priestly ordination and first mass of my former altar server, Rev. Fr Victor Ndecky which took place on the 9th and 10th of November 2013 respectively. Victor Ndecky was one of my active altar servers

when I took over as priest-in-charge of The Resurrection Parish, Bikama, Gambia early in 1996.

Vocation to the priesthood and religious life was one of the things I tried to promote during my days in Brikama where I spent nine of my ten years in the Gambian mission. If my campaign for the sacrament of matrimony yielded

immediate fruits judging from the numerous church marriages recorded within the period of my stay, the same could not be said of the vocation to the priesthood and religious life. This could of course be explained by the fact that while matrimony simply involves encouraging adults who were already living as husbands and wives [or are about to do so] to approach the altar and receive the blessing of God, the priesthood and religious life involves encouraging youths who feel called by God to

embark on a very long process of discernment and formation. Before my arrival, Brikama parish had no indigenous priest or religious neither did they have a seminarian or aspirant. Midway into my stay in the parish, some of the youths started gaining admission into the seminary and the novitiate.

Late September 2004, two months to my departure from the Parish and the Gambian mission, Brikama parish had its first indigenous religious in the person of Rev. Sr. Josephine Ndecky of the Presentation of Mary Sisters. She was one of those parish youths that I could rightly refer to as my 'children' since she passed through my tutelage both in the confirmation class and other areas of the parish life. In 2005, a year after my departure, the Parish had its first indigenous priest in the person of Fr Peter Jammeh, CSSP from Farababanta outstation. At the time of my leaving Brikama, four of my active altar servers were seminarians. My relationship with each of these



Rev Victor Ndecky presenting himself for ordination.

Fr Mbanefo laying hands on Rev Victor Ndecky.



was a cordial father-son relationship. Years have run so quickly and they have through the grace of God persevered in their seminary training.

On the 9th of November 2009, I was in the Gambia to attend the priestly ordination of Fr Yenes Manneh. I could not attend the ordination of Fr. Matthew Mendy who was ordained along with another Gambian on November 2012. Attending the ordination of Fr. Victor Ndecky on 9th of November 2013 was a cause of great joy for me. I was a special guest of honor at the ordination just as I was at that of Fr Yenes four years back. Just as he did during the ordination of Fr Yenes, Bishop Robert Elison welcomed me at the beginning of the ordination Mass. Fr Victor did me a big honor by calling me out at the end of the mass and told the whole congregation to thank me because I sowed the seed of the

vocation in him. The following day was the first Mass. It was like the ordination Mass, an open air celebration well attended by Catholics and even some Muslim friends from Gambia, Senegal and Guinea Bissau. This is because the Mankanya tribe of the Ndecky family migrated from Guinea Bissau with many relations and friends living in different parts of the two neighboring countries. Being the only priestly ordination for the year for the diocese of Banjul, which comprises of the whole of the Gambian nation, it was a national Catholic event. I preached at the First Mass with the local Wolof language and the people were amazed at my fluency. In the normal Gambian style, the afternoon of the day of the first Mass to the next morning was spent in celebration.

Fr Gomez was one of the five indigenous priests that the diocese of Banjul had when Frs. Sam Offia (MSP), Augustine Inwang (MSP), Maurice Iboro (MSP) and I came between 1992 and 1994.



The third picture is Fr Mbanefo in a warm embrace with Fr Victor Ndecky.

Today the diocese has twenty-five indigenous priests four of whom are priests of the Holy Ghost Congregation (Spiritans); the rest are diocesan priests. The number of Gambian indigenous sisters has also increased immensely. They are presently more than thirty which is over two times their initial number when we came to the mission in the early nineties. From Brikama parish we have three sisters and some novices and postulants. Even our former MSP parish, St Michael Njongon with its apparent dryness now has one sister of St Joseph of Cluny, one sister of Presentation of Mary and a novice to be professed in 2014. This is owing to the dynamism of Fr Ben Mba (MSP), the last of the illustrious line of the Missionaries of St Paul to pastor in Njongon Parish.

Please God Stanislaus Ndecky, (the younger brother of Fr Victor and Sr. Josephine) who is the last in the line of my servers that entered the major seminary, will be ordained next year. After him, there are still some young men in Brikama who are in their early stage of the senior seminary. They received First Holy Communion from me and served Mass in my last years in Brikama but entered the seminary under the tutelage of Fr Francis Eyo MSP and my other successors in Brikama Parish.

Rev Fr Anthony Mbanefo MSP is one of our illustrious and dedicated missionaries who worked in the Gambia for ten years. He is now working in the American Mission.

A Testimony of Primary Evangelization in Chad

by Fr Gordian Iwuji, MSP

The first set of the Missionary of St Paul priests arrived in Chad sometime in 1996. Since then, until today, the MSP's have been sending missionaries to Chad. We have maintained our presence in the Catholic Diocese of Sarh for the past ten years. Chad provides us the platform to exercise our missionary apostolate of primary evangelization. Our parish, St. Frances Xavier, in Koumra is made up of four big mission churches with the parish center. We have a population of about 3000 parishioners. Our annual RCIA registration produces hundreds of baptisms yearly and subsequently the sacraments of Holy Eucharist and Confirmation, as well as marriages.

Most times because of the difficult terrains and poor access roads, we use motorbikes to reach out to the people. It's on this note that we thank you our sponsors and friends immensely for all your support and assistance towards the acquisition of most of our means of transportation. Without your help, our movement in Chad would have been very difficult. We still need more of your help especially now that the motorbikes are getting older and begging for a change.

Before I left Chad last year, we realised that the number of converts were increasing, so we had to begin the celebration of two masses in the parish center and two in the other

two mission churches every Sunday. The remaining two mission churches do have Sunday service led by their church leader or catechist whenever the priest is not available. We were also able to train over sixty (60) committed men and women as catechists to help us teach catechism and conduct Sunday service or funerals in the absence of a priest.

Being a missionary call for an ability to adapt to the realities and various situations facing the people to whom we are sent. Just like any other mission in Africa, we encountered a lot of overwhelming challenges in Chad especially illiteracy. We had to



Fr. Gordian with children in Chad.

take upon ourselves to teach and catechise the people through our homilies and other social works. Other challenges include fighting some barbaric traditional beliefs like



Women singing at a community/church event.

female circumcision, early marriages for under-age girls, forced



Fr. Gordian using local means of transportation.

and the greater illiterate majority are crushed in a cycle of lack of hope. These challenges led us to reflect about our missionary involvement in Chad and a possibility of alleviating the difficult living conditions of the people apart from celebrating the sacraments. Before I left Chad, we thought about setting up a skill acquisition centre and a centre for rehabilitation for single mothers, and school dropouts. We are yet to realize most of our dreams in Chad like empowering our youths with good education and providing our churches with better and decent places of worship.

marriages, indiscriminate pregnancies and polygamy. My most painful moment in Chad was when a girl whom I encouraged to go to school and study hard in order to be useful in the future responded to me in anger,



Fr. Gordian distributing communion at Mass

"why are you encouraging me to study hard, was my elder sister not encouraged to read hard? Where is she now? Look at her with 3 children and no husband, the same with my second elder daughter. Please leave us alone with this your school stuff. There is no future for us and no hope even if we read the entire books in world". Isn't it pitiable? The youths in Chad live their lives in such circle of hopelessness. They resign to drunkenness, smoking and total idleness. They work so hard in the farms with little to show for it. The

weather is equally very harsh to the extent that many die every year of meningitis epidemic. Chadian s walk long distances on foot because of insufficient means of transportation. It really could be terrible.

The Catholic Church is very much involved in education and health care through the constructions of schools and hospitals and campaigns against some destructive traditions. In Chad, unemployment is very high; a lot of youths are unemployed

We feel that by doing all these, our identity as Missionaries of St. Paul will have a deeper and fruitful impact in the lives of Chadians. I said "Our" here because we all, the priests members, Associate members (AMSP), Sponsors and friends are missionaries of St. Paul working in Chad. I know your hearts are all in places like Chad and we have felt your support. Please continue to support our missionary work to bring about God's kingdom. Remember, 'some give to the mission by going, while others go by giving'.

However, we can say that it is the heart of the people that we treasure most. Amidst all these challenging living conditions the Chadians are humble and simple people. They are deeply down to earth. Finally working in Chad was a privilege and a blessing. It was indeed fulfilling. God bless you for all your support and continued support.

Missionaries Evangelizing the cradle of Christianity and Warming Hearts

~ from the new MSP Mission in Turin*, Italy ~
(Article culled from: *Famiglia Cristiana*, number 51/2013).

Father Benjamin Okon, a priest of the Misinety of St. Paul (MSP) walks about the church yard waiting to be interviewed. A stream of people approach him asking for dimes and change while a homeless man looks for food in the trash can in front of the parish office behind the sanctuary of St. Joachim. This is the paradox today: our churches are almost empty since almost no one goes to church nowadays. Yet, how many desperate people surround their walls.

Since Oct 20, 2013 this has been the mission of Fr Benjamin Okon, MSP, pastor of St. Joachim and Superior for the MSP Missions in Italy. "I have a dream," he reveals in a quiet, guarded voice, 'there is so much pain in this area of town that my dream is for everyone entering this church to feel happy in his Father's house. Happy as if they were embraced by their family. Leaving behind any sadness or pain.'

The challenge is how to get people to come to church. "It is the Spirit who calls people, not myself. Since they don't come inside, I go outside to meet people. But if everyone would bring even only one person, our church would not have enough space. If we trust evangelization and try to become disciples to one another, this becomes possible."

Father Benjamin entered the Seminary when he was 14 years old. He was ordained in 1999 and sent to Douala (Cameroon) in 2000 and later to The United States, in Texas, to work for his Congregation. In October, 2003 he came

to Rome to study Philosophy and spent the summer at Saccolongo (Padua) in the Parish of St Mary Assumpta. Later, he was appointed Chaplain of the African Mission in the Padua Diocese. Fr Benjamin has known what a missionary is since he was a little child. "My dad used to teach our local language to European missionaries who came to evangelize our country. We hosted so many in our home. I used to dream of becoming one of them."

But perhaps he couldn't really believe that this dream could come true. "When I say Mass, I descend the altar steps to greet people," says Fr Benjamin." A young mother was amazed and astonished at the beginning by a gesture that for me is so normal. This area of Italy swells with foreigners from Nigeria, Cameroon, Ivory Coast, Peru, and Brazil.

becomes a better image of Jesus." Besides Catholics, there are many Muslims. "I can smile and offer my friendship to everyone, no matter their beliefs. I can offer the warmth of a hug."

Today, we don't live in a small village anymore. Besides everyone's beliefs, there is the individual person with his or her concrete needs. Concrete needs of each single person is the starting point today. Evangelization even today and even in Europe starts from taking care of what everyone needs most, just as it was at the time of Jesus. Jesus gave bread, health, water while evangelizing. Evangelization means taking care of the whole person. At the same time, it means also making them realize that beyond physical needs and desires there is a bigger and deeper one - the only one that can give hope, peace and love.



Procession to the sanctuary for Sacrament of Confirmation Mass

"I would like to learn Spanish to be able to communicate with all the Spanish-speaking people here around," says Fr. Benjamin.

His theology is shaped on little things, "I ask everyone to help me keep the church clean. A clean church helps prayer and

* Background information on Turin: *Turin is situated in the north-west part of Italy and counts about 900,000 residents. It is an eclectic city that is a sort of open-air museum combining ancient palaces and contemporary architecture. The city is known throughout the World for the Holy Shroud. It is a multicultural town: nearly 32,5% of people between 25 and 34 years are foreigners* - from Romania, Morocco, Peru, Cina for the most. The Nigerian community ranks 8th in size - See the study 'La popolazione straniera a Torino nel 2012' (Foreigners in Turin, 2012)- Statistics Office of Turin.*

Immigration started in the 50s, when people were attracted especially by the automotive industry (FIAT, now FIAT-Chrysler) that in fact was able at that time to provide job security. Today the most sought-after roles are housemaids or caretakers. Turin is divided in districts. In the 7th district, the second for number of foreigners, is situated the Parish of St Joachim, that was assigned to MSP priests since last October.

Let Not Evil Prevail

We are familiar with the wise saying that evil thrives where and when good people do nothing and keep quiet. It is also a great lesson of history that you need only a few determined people to bring down a nation. Here the rule of majority does not apply. We do not know how many members Boko Haram has. But they are not that many – and they are causing so much havoc on the entire nation. The situation is serious.

I left home on Easter Sunday, when our nation was still reeling under the tragic news of the first Nyanya bomb blast and the abduction of as yet unknown number of girl students in Borno state. Since my arrival here in Rome, we have heard of another Nyanya bomb blast, and the number of girls abducted is now being given at over two hundred. The controversy over the numbers is futile and uncalled for. One missing girl is one too many. Everywhere I go, people are asking me what is happening in our country. There is no more room for explanations, let alone excuses. The view from outside our nation is very negative indeed. At a time like this, one would expect all Nigerians to stand together and face what should be clearly a common danger to us all. But unfortunately, such a common stand is anything but visible.

There are ominous signs that if the objective of Boko Haram is to tear Nigeria apart by pitting Christians against Muslims in a fratricidal war, that objective is gradually and systematically being realized. The wanton destruction of lives and property is bad enough. But perhaps worse than that is the gradual destruction and erosion of the hard earned good relations which Nigerian Christians and Muslims have managed to build up over the years. In my 2013 Christmas message, I warned that we should not take our fragile religious peace for granted. I pleaded that we should learn from the experience of other nations where such good relations have evaporated within a short time under poorly managed social and political crisis. The Central African Republic is a case in point.

In the midst of our serious security crisis, tribal and religious warlords are beating the drums of war and blowing

Catholic Archbishop of Abuja, Cardinal John Oniyekan writes a touching letter from Rome on May 5, 2014 concerning the state of the nation. The following are excerpts of his letter.

by John Cardinal Oniyekan

the trumpets of conflict. I read in the internet that the Jama'atu Nasr Islam has issued a statement accusing the Federal Government of persecuting Muslims under the guise of fighting terrorism. If this is true, it would indeed be most unfortunate and ill-timed under our present circumstances. This is hardly the best way to encourage our security agents to carry out their tough and thankless task. At the other end of the spectrum, one Evangelist Matthew Owojaiye, who is described as the President/Founder of the Old Time Revival Hour, and immediate past chairman of a group called "Northern States Christian and Elders Forum (NOCSEF), an associate of CAN", issued a passionate statement with a presumed list of 180 missing girls, 165 of which are Christians and the remaining 15 Muslims. It is commendable that a list has appeared with their religious affiliations, and this should be of help to the security agents in tracking the girls. But the document is hardly designed to promote mutual good relations between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria.

At times like this, when serious hurt has been inflicted and great injustice perpetrated, it is natural to feel deeply aggrieved and even angry. But the effort still needs to be made to look at things as dispassionately as we can so that we can work towards a just and practical solution. For most Nigerians, I believe that it is highly desirable that we continue as "one nation under God". But this will not happen unless we are all ready to sincerely identify

our common goals and aspirations, despite our non-negligible differences and diversities. It will mean being ready to make more concessions and compromises for the common good of the nation, well beyond the status quo. **National unity is beautiful and precious, but it comes with a price which all must be ready to pay, in a fair and equitable manner.**

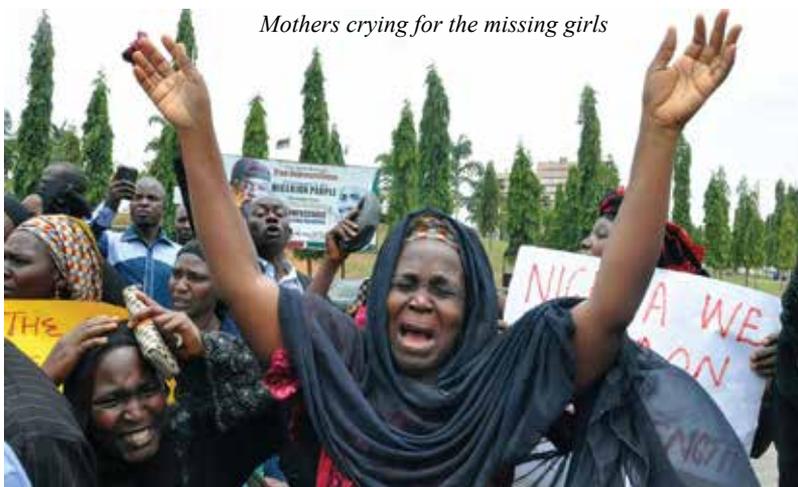
If this seems difficult, the alternative of a break-up of the nation along whatever lines would seem to me far more costly, and almost unthinkable. If a war of partition breaks out, where will the battle lines be drawn? It would be wonderful if such partitioning could be by peaceful negotiation. But that would call for nothing less than a miracle, which no one has any right to impose on God. The option to pursue unity therefore ought to be clear and obvious.

The menace which Boko Haram represents is hanging on the whole nation. The solution must involve all stake-holders working together. Promoting or allowing polarization of group interests, whether political (PDP against the Opposition) or religious (CAN versus JNI) will not only weaken our common efforts, but even lead to the far greater danger of polarization of our security forces along opposing lines. The red light is clear to anyone who cares to look. It is not an exaggeration to say that the nation is in grave danger. It is not too late to pull back from the brink of chaos. **All those who believe in the future of Nigeria can no longer afford the luxury of sitting back, watching and complaining. There is need to speak out and take meaningful action, each at his or her level.** As for those who rule the nation, I hope they know that the eyes of the whole world are on them. They should also know that they will answer for all their actions and inactions before their consciences, before history and before God.

All those who believe in the future of Nigeria can no longer afford the luxury of sitting back, watching and complaining. There is need to speak out and take meaningful action, each at his or her level. As for those who rule the nation, I hope they know that the eyes of the whole world are on them. They should also know that they will answer for all their actions and inactions before their consciences, before history and before God.

May God bless Nigeria!

Mothers crying for the missing girls



Francis Cardinal Arinze Visits the MSP

Jesus gave his Church a Global Mission

All through the three years of his public life, the Lord Jesus was giving his Apostles and disciples practical initiation into evangelization. After his resurrection he formally sent them on mission: "As the Father has sent me, even so I send you". And thereafter "he breathed on them, and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained'" (Jn 20:21-23). It was just before he ascended back to heaven that Jesus gave his Church the formal mandate to evangelize the whole world: "Go into the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe I will be condemned" (Mk 16:15-16).

The Church is Missionary

The Church is sent by God to all nations to be "the universal sacrament of salvation" {Lumen Gentium, 48}. Missionary activity flows from the innermost requirements of the Church's catholicity. "The pilgrim Church is missionary by her very nature. For it is from the mission of the Son and the mission of the Holy Spirit that she takes her origin, in accordance with the desire of God the Father" {Ad Gentes, 2}. The world gathering of Catholic Bishops at the Synod of 1974 was categorical in its statement: "We wish to confirm once more that the task of evangelizing all people constitutes the

essential mission of the Church." All along the centuries, the Church has retained this conviction that she is sent to evangelize by her Founder and Saviour Jesus Christ, that each member of the Church shares in some way in this mission, and that this Good News of salvation in Jesus Christ is meant for all peoples, cultures and languages. "The Church believes that God has established Christ as the one mediator and that she herself has been established as the universal sacrament of salvation" (Redemptoris Missio, 9). It is now time to ask ourselves how this Gospel has reached Nigeria and how the Church in Nigeria has taken part in sharing this Good News.

Highlights in the Evangelization of Nigeria

We can highlight four major periods in the planting of the faith in this country. The first phase includes the beginnings, marked by the arrival of missionaries of the Society of African Missions in and around Lagos in 1863, of the Holy Ghost Fathers at Onitsha in 1885 and of the SMA later in Lokoja and Shendam. These intrepid pioneers set up Vicariates Apostolic. This first phase was crowned with the elevation of Lagos and Onitsha to archdiocesan status in 1950 and of Kaduna in 1959. We can speak of a second phase in the 1950s and 1960s, marked by lively progress in Catholic school education, in the training of local clergy and in the nourishing of local religious congregations for women, with the number of new Christians increasing in the dioceses each year.

A third period starts after the 1967-1970 Civil War when most of the foreign missionaries in the Eastern part of the country were sent away by the Federal Government and in the country as a whole there was a decade of the appointment of many Nigerian Bishops in dioceses such as Enugu, Owerri, Ikot Ekpene,

Every year the National Missionary Seminary of St Paul organizes St. Paul's Annual Public Lecture. As the Church in Nigeria is increasingly participating in the Universal mission of evangelization with a growing missionary charism and consciousness, the theme for this year's lecture was "Nigeria's Role in Global Catholicism". It was delivered His Eminence Francis Cardinal Arinze who is not only grounded in the activities of the Nigerian Church but has a long and meritorious service to the Universal Church at the Vatican.

The following are the excerpts of his Lecture.

Lokoja, Ondo, Ibadan, Ogoja, Benin City, Yola, Kaduna, Oyo, Jos, Issele-Uku, Minna and Lagos. The new Bishops worked with their elder brother Nigerian Bishops (Nwedo, Okoye, Nwaezeapu, Arinze, Sanusi and Usanga) and the veteran missionary Bishops (McGettrick, Kelly, Cotter, Dempsey, Mahony, Murray, Grimard and Fitzgibbon), with Cardinal Dominic Ekandem, as the overall senior Prelate and leader.

A fourth period of evangelization can be arguably seen from the 1982 first Papal Visit to Nigeria which saw the impressive growth of Nigerian engagement in the missionary activity of the Church. Remarkable was the carving out of six more ecclesiastical provinces in 1994 so that the Church in Nigeria now has nine of them.

Among the bigger missionary congregations to whom gratitude is owed for the evangelization of Nigeria, one has to mention the Society of African Missions, the Holy Ghost Fathers, the St Patrick Fathers, the Missionaries of Africa, popularly known as the White Fathers, the Augustinians, the Dominicans and the Jesuits. Earlier among the Sisters' congregations are the Our Lady of Apostles Sisters, the Missionary Sisters of the Holy Rosary, and the Society of the Holy Child Sisters. Nigerian Sisters' congregations soon followed, with the Handmaids of the Holy Child Jesus, the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary Mother of Christ, the Sisters of the Eucharistic Heart of Jesus, the Fatima Sisters, the Daughters of Divine Love and the Daughters of Mary Mother of Mercy. Among the Brothers, the Marists and the Brothers of the Christian Schools are prominent. There is also an impressive flourishing of the monastic presence in the past fifty years, especially by the Cistercians, the Benedictines, the Carmelites and the Augustinians.



The lay faithful in Nigeria have responded energetically to the Gospel call. The catechists are most prominent. In the earlier decades, most Catholic teachers also functioned as official and, sometimes, unofficial catechists. The organization of the laity councils at the levels of parish, diocese, ecclesiastical province and nation has been impressive.

Here we need to pay tribute to the pioneer missionaries to Nigeria. Some of them died within a few weeks of arrival. Those were the days before the modern answer to malaria. These early missionaries trekked long distances on footpaths and did not hesitate to make sacrifices for the spread of the Word.

Church in Nigeria participates in Global Evangelization

When Pope Paul VI addressed the Bishops of Africa on 31 July, 1969, in Kampala, on his arrival from the Vatican City to inaugurate the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM), he exhorted them: **“By now you Africans are missionaries to yourselves. The Church of Christ is well and truly planted in this blessed soil.”** Let us say a word on how the Church in Nigeria has lived this missionary awareness.

Nigerian priests and religious sisters have been working in several African Countries. Nigerian participation in Church life and work in Rome is growing. In the diplomatic service of the Holy See, three Nigerian Apostolic Nuncios are prominent and there is a future one in the waiting. Two Nigerian priests are officials in the Roman Curia, the Pope’s central offices for his universal ministry. Four Nigerian priests lecture in the Pontifical Universities in Rome and in the past few years one of them rose to be Vice-Rector of the Urban University. There are three Nigerian religious priests working in the generalates of their Religious Congregations. A Nigerian is the prioress of a Carmelite monastery of nuns in Rome. Three Nigerian sisters are Superiors General of their congregations while three other sisters are working in their generalates. Quite a number of Nigerian Sisters’ Congregations have their regional houses in or near Rome. Three Nigerian priests are chaplains to the Nigerian Catholic communities in and

around Rome. There is also a Nigerian cardinal who is in semi-retirement in Rome after 24 years of service as head of two offices of the Roman Curia.

Around the world, there is an appreciable number of Nigerians who are members of Religious Congregations and Orders that operate in many countries. Religious Congregations of Sisters founded in Nigeria have shown active engagement in sharing the faith with people in other continents. One thinks, for example, of the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary Mother of Christ, the Handmaids of the Holy Child Jesus, the Sisters of the Eucharistic Heart of Jesus, the Fatima Sisters, the Daughters of Divine Love and the Daughters of Mary Mother of Mercy. The Nigerian Benedictine Abbeys of Umuoji and Amoji Nike have been willing to send some of their nuns to help in Benedictine monasteries in Italy and Spain that have a fall in numbers.

The Missionary Society of St Paul of Nigeria

The Institute in which we find ourselves is a beautiful and convincing manifestation of the engagement of the Church in Nigeria to promote the missionary activity of the Church especially by preparing priest missionaries.



For years Dominic Cardinal Ekandem, even as Bishop of Ikot Ekpene and President of the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Nigeria, had been suggesting to his brother Bishops that the Conference found a national seminary for the training of future priests. Finally at the meeting of the Bishops’ Conference held in Kaduna in September 1976, it was decided to establish the National Missionary Seminary of St Paul to promote the missionary activity of the Church which is in Nigeria. The Missionary Society of St Paul was founded by Cardinal Ekandem in 1977 and established by the National Bishops’ Conference of Nigeria on mission Sunday, 25 October 1977.

“We are ambassadors for Christ” (2 Cor 5:20), as the motto of the Society, is eloquent. The fact that from among its 235 priest members the Holy Father has chosen three to serve as Bishops in Nigeria is a sign of the high esteem which the Church nourishes for the Society.

Today priests of the Missionary Society of St Paul of Nigeria serve in the Bahamas, Botswana, Cameroun, Canada, Chad, Gambia, Germany, Great Britain, Grenada, Ireland, Italy, Liberia, Malawi, Nigeria, South Africa, South Sudan, Sweden and the United States of America.

Nigerian Catholic Communities in Europe and North America

There is quite a number of Nigerian Catholics residing in such major cities as Rome, Padua, Vienna, London, New York, Washington D.C., Los Angeles and Yaounde. Most of them are workers of various types, with many who are high up professionals. They generally have their whole nuclear family with them. Such Nigerian communities bring with them Nigerian characteristics like joyful celebration of the sacred liturgy, participation in liturgical singing by the people, and even harvest and bazaar fund raising events and the setting up of some lay apostolate groups, especially the Catholic Women’s

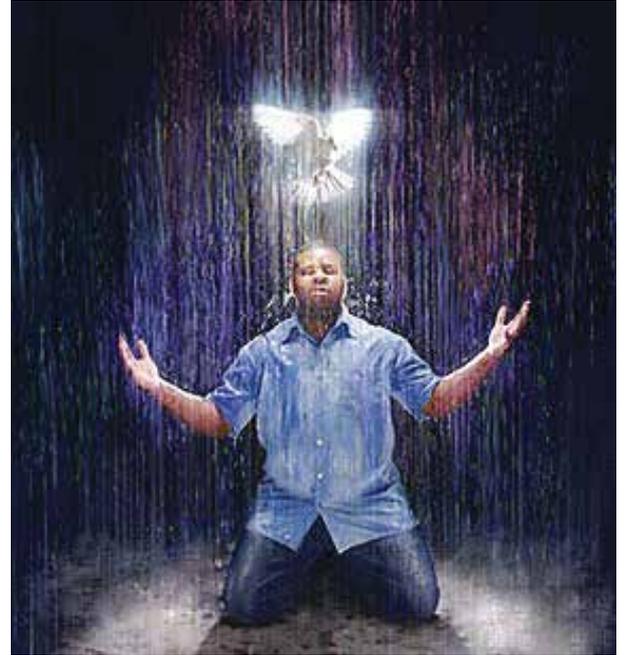
Organization. European and American Catholics are impressed by Nigerian participation in the celebration of joys and sorrows in the lives of members, and even by the Nigerian women’s dress styles.

The Most Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of Jesus the Savior, is the Morning Star that announces that the Rising Sun will soon come to visit us. Through her we render gratitude to God for the gift of the evangelization of Nigeria. And we request her intercession that every Nigerian Catholic may do what in him or her lies, to share in the engaging work of global Catholicism with joy, with faith, with love and with evangelical dynamism.

 + *Francis Cardinal Arinze*
Prefect Emeritus, Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments.
 18 January, 2014

CELEBRATING Spiritual OUR GIFTS

by Rev. Fr. Anthony Iffen Umoren, MSP



What are the variety of spiritual gifts bestowed on each one of us?

Paul discusses these spiritual gifts beautifully in I Cor 12: 4-11:

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discernment of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses.

Each person has received a gift from God. Paul's stress is on the identification and use of these spiritual gifts. Of primacy for Paul among the gifts is the utterance of wisdom. Secondly, utterance of knowledge, and thirdly, faith. Other gifts of healing, working of miracles, prophecy, discernment of spirits, various kinds of tongues and their interpretation follow. Everyone cannot possess all the gifts (1 Cor 12:29-30). Whatever the gift one has received, however, it is for the common good. So has to be used for the common good. Thus the gifts come with a responsibility for services and activities which are for the benefit of the church. Paul does not exhaust the gifts of the Spirit. He only mentions a few of them, as there are quite a lot of them. The different gifts are simply given by God and received by humans accordingly for a purpose. Yet Paul recommends that there is a spiritual gift which is greater than all these, which a Christian should strive for. It is the gift of love, which gives meaning to other gifts, such as the gift of tongues, prophetic powers,

knowledge, faith that moves mountains, and generosity (1 Cor 13:1-13). Therefore, whatever the gifts, they are to bear fruits of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self control (Gal 5:22-23). It is through these fruits that it is known if one really had obtained the gifts of the Spirit or not, for one who lives by the Spirit is guided by the Spirit (Gal 5:25).

Our country is witnessing an explosion of claims by many Christians to possessing a variety of spectacular spiritual gifts. These range usually from the gifts of healing and working miracles to many others, including prophecies and tongues. Certain questions, however, have to be asked before we roll out the drums: Are the celebrated gifts the most important that Christians are to have (1 Cor 14:1-5)? Have the gifts been tested by the leaders and members of the Christian community (1 John 4:1) and found to be authentic? Paul maintains that there can be satanic deception through people who use all power, signs and lying wonders, and every kind of wicked deception for those who

are perishing (2 Thess 2:9-10). Those aligned with Satan this way have a "powerful delusion, leading them to believe what is false". Again, are these spiritual gifts being used altruistically for the common good, and not for personal and selfish gains (1 Cor 14:12)? Lastly, do these gifts lead to love and other fruits of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-23)? Otherwise let us look around us and see who really is filled by the Spirit. If claims of certain spectacular gifts of the Spirit are indeed discerned by church authorities in some individuals as gifts of God, we should celebrate them. We would celebrate them, however, in the context of service to the whole Christian community. There are, however, so many others who quietly are truly being led by the Spirit, as it is evidenced by the *fruits of the Spirit* in their lives. Let us celebrate these, by thanking God for such people, encouraging them and trying to emulate them. Let us also celebrate our spiritual gifts by consciously letting ourselves live and be guided by the Spirit, eschewing pride, unhealthy competitions, envy and selfish ambitions (Gal 5:25-26; Phil 2:3-4)!



Daily Prayer for MSP

Heavenly Father, you created us and you care for us:
We thank you for taking the Missionary Society of St. Paul into your care.

We ask you to continue to watch over us. Fill us with your love, and help us to build a family where each member irrespective of tribe, feels at home with other members and is encouraged to give his best in the missionary work.

Lord Jesus, you died for us and you call us to be your witnesses to the ends of the earth: we thank you for enabling us to participate in this your saving work among people of every race. Fill us with zeal and a sense of commitment like St. Paul, to bear witness to your love and reconciliation. Help us with a lifestyle that will make us proclaim your Word with power and conviction. Send us your grace to make good whatever

is lacking in us as individuals and as a Society.

O Holy Spirit, you enlightened the hearts of the apostles, we beseech you now to continue to enlighten us and consecrate us in the truth. May each of us realize how invaluable our contributions can be, and thus invest our energies towards the success of our missionary endeavours. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Our Lady Queen of Apostles, pray for us
St. Paul our Patron, pray for us,
May the souls of our departed MSP brothers, AMSP brothers and sisters, and the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.
Amen.

(To be said daily by all MSP and AMSP)

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