



Proceedings of the Third  
International Conference of  
The Theological Institute of  
Consecrated Life in Africa

**COLLABORATIVE  
MINISTRY  
IN MISSION:  
A SOCIO-PASTORAL  
APPROACH**

**KANU, Ikechukwu Anthony, O.S.A (Ed)**

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A Publication of  
Theological Institute of Consecrated Life in Africa

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THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE OF  
CONSECRATED LIFE IN AFRICA

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*To all Missionaries in Africa and beyond*

## Foreword

In 2017, the Theological Institute of Consecrated Life in Africa organized the First International Conference on Collaborative Ministry in Mission and Canonical Processes. This Conference was held in Abuja with facilitators from the Congregation for the Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic life. The conference was the first of its kind and thus left a mark on the history of the Church in Nigeria. The conference introduced the Theological Institute of Consecrated Life in Africa aimed at providing qualified service to Consecrated Life through the systematic theological research on Consecrated Life in its various dimensions and aspects; the academic training, by conferring academic degrees, Doctorate, Licentiate and Master; the research and publication of various works on Consecrated Life and other services to Consecrated Life, such as counselling, animation of retreats, chapters, etc.

Last year, 2018, the Theological Institute of Consecrated Life in Africa organized the Second International Conference on Collaborative Ministry, looking at it from different perspectives: Doctrinal/Church documents perspective, Cultural/African perspective, Biblical perspective/St. Paul's experience, Skills and Challenges of Collaboration. More interesting about this second international conference is the fact that it did not only bring together consecrated persons of different affiliations but also diocesan priests to discuss the issue around collaboration. The conference was a huge success and would remain in the minds of those who attended a reference point for many years to come.

This year 2019, the institute focussed on “Collaborative Ministry in Mission: A Socio-Pastoral Approach”. I, therefore, present to you the book of proceedings of the Third International Conference of the Theological Institute of Consecrated Life in Africa. My sincere gratitude goes to Rev. Fr. Prof. Kanu Anthony, O.S.A who edited this book of proceedings, and also all those who worked hard towards the success of the Conference. We look forward to a more interesting and engaging conference in 2020.

***Very Rev. Fr. Daniel Onyeayana, CMF***

*Delegate Superior, Claretian Missionaries West Delegation*



## Introduction

The visit of Pope Francis to the US in 2015 was historic for various reasons. Even years after he returned to Rome, the images of his encounters in Washington, New York and Philadelphia remain vivid and moving. Very striking was his emphasis on the need for collaboration. The Roman Pontiff called upon the Church to be more collaborative than ever in its ministry, not building walls but “breaking them down.” It is therefore not surprising that during the past three years, collaborative ministry in mission has been the central theme of discourses at the International Conferences organized by the Theological Institute for Consecrated Life in Africa.

The document on Mutual Relations recognizes that in principle, collaboration between two entities is a project. Like every other project, collaboration does not occur because of the act of will of the parties. It presupposes objective laws and conditions which facilitate a relationship, and which must be respected and implemented. People must make conscious effort to build it. Primarily, the efforts should be directed to the renewal of the bonds of fraternity and cooperation between the diocesan clergy and communities of religious (cf CD 35, 5). MR enjoins that in order that the relations produce increasingly more fruitful results, they must be developed in cordial respect for persons and institutes, in the conviction that religious must give witness of docility towards the Magisterium and of obedience to their superiors, and-with the mutual understanding to act in such a way that neither transgresses the limits of competency' of the other (MR, 45). Great importance should therefore be placed on all those means, even though simple and informal, which serve to increase mutual trust, apostolic solidarity and fraternal harmony (MR, 37; cf. ESI, 28).

The present work titled: COLLABORATIVE MINISTRY IN MISSION: A SOCIO-PASTORAL APPROACH is a collection of the presentations at the Third International Conference of the Theological Institute for Consecrated Life in Africa. I strongly recommend this book of proceedings to anyone who wishes to be abreast with important debates and developments in collaborative ministry.

***KANU, Ikechukwu Anthony, O.S.A.***

*Professor of Religion and Cultural Studies*

*Tansian University, Nigeria*

## **WELCOME ADDRESS**

*Very Rev. Fr. Simeon Okezuo Nwobi, CMF*  
*President, Conference of Major Superiors of Nigeria (Men) &*  
*Provincial, Claretian Missionaries, Eastern Province*

His Grace, Most Rev. Alfred Adewale Martins, Archbishop of Metropolitan See of Lagos.

His Lordship, Most Rev Hilary Dachelem, CMF (Liaison Bishop of the Religious).

Very Rev. Fr. Henry Omonisaye, CMF (Representative of the Superior General Very Rev. Fr. Mathew Vattamattam, CMF).

Rt. Rev. Msgr. John Aniagwu, Episcopal Vicar Archdiocese of Lagos.

Rev. Mother General Claude Ogu, IHM, President, Nigeria Conference of Women Religious.

Very Rev. Fr. Daniel Mary Onyeayana, CMF (Major Superior - West Nigeria Delegation).

Distinguished and Revered Professors and Presenters.

Beloved Reverend Fathers, Brothers and Sisters, and esteemed Lay Faithful.

### **Introduction**

Greetings from the Conference of Major Superiors of Nigeria (Men). It is on their behalf that I welcome you to the 3rd International Conference on Consecrated life, organized by the Theological Institute of Consecrated Life in Africa. In the name of the Conference of Major Superiors of Nigeria I express our sincere gratitude to the Claretian Missionaries of Nigeria and Africa for this great opportunity for us to reflect together our common mission. The first and second editions of this annual Conference were exciting, creative, educative and highly enriching. It is a laudable initiative taken by the Claretian Missionaries to give all

who are involved in missionary work a platform to dialogue and exchange ideas on how best we can effectively be witnesses in the present age. This conference no doubt gives missionaries opportunity to be salt to the earth and light to the world (cf. Matt. 5: 13) in such a way that we can sincerely work well among ourselves as priests, religious and the lay faithful.

Last year's conference focused on collaborative ministry among the Diocesan priests and the Religious. It was the first time the Diocesan Priests and the Religious had a conference at that our own ministry and are now ready to sell the same success we have harvested in our own ministry to others, our intended audience, our collaborators and the plan we have for future ministries.

Movement towards a more shared style of leadership necessitates change on the part of the people involved. While the purpose of ministry remains unchanged, the mission of Christ, the method for accomplishing this task today calls forth attitudes, behaviors and skills different from those needed in the past. Even when the concept of collaborative ministry is attractive and desirable, ministers may experience difficulties in developing a more collaborative style of ministry.

Most individuals who are confronted with change show a certain degree of resistance. This resistance interferes with movement towards a more shared concept of ministry. If the goal is greater collaboration, then time must be spent to identifying what stands in the way.

To consider this theme, I would want us to examine the following areas which may constitute some socio-pastoral obstacles to collaborative ministry. These include: Attitudes (competitiveness, parochialism, arrogance and burnout) and Behaviors (hostility, unwillingness to deal with loss, learned helplessness, failure to share faith, lack of commitment or training and failure to integrate sexuality). For want of time let us briefly examine the first part - attitudes.

## **Attitudes**

### *Competitiveness*

We live in a world that fosters values and rewards competitiveness. A spirit of competition can stimulate a person to explore new expressions of creativity and to unfold new avenues of growth and human potential. Competition among teams, for example, also illustrates the necessity for working together with others, for combining talents and gifts most effectively in reaching a goal. However, some people develop a destructive competitiveness that blinds them to the gifts of others and interferes with their freedom to unite their gifts with others in the ministry, the cause, arrogance is destructive of collaboration. Arrogance can affect anyone in the People in position of authority may perceive themselves as superior to those they are Presumably, they may have been elected or chosen because of their leadership qualities and abilities have been recognized and called forth. It is important for leaders to remember that leadership gifts and abilities are not superior to other gifts, only different.

### *Arrogance*

Arrogance is difficult to eradicate because most people find it difficult to perceive it in themselves, although they can readily recognize it in others. It is a pernicious obstacle. It is observed that skill training in collaborative ministry will not result in much growth unless we intentionally focus also on helping people uncover their arrogant attitudes. We have noticed in countless situations of superiority and arrogance towards the laity by presuming that they have much to be taught them. In this reaction, we also have to observe some laity who presume that they are better qualified for some ministries than the clergy and religious, simply because they are laity. Both cases exemplify an arrogance based on role rather than gift. Since arrogance is usually difficult to perceive in ourselves, we need the feedback of others to assist us in coming to fuller self-knowledge. One test of a person's desire to

achieve self-knowledge is the willingness to seek out honest feedback from others.

### *Burnout*

The large number of journal articles on the topic of burnout would seem to indicate the widespread presence of this sometimes vague malady among helping professionals, including ministry. Burnout is an obstacle because those who experience it lack energy and/or interest to engage in collaborative ministry. A review of the type of persons who are vulnerable to burnout can aid personal reflection. In an informative article on burnout among those in ministry, a Jesuit psychiatrist James Gill identified potential candidates for burnout as those who:

- work exclusively with distressed persons
- Work intensively with demanding people who feel entitled to assistance in solving their personal problems
- charged with the responsibility for those too many individual
- are perfectionists and thereby invite failure
- cannot tolerate variety, novelty or diversion in their work life

These and similar questions prepare the persons for stage three. The effect of these two stages of burnout on collaborative ministry is apparent. The invitation to minister with someone whose life conveys sadness and exhaustion is hardly attractive to healthy individuals. Such persons tend to repel potential ministers rather than attract them. In addition those experiencing constant exhaustion lack the energy to engage in anything beyond normal individual activities.

Ladies and Gentlemen, it is not my wish to bore you with these information. I have the confidence that the experts who have been invited and who will be giving lectures on the different topics relating to our general theme will do justice to their different areas of collaborative sharing of experiences that may help to enrich all.

Once more, welcome and thanks for your attentive listening.

## **THE VISION AND MISSION OF TICLA**

*Very Rev. Fr. Henry Omonisaye, CMF  
General Consultor and President of the Board of the  
Institutes of Consecrated Life,  
Claretian Missionaries General curia, Rome*

Your Excellencies, Superiors General, Major Superiors, my Sisters and Brothers.

I wish to use this medium to welcome you all to the third conference on Consecrated Life organized by the Claretian Missionaries as a step towards bringing into greater lime light the establishment of the Theological Institute of Consecrated Life in Africa. It is particularly heartwarming to acknowledge the presence of your Excellencies at this edition of the Conference. It is a clear demonstration of the communion that exists with the local Church. This is more imperative when taken within the context of the theme chosen for these days- Collaborative Ministry in Mission.

### **The Vision and Mission of TICLA**

#### ***What is TICLA?***

TICLA is the acronym for Theological Institute of Consecrated Life for Africa. It is a Theological Institute that will focus primarily on Consecrated Life as a form of life and vocation in the Church. This will of course take into cognizance all the theological implications and dimensions.

The Claretian Congregation has been involved in the Institutes of Consecrated Life with the establishment of Claretianun, Rome in 1935. *Claretianum* officially became an Institute with all the rights and privileges of an ecclesiastical Institute with the decrees

of the Vatican on 6th June 1971, 47 years and about 5 months ago. With the official establishment of the Theological Institute of Consecrated Life (*Claretianum*) in Rome and the *Instituto Teológico de Vida Religiosa* in Madrid, same year, 1971. We have over the years consolidated this service to Consecrated Life in the other Continents with the establishment of a similar Institute- 1996 in Quezon City, Philippines and in 1998 in Sanyasa, Bangalore (Bangaluru) in India. Thus, we have:

- The *Istituto di Teologia della Vita Consecrata - Claretianum* (ITVC) in Rome, Italy, incorporated to the Pontifical Lateran University in Rome.
- The *Instituto Teológico de Vida Religiosa* (ITVR), in Madrid, Spain, a section of the Faculty of Theology of the Pontifical University of Salamanca.
- The *Institute for Consecrated Life in Asia* (ICLA) in Culiati Quezon City, Philippines, affiliated to the Faculty of Theology of the Pontifical University of Santo Tomas in Manila and recognized also by “St. Anthony Mary Claret College” in Quezon City.
- The *Sanyasa Institute of Consecrated Life* (SICL), in Bangalore, India, affiliated to the Pontifical Lateran University in Rome and associated with “Christ University” of Bangalore.

You can obviously see that we have 2 Institutes each in Europe and Asia. Africa is up till now, visibly absent in the whole project. We think it would be important to establish one in Africa given the number of Religious Institutes in Africa and some locally founded Institutes that would require a lot of help and formation in building up their vision and charism for the good of the Church in Africa. We have the same vision and mission for Africa that is part of the *raison d'etre* here today. With this seminar, we want to start this



project which will involve building of Structures- physical, academic, spiritual and formative in service of the Church in Africa. The project is also on in Colombia For the American Continent.

Let me just quickly add that the service to the Church in the Area of Consecrated Life is not restricted to the Academic (the different Institutes) level but more practically many of our brothers work in the Congregation for Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life in the Vatican and some are Consultants to the Holy See in this and other spheres especially in the discipline of Canon Law.

### ***Mission***

In our Corporate Statement of the Theological Institutes of Consecrated Life (TICL) the set of principles, motivations and criteria that guide the mission of the Claretian centers serving Consecrated Life (CL) within the Church and the entire evangelizing mission of the Church as a whole is presented. Therefore, we conceive and develop our mission within the evangelizing mission of the universal Church, under the guidance of the Magisterium of the Church directed to Consecrated Life and the guidelines and directives issued by the particular churches.

We are inspired also by the very special dedication of St. Anthony Mary Claret, our founder, to Consecrated Life and heirs to a long history of missionary service to Consecrated Life in the world developed by our Congregation. Therefore, following his explicit desire, our theological Institutes unreservedly offer their service with renewed dynamism to Consecrated Life in its rich diversity.

This diversity is an important aspect of this Institute as it stands to contextualize the reflection on Consecrated Life taking into cognizance the diversity, fecundity and values of different cultural

milieu where it serves. Therefore, the African values and points of view will be part of the ingredients of TICLA.

### **Motivation and purpose of our missionary work**

We unite our efforts to better support the process of formation and renewal of CL in today's world, meeting the guidelines of the Church and in permanent dialogue with the various socio-cultural contexts.

We are living in the era of globalization. Therefore, working together, we intend to give a qualified answer to the challenges posed to Consecrated Life today especially in Africa. We also take seriously into account the ecclesiology of communion and the new theology of the forms of Christian life. These are not also strange to us in Africa.

We adopt as a priority the specific theological reflection on Consecrated Life in tune with the guidelines of Vatican II. We continue to further deepen the prophetic and eschatological dimension of Consecrated Life. We opt for a comprehensive and thorough training of those who will be the future leaders of the Church's mission or will have responsibilities in formation.

Therefore, we develop this qualified service to Consecrated Life through,

- The systematic theological research on Consecrated Life in its various dimensions and aspects.
- The academic training (by conferring academic degrees, Doctorate, Licentiate and Master).
- The research and publication of various works on Consecrated Life
- Other services to Consecrated Life, such as counseling, animation of retreats, chapters, etc.

**Priorities, areas of cooperation and coordination structures;  
Guidelines, criteria and priorities of our curriculum:**

Our missionary work in the TICLA will start with an accurate attention to the cultural, religious, socio-political, etc. context, both globally and locally.

In our service to Consecrated Life we adopt a holistic approach that aims to address the student's person comprehensively, covering both the academic and life experience.

Our academic plans give priority to fundamental subjects such as:

- The inspiration and biblical foundation of CL.
- The history and experience of CL.
- The theological reflection on the various forms of CL and of evangelical life (monastic, contemplative life, apostolic life, secular institutes, new forms of consecrated life).
- The systematic study of the theological elements of CL (consecrated life, relative to other forms of Christian life, evangelical counsels, community life, mission).
- The study of CL as a gift of God to the Church in its various charisms.
- The development of the theology CL benefits also of the contributions of those sciences that provide essential insights into human baseline (anthropology, psychology, sociology, law). Some of our students will probably become formators in their respective institutes. This is why a particular attention to educational matters is given in our academic plans.

### **Areas and forms of cooperation/collaboration**

We join forces to optimize the results of the research and teaching of the theology of CL. For this purpose, we want to increase the collaboration of professors from various institutes, (intra-congregational) and different other Religious Institutes and societies of Apostolic Life (Inter-congregational).

### **Conclusion**

The TICLA project has the objective of enhancing and promoting quality of Consecrated Life in Africa through the service of the Institute. We consider this kind of Institute as being indispensable for the continent now because of its epistemological, religious and institutional advantages for the Church in Africa and the different religious institutes that are in the continent. Permit me to conclude by saying that we thank God for the numerous vocations that we have in Africa, especially for the growth of the Church not only in Africa but universally. It would, therefore, be our collective responsibility to prepare, train and make people available for the Mission Dei. This is what TICLA aims at and with the cooperation of the Nigeria Church and gracious permission of his Eminence, John Cardinal Onaiyekan, the Archbishop of Abuja in whose territory the institute will be established. It is our hope that the construction of the Institute will begin a new phase in the growth of the theology of Consecrated Life in Africa.

## GOODWILL MESSAGE

*Mother Mary Claude Oguh, IHM*

*President, Nigerian Conference of Women Religious*

It is a thing of joy to be part of this noble project of the Claretian Missionaries, which is a series that has been running since 2017. These conferences actually are hoped to give birth to a magnificent institute, the Theological Institute of Consecrated Life for Africa (TICLA), which will enrich the whole Church in Africa and Nigeria in particular. Religious Life in Africa seems to be struggling with her identity and faces challenges that require solid and sound theological foundation and interpretation. For this reason this initiative is timely. It invites all stakeholders, especially consecrated men and women, for an in-depth conversation.

As the President of the NCWR and on behalf of all the Superiors and women Religious in Nigeria, I congratulate and encourage the Claretian Missionaries in this great endeavour. This year the focus is on creating a platform for socio-pastoral dialogue between the different Pastoral Agents in Nigeria: the Clergy, the Consecrated Men and Women and the Lay Faithful. This is a very unique platform for effective and efficient collaboration in ministry.

In his message at the 6<sup>th</sup> *Ordinary Assembly of International Forum for Catholic Action*, Pope Benedict XVI invited the participants to reflect on "ecclesial and social co-responsibility". For him, the laity are not just collaborators of the clergy, but rather are "really 'co-responsible' for the Church's being and acting. It is therefore important that a mature and committed laity be consolidated, which can make its own specific contribution to the ecclesial mission ... and always in cordial communion with the bishops." (cf. Pope Benedict. 10<sup>th</sup> August, 2012).

We are happy that this conference will also have a look at the Post

Synodal exhortation on the Youth in the Church, *Christus Vivit*, and the sensitive and delicate issue of sexual abuse of minors and protection of vulnerable adults.' There is urgent need to protect our youth and keep the Church environment safe.

There is a need to prepare our young people as the Church of tomorrow. The Holy Father notes that they have a lot to offer that they "can help keep the Church young ... keep her to be poorer and to bear better witness ... to fight for justice ... can offer the Church the beauty of youth ... to' give unreservedly of herself, to be renewed and to set out for ever greater accomplishments." (cf. *Christus Vivit*, n.37)

He equally invites those who are no longer young to keep close to the young people noting that "Drawing together creates the condition for the Church to become a place of dialogue and a witness life giving fraternity to a listening makes possible an exchange of gifts in a context of empathy a listening that set the conditions for a preaching of the Gospel that can touch the heart truly, decisively and fruitfully." (*ibid* n. 38)

It is my hope that this conference will open us up, as Pastoral Agents, to a more effective and better collaboration in the mission of Christ and our different apostolate. I also believe strongly that the Religious in Nigeria are going to collaborate with the Claretian Missionaries to achieve a maximum success of this TICLA project.

## KEYNOTE ADDRESS

*Mrs Geraldine Chizubie Igboanugo*  
*President, Lagos Archdiocesan Laity Council*

I welcome you all to the Archdiocese of Lagos. As we have gathered today to review the *Christus Vivit* in the, Collaborative Mission of the Church with the theme, Laity as indispensable partners' in the evangelization mission of the Church ..

The theme is very relevant in our time when most Catholics and especially leaders in the Church have deviated from the major reason why we as people of God have been called into his vineyard to work.

It is very important that we understand that the Clergy and Lay faithful are all Christ's faithful, people of God and therefore of one family, the common Priesthood. The Clergy have been specially selected from the common priesthood which we all belong to, to the ministerial Priesthood and ordained to teach, sanctify and nourish the Lay people of-God, If we are then drawn from the same family and chosen for the same salvific mission of the Church, we cannot achieve that which our Father has sent us to do without collaborating with one another.

The Era when the Church was regarded as Father's Church has gone and the Church has found it of great importance that the Laity works with the clergy and the religious for evangelization to be truly moved to the ends of the earth. This therefore calls for the use of our Time, Talent and treasure to ensure that, that which Our Father has sent us to do is accomplished. Our Catholic social teachings throw more light on what is expected of us as Catholics.

Although we are called to collaborate with our Priests and Religious, it does not erode the hierarchy of the Church but calls for mutual respect

between the two in order to have a harmonious relationship.

The Lay faithful in *Christi Fidelis Laici*: A post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation of Pope John Paul II, have been told that the hour has come for re-evangelization and that we have been appointed to go forth and bear fruits.

Let us then wake up from, our passive participation in the work of evangelization and work in collaboration with our Priests and Religious who have been selected from amongst us to perform very special and exulted role in the Church. In playing that roll, let us not forget the young ones who need to be nurtured and groomed for the work of evangelization. Taking from *Christus Vivit*, Chapter one, item 10:

Solomon, when he had to succeed his father, felt lost and told God: "I am a mere youth, not knowing at all how to act" (1 Kg 3:7)." Yet the audacity of youth moved him to ask God for wisdom and he devoted himself to his mission." Can we then exploit this audacity by inflaming their enthusiasm in order for them to make great exploits for the Church and the Kingdom of God? How do we collaborate to keep 'Christianity and the Church ever young?

May God who has admonished us in Mathew 20:4, "to go into His vineyard too" grant us the grace of love, respect and encouragement for one another as we work together as one to move the mission of Evangelization to the ends of the earth.



# THE CLERGY, CONSECRATED PERSONS AND THE LAITY IN THE MISSION OF UPLIFTING THE SANCTITY AND DIGNITY OF THE FAMILY

*Msgr. John Aniagwu*

*St. Leo's Catholic Church, Ikeja, Lagos,*

## **Introduction**

The Fifth Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops in 1980 was the first synod at which Pope St. John Paul II presided as Pope. The subject matter was the *Christian Family*. I believe that underlines the importance, the Pontiff, attached to the Christian family.

In the aftermath of the synod, the Pope issued the usual Apostolic Exhortation, titled *Familiaris Consortio: Regarding the Role of the Christian Family in the Modern World*<sup>1</sup>. I believe that this has to be the seminal document of the Magisterium on the subject since the Second Vatican Council. In discussing the topic of this paper, I shall rely very much on the content of that exhortation.

In this paper, what I understand as the Christian family is the nuclear family of a man and a woman and their offspring. The man and woman will be those who have sealed their union in the Sacrament of Matrimony. While I recognize and respect the traditional African notion of the extended family; it will not be part

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<sup>1</sup>John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris Consortio: Regarding the Role of the Christian Family in the Modern World*, in *The Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortations of John Paul II*, ed. J. Michael Miller, CS6 (Huntington, Indiana: Our Sunday Visitor, 1998), pp. 148-233. The abbreviation FC will be used subsequently for this Exhortation.

of my discussion. I shall not be considering either the many cases of baptized Christian couples who may have contracted marriage according to traditional or civil rites, without sealing their union in the Sacrament of Matrimony.

I shall begin by discussing the sanctity and dignity of the family from the Christian (Catholic) point of view. Thereafter, I shall look at the respective roles that the clergy, consecrated persons and the lay faithful have to play in preserving and uplifting the sanctity and dignity of the family.

### **The teaching of Scripture**

The biblical teaching on the family begins with the first book of Sacred Scripture. Genesis 2:18-24 tells the story of the creation of woman to be a "suitable helpmate" to the man God had earlier created. Genesis 1:28 had earlier related how God blessed the man and woman that he created to increase and multiply and fill the earth. The two texts taken together tell about the origin of the human family. What they say is that the family is from God. God, not man, not any culture or tradition, not any man or woman, created the family. God willed that the family should be, and so it came to be. That is already a first statement of the sanctity and dignity of the family.

Genesis 1:31 concludes the story of creation by saying that God looked at all he had created and found it to be livery good". That includes the family. The family, as a creation of God, is very good. It could not have been otherwise. God is good, indeed, God is Goodness itself. Therefore, whatever he creates must be good. He cannot create anything, and that thing will be less than good. That

is also a statement of the sanctity and dignity of the family.

The Old Testament tells the stories of numerous families, notably those of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, which gave origin to the Twelve Tribes of Israel; that is, the Hebrew (or Jewish) nation. Instructively, in the New Testament, Matthew opens his gospel with "An account of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the Son of Abraham" (Matthew 1:1), what is effectively the "Family Tree" of Abraham and his descendants.

In the New Testament, we witness a dramatic turn of events. God becomes a member of a human family. God, who created the family in the first place, now inserts himself within his own creation. He becomes a member of the Holy Family of Nazareth, the family of Mary, Joseph and the child Jesus.

I believe that there can be no more powerful statement of the sanctity and dignity of the family than this one: namely, that God himself became a member of a human family. By that singular act, God bestowed on the family a sanctity and a dignity that nothing else can match in all of creation.

The stories of Jesus' family in the New Testament are restricted to his infancy and early childhood, culminating in the "Finding in the Temple" when he was about twelve years old. After that, Joseph disappears completely from the scene. Mary makes only a few unheralded appearances during the public ministry of Jesus. The most telling of them was at the foot of the cross when her Son was paying the ultimate price for the salvation of the world. Her presence and agony made her a participant in the sacrifice of her Son. She suffered and died with him, thereby actively participating in the redemptive sacrifice of the Saviour of the world.

The Apostle Paul gives some explicit teaching on the family, especially in Ephesians 5:21-33 and 6:1-4. There, he spells out in some detail the roles of different members of the family within the family and in relation to one another.

### **The Magisterium**

The teaching of the Magisterium on the family is closely linked to the Church's doctrine on marriage. The point to note is almost too obvious to deserve mention. It is the fact that marriage is the foundation of the family. Consequently, whatever affects marriage has consequences for the family. Where a marriage is healthy and fulfilling the purpose set for it by its divine Author, the family stands every good chance of being healthy and stable. Where, on the contrary, a marriage is troubled or disturbed, that is likely to rub off negatively on the family as well.

Therefore, if a married couple is desirous of having a healthy and stable family, they must attend to the health of their union. They cannot allow their marriage to hit the rocks and somehow expect that their family will be just fine, unaffected by the crisis in their marriage. That will not happen, except by some unforeseen miracle.

According to *Familiaris Consortio*, the family has an *identity* and a *mission* in the world. The identity of the family is that of an intimate community of life and love."<sup>2</sup> In the family, new life comes into being by procreation. The parents communicate life to their offspring by bringing them into the world and bringing them up in the world. Such that communication of life is not just by way of biological transmission of life, but also by way of socialization, leading and guiding the offspring to find their proper place in both the civil and ecclesial communities.

Somewhat in keeping with the age-old scholastic maxim, *agere sequitur esse*, the mission of the family flows from its identity. That mission is to "*quard, reveal and communicate love*"<sup>2</sup>. According to *Familiaris Consortia*, this mission translates into four general tasks of the family, namely:

1. Forming a community of persons;
2. Serving life;
3. Participating in the development of society;
4. Sharing in the life and mission of the Church."

First of all, the family has the responsibility of establishing its own self as a community of persons. This can be achieved in several ways. One of them is by *presence*, simply being there for one another. The family should spend a lot of quality time with one another, praying together, eating together, socializing together, even going on outings together, notwithstanding the exigencies of work and professional life. I would like to emphasize the aspect of praying together, because, as the old adage goes, "*the family that prays together stays (happily) together.*"

*Familiaris Consortio* divides the second task, that of "serving life" into two sub-tasks. The first is "transmission of life." First of all, the transmission of life engenders the family. After being joined in marriage, a couple creates a family by procreation; that is, by bringing new life into the world. Traditionally, this has been labeled one of the "ends of marriage", one of the purposes that God created marriage to serve. (cf. Genesis 1:28) Therefore, one of the purposes that marriage is meant to serve is to give rise to family.

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<sup>2</sup>Familiaris Consortia, 17.2

The enduring teaching of the Catholic Church has been that conjugal love between a married couple must always be open to the transmission of new life. It is on this ground that she rules out every measure aimed at shutting the transmission of life from conjugal love, such as by the use of artificial means of family planning, otherwise known as "birth control" or "contraception".

The family does not only have the task of transmitting life. It also must protect and promote human life as well. It should stand up in stout defense of the sanctity and inviolability of every human life, beginning with the life of everyone within itself (the family), including the unborn life. When life has been transmitted, the family has the duty of ensuring that it gets all it needs to develop and mature until it reaches its full potential as a human person. In doing so, the family has a powerful ally in the Church. In the words of *Familiaris Consortio*:

The Church is called upon to manifest to everyone with clear and stronger conviction, her will to promote human life by every means and to defend it against all attacks, in whatever condition or state of development it is found."

The second aspect of the task of "serving life" is "education", understood in its integral sense as the "upbringing" of children. This goes well beyond the mere transmission of knowledge to embrace spiritual, emotional, psychological, social and physical development. All these must begin within the bosom of the family.

During the rite of baptism of infants, the parents are reminded more than once that they are to be the first teachers of their children in matters of the faith. That has to do with spiritual development. But it is applicable to the other areas of development as well. It is in the home, within the family, that the foundation of every form of

future development must be laid. If that foundation is lacking or deficient, whatever superstructure is put on it by other agents, including the Church, will be seriously at risk.

This underlines the importance of parents being there for their children to guide them through their early years of life. In this regard, I have some reservation about the practice today among many parents of entrusting their children to the care of other agents from as early as six months old. They do so because they are busy with their profession or going out to work so that they can provide materially for the family. In many cases, both parents leave home early, before day break and return late, after nightfall, for five or six days a week. When the weekend comes, they are too tired or they are again too busy with shopping or cooking for the following week to devote any kind of quality time to their children.

On the other hand, to be fair to the parents, the prevailing economic conditions make it extremely difficult for them to make ends meet if both parents do not go out and work on a daily basis. Unless they do so, they just may not be able to put food on the table for themselves and their children, not to talk about paying school fees, house rent, settling medical bills, and so on. As a result, many parents find themselves in quite a dilemma when it comes to the education, that is, upbringing of their children. They are faced with quite an uphill task. Yet, they must figure out some way of being optimally available for the upbringing of their children. The bible says, "What does it profit a man (or woman) if he (or she) gains the whole world and suffers the loss of his (or her) soul." (Mark 8:36) I like to paraphrase that by saying, "What' does it profit a couple if they gain the whole world and suffer the loss of their children."

The third task is "participating in the development of Society".

Through procreation and education, the family already participates in the development of society. The family is the nucleus of the society. The Society is the sum total of the families within it. Without family, there can be no society. Similarly, by educating its young in the different ways that I have already indicated - spiritually, intellectually, psychologically, emotionally, socially and physically- the family also contributes to the development of society.

However,' beyond procreation and education, Families either singly or in association, can and should devote themselves to manifold social service activities, especially in favour of the poor, or at any rate for the benefit of all people and situations that cannot be reached by the public authorities' welfare organization."

The teaching here is that families should not be selfish and self-centered, thinking of themselves alone and catering for themselves alone. They should also show an active concern for the well-being of the entire society. To use a biblical expression, they should be their brothers' and sisters' keepers. And it is actually in their own interest to do so. If they contribute to the development of the society and things go well with the society, the families themselves will be the beneficiaries. If things do not go well with the society because of any failure or refusal of the families to contribute to its development, the same families will be the major casualties.

The society does owe certain things to the family. There exists a social contract between the family and the society, written or not. By virtue of that contract, the family owes the society certain things for its development. Such things include respect for the rule of law, participation in the political process of choosing the leaders of society through elections, payment of legitimate taxes and dues,



and so on; all of which add up to giving to Caesar what belongs to Caesar. (cf. Matthew 22:21)

By virtue of the same contract, the society owes the family a lot of things. *Familiaris Consortia* has a section on lithe charter of family rights/S It says that lithe Church openly and strongly defends the rights of the family against the intolerable usurpations of society and the State, It then goes on to list fourteen (14) rights of the family that were specifically mentioned by the 1980 Synod of Bishops.

I have to say that, in a situation where the society does not keep or largely ignores its own side of the social contract, it is very difficult to ask the families to keep their own side. That is unfortunately the case in a country like Nigeria. We have a country where the Society, that is the State, is performing abysmally with regard to respecting the rights of the families and giving them what is their due as members of the society. Reading through the fourteen rights of the family listed by *Familiaris Consortia*, I cannot put my finger on a single one that the Nigerian Society or State is respecting at this time. We have a system that is heavily skewed towards serving the greed of the ruling class, and not the interests of the citizens.

In such a situation, one finds it very difficult to ask the families to contribute to the development of the society, knowing that what they contribute may end up in merely feeding the greed of the ruling class. For instance, if they pay taxes and dues, the majority of what they contribute will be used to pay the outrageous and totally unmerited salaries and allowances of political office holders. Little or none of it will be used to provide social amenities

and services for the benefit of the families and the general citizenry.

The fourth and final task of the family is "sharing in the life and mission of the Church." The family has been described as the "Domestic Church", the Church of the home. In light of this, the family participates in the mission of the Church, which is essentially, to carry out the *threefold function of Christ as prophet, priest and king*. The Christian family, therefore, can be seen as 1) a believing and evangelizing community, 2) a community in dialogue with God, and 3) a community at the service of man."

As a believing and evangelizing community, the family, in the words of Pope Paul VI, like the Church, ought to be a place where the Gospel is transmitted and from which the Gospel radiates. In a family which is conscious of its mission, all the members evangelize and are evangelized. The parents not only communicate the Gospel to their children, but from their children they can themselves receive the same Gospel as deeply lived by them. And such a family becomes the evangelizer of many other families, and of the neighbourhood of which it forms part.

*Familiaris Consortio* adds that the future of evangelization depends in great part on the Church of the home. The family will begin by evangelizing itself, being thoroughly permeated and suffused with the values of the Gospel. It can thereafter take that evangelization to every area of the ecclesial or civil society where it lives and carries out its everyday activities: the neighbourhood, the workplace, the school, clubs and societies, the Basic Christian Community, the parish, and so on. The aim will be to permeate all of them with the same values of the Gospel, either by word of

mouth or "witness of life", the two ways by which evangelization is to be carried out, according to the same Pope Paul VI.

Like the Church, the Christian family is called upon to exercise a "priestly role". That role can and ought to be exercised in intimate communion with the whole Church, through the daily realities of married and family life. In this way, the Christian family *is called to be sanctified and to sanctify the ecclesial community and the world.*

The Christian family has a mission to sanctify itself, to be a "holy family" in imitation of the model family, the Holy Family of Nazareth. This will happen if it is a praying family, a family where daily family prayer is high on the agenda, the celebration of the Sacraments, especially the Holy Eucharist, enjoys pride of place, reading and meditating on the word of God is part of the daily fare, family members are actively engaged in the life of the local ecclesial community (the diocese through the parish) through membership of ministries and Societies, and so on.

Having sanctified itself, and even while sanctifying itself, the family should be busy sanctifying the society and the world as well. It will do that by exactly the same measures that I have just listed for the family itself. Beyond that, members of the family should participate actively in spiritual activities organized by the local ecclesial community for itself, for the nation and for the world. Such activities will include retreats, prayer vigils, pilgrimages, congresses, and the like. In this regard, family members should be encouraged to participate in spiritual activities of an ecumenical nature, where they can gather with Christians of other denominations to pray for the needs of families, the whole

Christian Church, the nation and the world at large.

In fulfillment of its royal or kingly function, the Christian family should be at the "service of man". The "new law of love" binds members of a Christian family to serve God by serving their fellow men and women.

Just as Christ exercises his royal power by serving us, so also the Christian finds the authentic meaning of his participation in the kingship of his Lord in sharing his spirit and practice of service of man.<sup>3</sup>

Also, Inspired and sustained by the new commandment of love, the Christian family welcomes, respects and serves every human being, considering each one in his or her dignity as a person and as a child of God.<sup>4</sup>

And again, another task for the family is to form persons in love and also to practice love in all its relationships, so that it does not live closed in on itself, but remains open to the community, moved by a sense of justice and concern for others, as well as by a consciousness of its responsibility toward the whole society."<sup>5</sup>

Already observed earlier in this paper that the Christian family should not be closed in on itself, serving only its own interests and needs while ignoring those of others, individuals and families. On the contrary, it should deploy all the resources available to it to promote the interests and well-being of all in the society. While it is doing that, its own interests and well-being too will be served.

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<sup>3</sup>Familiaris Consortia 63.4

<sup>4</sup>Familiaris Consortia 64

<sup>5</sup>Synod of Bishops, Fifth Ordinary General Assembly, *Message to Christian Families in the Modern World* (October 24, 1980), 12: *L'Osservatore Romano* (English language edition, November 10, 1980, 6)

Pastoral care of the family, it must be emphasized once more that the pastoral intervention of the Church in support of the family is a matter of urgency. Every effort should be made to strengthen and develop pastoral care for the family which should be treated as a real matter of priority, in the certainty that future evangelization depends largely on the domestic Church.

The Church must care for the family. It is her vocation and mission to do so. God who created the family, Christ who was a member of a human family expect the Church to care for the family. The comments of St. Paul in Ephesians 5 and 6 suggest that the Church in apostolic times cared for the family. Today's Church can do no less than care for the family. That is what we call the "pastoral care of the family."

This care begins with the pastoral care of marriage, since marriage is what gives rise to the family. Like every other Sacrament in the Church, notably the Sacraments of Initiation and Holy Orders, marriage requires preparation. This preparation is in stages. There is a *remote preparation* which begins in early childhood. Then follows a *proximate preparation* of adolescents and young people who may eventually get married. There is the *immediate preparation* for couples that have already decided to tie the matrimonial knot. There is also a need for a post-matrimonial care of marriage. Unfortunately, this last one is often not provided. Its absence may account for some of the problems that couples encounter in their marriage. One would wish for greater attention to be paid to this aspect of pastoral care of marriage by the Church, especially here in Nigeria.

The pastoral care of the family begins at the level of the parish.

Usually, there is a diocesan programme of pastoral care of families. Where it does not exist, the diocese should formulate one. Once it is formulated, every parish in the diocese should key into it. For instance, here in the Archdiocese of Lagos, we have a Family and Human Life unit in the department of Church and Society. That is the unit responsible for the formulation and implementation of an archdiocesan programme of pastoral care of the family. Every parish is required to constitute its own Family and Human Life committee to implement the archdiocesan programme of pastoral care of the family.

It must be noted that the first agent of pastoral care of the family is the family itself. The Christian family should see to its own health and well-being. It should strive to live its own life as a family in a way that follows the teaching of Scripture and the Magisterium for the Christian family, while carefully avoiding everything that is contrary to it. If the family does not care for itself, there is little that other agents can achieve in trying to care for it. A family that does not care for itself cannot be receptive to any kind of care coming from external agents, whoever they may be.

Another agent of pastoral care are the associations for families. Where such associations exist, they can be of great help in supporting the efforts of the families themselves. Christian families should be encouraged to join such associations and be active in them.

*Familiaris Consortia* mentions specifically as "Agents of the Pastoral care of the Family", Bishops and priests, men and women Religious, Lay specialists, recipients and agents of social communicator."

The person principally responsible in the Diocese for the pastoral care of the family is the Bishop.... He must devote to it personal interest, time, personnel and resources, but above all personal support for the families and for all those who, in various diocesan structures, assist him in the pastoral care of the family.

The front line of personnel that bishops will enlist to assist them in caring for families are the priests, especially parish priests (pastors) and their associates/assistants. In the parish, priests should be personally involved in caring for the families of the parish. They cannot delegate that responsibility to others, while they go to sleep. It is they, not anyone else, who are responsible to the bishop for the health and well-being of the families in their parish. They must unceasingly act toward families as fathers, brothers, pastors and teachers, assisting them with the means of grace and enlightening them with the light of truth."

Members of institutes of consecrated life can and should participate in the pastoral care of families in every local Church where they are present. They can and should, individually or as a group, take care of some special needs of families, like the care of children and the young, especially the needy and vulnerable ones among them. They can devote themselves to caring for troubled marriages and families that are facing difficulties. They can offer their services for the preparation for marriage at the various stages. Pope St. John Paul called on the heads of institutes of consecrated life to consider -always with substantial respect for the proper and original charism of each one- the apostolate of the family as one of the priority tasks, rendered even more urgent by the present state of the world."<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Familiaris Consortia 74.3

Some categories of lay persons receive specialized training in the care of families. They are doctors, lawyers, psychologists, social workers, counselors, and so on. They should use their professional expertise to promote the health and well-being of families. Beyond them, there are other lay persons who are trained specifically in Scripture, theology, canon law, counseling to assist in the pastoral care of families. Dioceses will do well to train, equip and deploy a sufficient number of such specialists for their needs.

Also worthy of mention are the practitioners of social communications. The influence of the means of social communications on every aspect of human life cannot be overstated. They are a powerful force for shaping the views and beliefs of people on all aspects of life for good or for ill. They can, therefore, and should be deployed creatively and positively in the pastoral care of families. They should be used to disseminate the authentic teaching of Scripture and the Magisterium on marriage and the family, while at the same time countering the many negative trends in the contemporary world.

It is a well-known fact that many practitioners of the means of social communications are actively engaged in propagating those negative trends. The Church should use the same means to demolish that propaganda. In order to do so effectively, the Church must train, employ and equip competent media practitioners among the clergy, religious and lay faithful who can take the battle effectively to that section of the secular media that is openly hostile to the Catholic Church and her teachings. There is no need to be apologetic here.

We must confront the hostile secular media decisively, and yield no quarters to it.



## Collaboration

Nowadays, it goes without saying that every ministry and activity of the Church must follow the collaborative path. That can be seen from several documents of the Magisterium. For instance:

Efforts should be made to renew the bonds of fraternity and cooperation between the diocesan clergy and communities of religious.... Great importance should therefore be placed on all those -means, even though simple and informal, which serve to increase mutual trust, apostolic solidarity and *fraternal harmony*.<sup>7</sup>

In order that the diocesan *presbyterium* express due unity and that the various ministries be better fostered, the bishop should with all solicitude exhort the diocesan priests to recognize gratefully the fruitful contribution made by religious to their Church and to approve willingly their nomination to positions of greater responsibility, which are consonant with their vocation and competency.<sup>8</sup>

Also, for their part consecrated persons will not fail to cooperate generously with the particular Churches as much as they can and with respect to their own charism, *working in full communion with the bishop* in the areas of evangelization, catechesis and parish life.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Sacred Congregation for Religious and for Secular Institutes and Sacred Congregation for Bishops, *Directives for the Mutual Relations between Bishops and Religious in the Church, Mutuae Relationes, MR, L'Osservatore Romano*, English Edition, No. 29 (538), July 20, 1978, 37.

<sup>8</sup> Sacred Congregation for Religious and for Secular Institutes and Sacred Congregation for Bishops, *Directives for the Mutual Relations between Bishops and Religious in the Church, Mutuae Relationes, MR, L'Osservatore Romano*, English Edition, No. 29 (538), July 20, 1978, 55

<sup>9</sup> John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation, *Vita Consacrata* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1996), 49.

With these statements in view, it becomes obvious that the pastoral care of the family too must follow the collaborative path. Under the leadership and direction of the diocesan bishop, all the agents mentioned in *Fami/iaris Consortio* should be invited and encouraged to make their own contributions to the pastoral care of the families within the diocese. When they are thus invited, they should make themselves readily available to work with the bishop and the diocesan *presbyterium* in providing that care. They should be seen and they should see themselves as joint stakeholders with the bishop and the diocesan clergy in the "apostolate of the family", since the family is the domestic Church, and the future of evangelization must necessarily pass through the family.

## **Conclusion**

In this paper, I have tried to show the sanctity and dignity of the family according to the teaching of Scripture and the Magisterium. That sanctity and dignity are very much under siege today. Some strange new definitions of the family are being peddled that are incompatible with the Bible and the Sacred Tradition of the Church. These stem from some .equally strange definitions of marriage.

What is the meaning of "same sex marriage"? Why call it "marriage" when the biblical definition of marriage and that of humanity until the most recent times is that of a union between persons of opposite sexes? If two persons of the same sex decide to cohabit, what sense does it make for them to want to bring children into their liaison, by way of adoption or surrogate motherhood, and call it a family? What becomes of the respective roles of father and

mother found in a regular marriage?

There are many other disturbing trends about marriage and the family in the contemporary world. But this paper is not about them. All that needs to be said is that the very presence of these trends makes it imperative to put in place an effective and well-structured programme of pastoral care of the family in each local Church. Christian families need to be assisted to stay well clear of the negative trends that are making the rounds today. They need to be equipped with sound knowledge and solid principles that will enable them to withstand the pressures that are being put on them by those who are seeking to erode the sanctity and dignity of marriage and the family.

The local Church should do these things for the families, using all the resources available to it. The first among those resources are the personnel at her disposal, clergy, religious and lay faithful. All of them should contribute to the programme of pastoral care of families in the ways and measures that they are capable. The local Ordinary will guarantee that the contribution of each individual or group is welcome and appreciated. If it is in harmony with the overall programme of the local Church, it will be taken on board. If, for any reason, it cannot be taken, the local Church will still express her gratitude, and duly explain why it cannot be taken.

Through the collaborative effort of all concerned, it can reasonably be expected that the needs of the families in the local Church will be largely met, and the sanctity and dignity of the family will both be preserved and enhanced for the greater good of both the Church and the Society.

# THE LAITY AS INDISPENSABLE PARTNERS IN THE EVANGELISATION MISSION OF THE CHURCH

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## **Introduction**

Let me just begin by taking you back to a passage we all know very well in the Acts of the Apostles concerning the conversion of St Paul- He was viciously persecuting Christians, "As he travelled along and was approaching Damascus, a light from the sky suddenly flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, 'Saul, Saul! Why do you persecute me?' He asked, who are you Lord? The voice replied, 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting.'"(Acts 9:3-5} What we heard in that passage is a classic description of what the Church is. The voice did not ask, why are you persecuting my followers, my church, my disciples, my priests ... but, why are you persecuting me? Those being persecuted here are not just the leaders but "anyone he might find, man or woman, belonging to the Way." The Church and Jesus are synonymous, the Church and Christ are One and inseparable. Whatsoever you do to the least of my brethren, that you do to me. The Church is the bride, Jesus is the husband, what God has joined, we must not divide. Your husband is indispensable, your wife is indispensable, Can any part of the Church be dispensable?

To deal with the topic, "The laity as Indispensable Partners in the Evangelisation Mission of the Church," I will like to begin by looking into what the Church means by Laity or Lay Faithful from *Christi fideles Laici*, "The term 'lay faithful' is here understood to mean all the faithful except those in Holy Orders and those who belong to a religious state sanctioned by the Church. Through

Baptism the lay faithful are made one body with Christ and are established among the People of God. They are in their own way made sharers in the priestly, prophetic and kingly office of Christ. They carry out their own part in the mission of the whole Christian people with respect to the Church and the world."<sup>1</sup> That definition begins from what they *are-fall the faithful*', to what they are *not-'except those in Holy Orders and those who belong to a religious state sanctioned by the Church.'* The point of entry into the membership of the Church is their baptism and by this, they are sharers in the life of Christ. Any other position within the body of the Church is only in addition to what they are *already-and that is always for service*. In that initiation lies the dignity of the Christian faithful.

When we talk of partners in this discussion, it has to do with the relationship between the Laity and the Ordained members of the flock. I said so because we are all members of the Church and can't therefore hope to be partners of the Church. Also I want to believe that evangelisation here means both the mission pre-Vatican II which Ratzinger calls "Classic Evangelisation"<sup>2</sup> and new way of passing on the gospel today which often emphasises New Evangelisation.

That we call it, 'New Evangelisation" does not mean a completely new approach or programme, as Saint John Paul II himself emphasized:

We are certainly not seduced by the naive expectation that - faced with the great challenges of our time -we shall find some magic

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<sup>1</sup>*Christifideles Laid* no.9; *Lumen Gentium* no.31

<sup>2</sup>Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, Address to Catechists and Religion Teachers: Jubilee of Catechists, On the New Evangelisation. December 2000.

formula. No, we shall not be saved by a formula but by a Person, and the assurance which he gives us: 'I am with you!' "It is not therefore a matter of inventing a "new programme". The programme already exists: it is the plan found in the Gospel and in the living Tradition, it is the same as ever. Ultimately, it has its centre in Christ himself, who is to be known, loved and imitated, so that in him we may live the life of the Trinity, and with him transform history until its fulfilment in the heavenly Jerusalem ... This is a programme which does not change with shifts of times and cultures, even though it takes account of time and culture for the sake of true dialogue and effective communication. This programme for all times is our programme for the Third Millennium. But it must be translated into pastoral initiatives adapted to the circumstances.<sup>3</sup>

In every age, we must continue to think of the existing tradition or programme of evangelisation but with a view to translating it into pastoral initiatives adapted to our time and circumstances. Let us briefly reflect on where we are coming from while keeping in our mind "present situation. Let us turn to the document which followed the Special Synod on Africa by, Paul IT, Ecclesia in Africa. It captures very Succinctly, the evangelising mission of the as it relates to Africa.

### **The Church's mission**

'Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to the whole creation' (Mk 16:15). Such is the mandate that the Risen Christ, before

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<sup>3</sup> John Paul II, *Novo Millennia Ineunte*. 29 ; Ratzinger agrees, "New evangelization means: never being satisfied with the fact that from the grain of mustard seed, the great tree of the Universal Church grew; never thinking that the fact that different birds may find place among its branches can suffice-rather, it means to dare, once again and with the humility of the small grain, to leave up to God the when and how it will grow (Mark 4:26-29)." Cardinal Joseph Ileo of Catechists, *On the New Evangelisation*. December 2000.

returning to his Father, gave to his Apostles: "And they went forth and preached everywhere" (Mk 16:20). "The task of evangelizing all people constitutes the essential mission of the Church ... Evangelizing is in fact the grace and vocation proper to the Church, her deepest identity. She exists in order to evangelize". Born of the evangelizing mission of Jesus and the Twelve, she is in turn sent forth. "Depositary of the Good News to be proclaimed" having been sent and evangelized, the Church herself sends out evangelizers. She puts on their lips the saving Word". Like the Apostle to the Gentiles, the Church can say: "I preach the Gospel ... For necessity is laid upon me. Woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel!" (1 Cor 9:16).<sup>4</sup>

The church's Mission as seen from the Lord's own mandate to his disciples above is to bring the world home to God by their proclamation of the Gospel to the whole of creation. This whole of creation includes both human and material. By their mission they will lead humanity back to its creator and through it further the kingdom of righteousness and peace. According to Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger in an address to Catechists on the New Evangelisation, "The Church always evangelizes and has never interrupted the path of evangelization. She celebrates the Eucharistic mystery every day, administers the sacraments, proclaims the word of life-the Word of God, and commits herself to

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<sup>4</sup> Ecclesia in Africa no. 55; the paragraph continues, "This testimony which the Christian bears to Christ and the Gospel can lead even to the supreme sacrifice: martyrdom (cf. Mk 8:35). For the Church and the Christian proclaim the One who is "a sign of contradiction" (cf. Lk 2:34). They preach "Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles" (1 Cor 1:23). As I said earlier, besides honouring the illustrious Martyrs of the first centuries, Africa can glory in its Martyrs and Saints of the modern age."

the causes of justice and charity. And this evangelization bears fruit: It gives light and joy, it gives the path of life to many people; many others live, often unknowingly, of the light and the warmth that radiate from this permanent evangelization.

Ratzinger's words suggests that the church's evangelistic mission is a permanent situation. There was no time when it was put on hold and no time was it the church stopped evangelising. He however in this same paper also acknowledge the loss of faith and de-Christianization taking place particularly in Europe which calls for New-Evangelisation, "However, we can see a progressive process of de- Christianization and a loss of the essential human values, which is worrisome. A large part of today's humanity does not find the Gospel in the permanent evangelization of the Church: That is to say, the convincing response to the question: How to live? This is why we are searching for, along with permanent and uninterrupted and never to be interrupted evangelization, a new evangelization, capable of being heard by that world that does not find access to "classic" evangelization. Everyone needs the Gospel; the Gospel is destined to all and not only to a specific circle and this is why we are obliged to look for new ways of bringing the Gospel to all."<sup>5</sup>

**Mode and purpose of evangelization as Ecclesia in Africa tells us that** the Church proclaims the Good News of Christ not only by the proclamation of the Word which she has received from the Lord, but also by the witness of life, thanks to which Christ's disciples bear witness to the faith, hope and love which dwell in

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<sup>5</sup> Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, Address to Catechist and Religion Teachers; Jubilee of Catechists, On the New Evangelisation. December 2000.



them (cf. 1 Pet 2:1S) ... The purpose of evangelization is "transforming humanity from within and making it new". In and through the Only Son the relations of people with God, one another and all creation will be renewed. For this reason the proclamation of the Gospel can contribute to the interior transformation of all people of good will whose hearts are open to the Holy Spirit's action.

One may also here note Ratzinger's caution, "Yet another temptation lies hidden beneath this is the temptation of impatience, the temptation of immediately finding the great Success, in finding large numbers. But this is not God's way. For the Kingdom of God as well as for evangelization, the instrument and vehicle of the Kingdom of God, the parable of the grain of mustard seed is always valid (see Mark 4:31-32). The Kingdom of God always starts anew under this sign. New evangelization cannot mean: immediately attracting the large masses that have distanced themselves from the Church by using new and more refined methods. No-this is not what new evangelization promises"

### **Field of mission**

The African continent is old but very youthful with many untapped resources, yet with many wasted resources- both human and material. According to the Synod Fathers, it is a continent fraught with woes of all kinds. "In a Continent full of bad news, how is the Christian message 'Good News' for our people? In the midst of an all-pervading despair, where lie the hope and optimism which the Gospel brings? Evangelization stands for many of those essential values which our Continent very much lacks: hope, peace, joy,

harmony, love and unity"? Since that synod, not much has changed on the positive side. In fact the hopes of the people have suffered a lot more and fast turning to despair since 1995 when that document was released. Out of fear, many more Africans are looking for greener pastures on the other side of the wall even when it is mere synthetic grass. Many are dying at sea and in the desert in an exodus that leads nowhere in particular. Africa like her sons and daughters is now adrift like a comet that destroys anything in its path. Where exactly are we?

In *Redemptoris Missio*, John Paul II explores three contexts in which the Church finds herself today, and he suggests some routes of evangelisation needed for each:

- (i) Persons and contexts where the Gospel has not yet been announced. What is needed here is primary proclamation, the basic communication of the Gospel.
- (ii) Persons and contexts where the faith is flourishing and vigorous. What is needed is on-going pastoral care of the faithful.
- (iii) Persons in intermediate situations: countries ... of ancient Christian origin, where people have been baptized, are of good will, are perhaps connected with us through, say, the school, but are either no longer (or maybe not yet) in a real, living relationship with Christ, or have drifted from the practice of faith. What is needed here is New Evangelisation.

It is however possible, that all of these contexts will exist in the same country or even the same Diocese. Some in need of primary proclamation, some in need of on-going pastoral care and others in

need of new evangelisation. From the Church's teachings on Mission and New Evangelisation, some of these are clear enough for all to see.

Evangelisation calls for the participation of every Christian.

Evangelisation is different from foreign missions.

Evangelisation is personal and also communal.

Evangelisation is directed to cultures, including the digital culture of today.

Evangelisation is ecumenical.

Evangelisation has a preferential option for the poor.

Evangelisation summons the Church to be evangelised Herself.

Evangelisation has the Holy Spirit as an Agent.

### **Agents of evangelisation**

The Holy Trinity is the Principal actor in evangelisation. The Father began it all by His constant intervention in the history of mankind. The Old Testament, is replete with the history of God's intervention from creation to Adam and Eve, Noah, Abraham, Moses etc. According to the Letter to the Hebrews, "God has spoken in the past to our fathers through the prophets at many times and in different ways, but in our times he has spoken definitively to us through a Son. He is the one whom God appointed heir of all things, and through whom he created the universe."<sup>6</sup> In the New

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<sup>6</sup> EA. 35i Pope Paul VI told Africans in Kampala in 1969, "By *now*, you Africans are missionaries to yourselves. The Church of Christ is well and truly planted in this blessed soil (d. Ad Gentes, 6). One duty, however, remains to be fulfilled: we must remember those who, before you, and even today with you, have preached the Gospel in Africa; for Sacred Scripture admonishes us to 'Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of Cod, consider the outcome of their life; and imitate *their* faith' (Heb 13:7). That is a history which we must not forget; it confers

Testament, we see a different level of God's intervention in the incarnation of the Word Made Flesh, who came to bring life and not condemnation. After his resurrection, Jesus mandated the disciples he had formed and prepared to go out and continue his mission to save the world. The Holy Spirit descended upon the Apostles to give them power and to remind them of all they had been taught by Jesus. This same Holy Spirit continues his work in our midst even today as a principal factor in the continuing mission of the Church and every apostolate that she undertakes. Going back to Ecclesia in Africa, we read, "The splendid growth and achievements of the Church in Africa are due largely to the heroic and selfless dedication of generations of missionaries. This fact is acknowledged by everyone. The hallowed soil of Africa is truly Sown with the tombs of courageous heralds of the Gospel." The Synod Fathers duly paid their respect to the missionaries as reflected in paragraph 36 of the same document. Aside the divine agents of evangelisation, there are also the human agents who are foot soldiers of God.

### **Priests and Consecrated Men and Women**

The Church's calendar of Saints, her well developed theology and the many men and women who through times and generations have adorned the priestly and religious garbs is a testimony to the works of these men and women who have dedicated their whole lives to the service of the Church, the world and the poor. Many of the earliest missionaries to Africa and indeed many parts of the world

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on the local Church the mark of its authenticity and nobility, its mark as 'apostolic'. That history is a drama of charity, heroism and sacrifice which makes the African Church great and holy from its very origins". EA 35

were priests and religious. But of course, there were many lay persons right from the very beginning of the missionary efforts of the church. From the persecutions that started in Jerusalem, to the different places evangelised by the Apostles including the Apostle to the Gentiles-Paul, as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, it is very clear that many were simply men and women of faith who did not belong to the presbyterate but who were passionately moved by the gospel they have heard and also gave their all to the proclamation of the gospel and the support of missionaries.

### **Lay Faithful's involvement**

Whenever and wherever the Church has faced persecution, it has always recorded more lay faithful martyrs than from among the priests and religious. In North Africa, Korea, Japan, Uganda and even here in Nigeria. "The Synod Fathers strongly reiterated their homage to the missionaries in their Message to the People of God, but they did not forget to pay tribute to the sons and daughters of Africa who served as co-workers of the missionaries, especially catechists and translators."<sup>7</sup> The Church's path to the future of evangelisation must be built primarily around proper education of the Laity on their role in making the kingdom of God present

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<sup>7</sup>EA. 35i Pope Paul VI told Africans in Kampala in 1969, "By now, you Africans are missionaries to yourselves. The Church of Christ is well and truly planted in this blessed soil (d. Ad Gentes, 6). One duty, however, remains to be fulfilled: we must remember those who, before you, and even today with you, have preached the Gospel in Africa; for Sacred Scripture admonishes us to 'Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of Cod, consider the outcome of their life; and imitate *their* faith' (Heb 13:7). That is a history which we must not forget; it confers on the local Church the mark of its authenticity and nobility, its mark as 'apostolic'. That history is a drama of charity, heroism and sacrifice which makes the African Church great and holy from its very origins". EA 36

everywhere. The great success the new age churches have recorded. can be attributed to a number of things: while many may talk about the monetary gains that it brings, their quick spread is built on the fact that they do not need a proper structure of many years of training like we do. Have we tried to understand how much the Holy Spirit inspired those early Catechists to understand the missionaries and the new faith and to influence the growth of faith in many communities without serious western education and theological trainings? If that was achieved, why do we have problems today working with even a more educated lay faithful? Are we afraid of something-their education, exposure, church finances? Why should that be? The faithful are our parents, Siblings, relations and community members.

### **Lay Faithful as indispensable partners**

Concerning "Indispensable," the Cambridge Dictionary says, "Something or someone that is indispensable is so good or important that you could not manage without it, him, or her."<sup>8</sup> As I mentioned at the beginning, this indispensability has to do with the relationship of the Laity with the ordained. In this first instance, the ordained have the Laity as his first catchment area of assignment. It is on the second level that he begins to deal with the non-baptised in most cases.

With what resources will the Church in Africa succeed in meeting the challenges just mentioned? "The most important [resource], after the grace of Christ, is the people. The whole

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<sup>8</sup><https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/indispensable>

People of God in the theological understanding of *Lumen Gentium* - this People, which comprises the members of the Body of Christ in its entirety - has received the mandate, which is both an honour and a duty, to proclaim the Gospel ... The whole community needs to be trained, and empowered for evangelization, each according to his or her specific role within the Church". For this reason the Synod strongly emphasized the training of the agents of evangelization in Africa. I have already referred to the necessity of formation for candidates to the priesthood and those called to the consecrated life. The Assembly also paid due attention to the formation of the lay faithful, appropriately recognizing their indispensable role in the evangelization of Africa. In particular, the training of lay catechists received the emphasis which it rightly deserves to.

We must acknowledge that we do not have enough parishes and priests to carry out the work of evangelisation in the best way possible. In the absence of that, we need Small Christian Communities served by competent community leaders. The market place and offices are avenues to evangelise. The media, the Television and Radio broadcast industry requires adequate presence and attention by the Church. These are places where most Priests and Religious are either not trained or cannot penetrate easily.

### **Whats the problem with our partnership**

One of the problems with our mode of evangelisation is basically that we have not defined what sort of evangelisation we are involved in because we have lumped together the permanent,

uninterrupted, and never to be interrupted evangelization with what the evangelicals and the pentecostals are doing. In the same light, we have failed to assign roles to the already identified agents of evangelisation. The materials are in the books, we acknowledge that we have to work together for the evangelisation of our people, but we have not agreed to shift grounds on what we hold presently. Let me speak from the angle of Seminary formation. If the Church exists to evangelise, how much emphasis was placed on that during formation? How much of practicals was done particularly with the area of primary evangelisation to non- Catholics? What model of evangelisation did you study in the course of formation aside parish ministry?

### **Necessary areas of partnership**

Some of the areas where good partnership is needed is in:

*The pastoral care of the parish-* The priest is just a member and the head of the parish yet he needs to work with the parishioners in developing pastoral activities of the parish and in successfully implementing it. The attitude of the parish priest is the first and most important element in pastoral evangelisation. If the commitment is not there on the side of the priest and if the parishioners cannot read a clear signal of a true pastor who is concerned for his sheep in their priest, all his words will not change a thing. We need to build confidence in the Laity to take up their roles.

*Care of priests and religious-* The safety and proper care of a priest is also necessary for him to carry out a fruitful mission of evangelisation. However, the dangers faced by the priest is also



another level of evangelisation for the courageous.

*Extra-ordinary ministers and Liturgical ministries-* According to Zeni Fox, "Ministry belongs to the whole Church, not a particular group. Official ministers have as a primary function the recognition of the charisms of all the people, and the development of pastoral practices that will enable and sustain the exercise of those charisms. It is the responsibility of official ministers to recognise and rejoice in the diverse ministers and ministries of the church. Studies of the new ministers show that they call many others to ministry; their efforts should continue, and grow.

*The financial administration of the Parish-* The priest relies on the parishioners to raise the funds necessary for the running of the parish, he needs some level of transparency particularly with the Finance Council of the parish.

*Parish Projects-*Most Priests are not experts in this area. Some may have gathered some experience in their many years of running projects if he has not done a post ordination training in the field. He therefore requires the help of competent lay persons.

*The media-*This is one area we often overlook and where many of our lay faithful are far ahead of the clergy and religious and so as a necessity we need them to propagate the faith using the modern means of communications. It might be necessary for dioceses to have communications and marketing groups among the faithful to help the priests and religious fulfil this task.

*Building faith in families-* The family is the domestic Church and a lot of what the society becomes is a result of what is going on in individual families. That is why we need to do a lot more in the family apostolate.

*Youth Ministries-* We often call the youths our future. Parents who fail to raise their children have no future in those children. Are we doing enough to raise our youths or are we just relying on the slogan that they are our future?

*In schools, hospitals and the marketplace-* While Church schools are in short supply and sometimes beyond what many of our faithful can afford, how do we make sure that the ordinary faithful on the street can remain educated and faithful to Christ?

*Politics-* While priests and religious are officially barred from partisan politics, the Lay Faithful must be trained and supported if the Church will have a voice outside of the pulpit.

*In a bid for a just world-* Justice in the courts and on the streets require that our Laity particularly those wearing the wigs also have a proper understanding of the Church's teaching on human dignity and its relationship with the world for a better world.

*In fighting corruption-* We pray for the eradication of poverty and corruption but corruption cannot be rooted by prayers only. It requires an enlightened Laity to fight this battle.

*In ecumenism-* While the official ecumenical activities are important, the unofficial ecumenism can only be successful if we have a laity that is well grounded in what the Church believes in relation to Non-Catholics and Non-Christians.

*Evangelisation through societies and Small Christian Communities-*At the level of the Small Christian Communities and even the street evangelism, we need a well-informed Laity to carry on the Mission of the Church to bring the world home to God.

### **Parish guidelines and the role of the Lay Faithful**

Of recent, we have had a great synergy on the side of the priests and lay people in the Archdiocese of Lagos in the drafting of the Guidelines for Parish Administration in Lagos. This has been followed by the implementation Committee of the same documents. To make sure that the implementation succeeds, the Archdiocese has followed it with the training of Priests in Leadership which is rounding up with the 3<sup>rd</sup> batch this month. One of those discoveries through this process is that we have been trained for years to become priests; with our ordination, we have leadership trusted upon us yet there has been no focus in our training specifically on leadership. This is one of those things hampering the relationship between priests, religious and lay faithful in Our parishes and institutions. A 25 year old becomes a priest and cannot even listen to many who are older than his parents when they advise him because he is the appointed leader of the community. This training will extend Soon to the leaders among the lay faithful as well. This is a new way of evangelising from within. If we cannot cooperate in our parishes, we cannot hope to bring those outside of the fold into the Church. The Fathers at the African Synod were very clear on this, *lithe* primary and most fundamental fact noted by the Synod Fathers is the thirst for God felt by the peoples of Africa. In order not to disappoint this expectation, the members of the Church must first of all deepen their faith. Indeed, precisely because she evangelizes, the Church must "begin by being evangelized herself". She needs to meet the challenge raised by 'this theme of the Church which is evangelized by constant conversion and renewal, in order to evangelize the world with credibility'<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup>EAno.47

### **Conclusion: The necessity of partnership**

The road to enhancing our partnership begins with the deepening of faith in our people.

The Church in Africa, in order to evangelize, must begin "by being evangelized herself ... She needs to listen unceasingly to what she must believe, to her reasons for hoping, to the new commandment of love. She is the People of God immersed in the world, and often tempted by idols, and she always needs to hear the proclamation of the 'mighty works of God' ". In Africa today "formation in the faith ... too often stops at the elementary stage, and the sects easily profit from this ignorance". A serious deepening of the faith is thus urgently needed, because the rapid evolution of society has given rise to new challenges linked to the phenomena notably of family uprooting, urbanization, unemployment, materialistic seductions of all kinds.

We must reject a clergy-laity relations that is characterized by the extremes of clericalism on the one side and passivity on the other. We need to seek a form of collaboration that gives the laity the confidence that they are real stakeholders where their talents and gifts are welcomed, received and appreciated to build up the church.

We need a situation where priests and religious do not have to think about settling their future but have provisions made for their in-active days.

We need to have a strategic way of handing over leadership to lay

persons when they have been prepared through adequate training. We must transit from the "Father's Church" to the "Faithful's Church" where Father is a member with all others. What *Sacrosanctum Concilium* recommends for the Liturgy should also apply to other areas of the Church's life, "In liturgical celebrations, whether as a minister or as one of the faithful, each person should perform his role by doing solely and totally what the nature of things and liturgical norms require of him."<sup>10</sup> The CCC reaffirms the same teaching saying, "In the celebration of the sacraments it is thus the whole assembly that is *leitourgos*, each according to his function, but in the "unity of the Spirit" who acts in all. "In liturgical celebrations each person, minister or layman, who has an office to perform, should carry out all and only those parts which pertain to his office by the nature of the rite and the norms of the liturgy."<sup>11</sup> It is not a new teaching, it's just about going back to our true nature as the People of God. It is not in anyone's interest to deny the Lay

Faithful their rightful place in the Church just for the Clergy to hold on to their privileged position in the same Church.

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<sup>10</sup>Walter M. Abbott, S.J., "The Documents of Vatican II With Notes and Comments By Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox Authorities." Apple Books. <https://books.apple.com/us/book/id1041126269>--SC 28

<sup>11</sup>United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. "Catechism of the Catholic Church." Apple Books. <https://books.apple.com/us/book/id496699786> CCC1144

# **HIGHLIGHTS OF CHRISTUS VIVIT: POPE FRANCIS' APOSTOLIC EXHORTATION TO YOUNG PEOPLE AND TO THE ENTIRE PEOPLE OF GOD**

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## **Introduction**

This document began with the strong statement that Christ is alive and he is our hope. The Pope intends that this Apostolic Exhortation reminds the Christian Youth of certain convictions born of our faith and at the same time to encourage the Christian youth to grow in holiness and in commitment to their vocation. This document stipulates what youth ministry entails in the modern world. The Holy Father cited from the scriptures instances of God's personal encounters with various young people, starting from Joseph (Gen. 37:2-3; 37:47), Gideon (Jg 6:13-14), Samuel (1 Sam. 3:9-10), King David (1 Sam 16: 6-13); Solomon (1 Kg 3:7); Ruth (Ru. 1: 1-18; 4: 1-17). In the New Testament we see Jesus and his parables (cf. LK15: 11-32). Jesus, himself eternally young, wants to give us hearts that are ever young. Cast out the old leaven that you may be fresh dough (1 Cor 5:7). St Paul in explaining what it means to put on youthfulness which is being renewed, mentions compassion, kindness, humility, meekness and patience, bearing with one another and forgiving each other (cf. Col. 3:12-14). For Jesus, the greatest among you must become like the youngest (Lk. 22:26).

## **Jesus ever young**

The Lord gave up his spirit (Mt.27:50) on the cross when he was

little more than thirty years of age (Lk. 3:23). It is important to realise that Jesus was a young person. He gave his life when he was, in today's terms, a young adult.

Jesus' life can prove inspiring for all those young people who are developing and preparing to take mission in life. This involves growing in a relationship with the Father, in awareness of being part of a family and a people and in openness to being filled with the Holy Spirit and led to carry out the mission God gives them, their personal vocation. None of this should be overlooked in pastoral work with young people, lest we create projects that isolate young people from their family and the larger community, or turn them into a select few, protected from all contamination. Rather we need projects that can strengthen them, accompany them and impel them to encounter others in generous service, in mission.

Jesus does not teach you, young people, from afar or from without, but from within your very youth, a youth he shares with you. It is very important for you to contemplate the young Jesus as presented in the Gospels, for he was truly one of you, and shares many of the features of your young hearts.

### **The Youth of the Church**

Youth is more than simply a period of time; it is a state of mind. The Church is young when she is herself, when she receives ever anew the strength born of God's word, the Eucharist, and the daily presence of Christ and the power of his spirit in our lives. The Church is young when she shows herself capable of constantly returning to her source.

Certainly members of the Church should not stand aloof or apart from others. All should regard us as friends and neighbours, like the apostles, who enjoyed the good will of all the people (Acts 2:47; 4:21, 23; 5:13). Yet at the same time we must dare to be different, to point to ideals other than those of this world, testifying to the beauty of generosity, service, the purity perseverance, forgiveness, fidelity to our personal vocation, prayer, the pursuit of justice and the common good, love for the poor, and social friendship.

The young people can help keep the Church young. They can stop the Church from becoming corrupt; they can keep her to be poorer and to bear better witness, to take the side of the poor and the outcast, to fight for justice and humbly to let herself be challenged. Young people can offer the Church the beauty of youth by renewing her ability to rejoice with new beginnings, to give unreservedly of herself, to be renewed and to set out for ever greater accomplishments.

Those of us who are no longer young need to find ways of keeping close to the voices and concerns of young people. Drawing together creates the conditions for the Church to become a place of dialogue and a witness to life-giving fraternity. We need to make more room for the voices of young people to be heard: listening makes possible an exchange of gifts in a context of empathy... at the same time, it sets the conditions for a preaching of the Gospel that can touch the heart truly, decisively and fruitfully.

Even though to many young people, God, religion and the Church seem empty words, they are sensitive to the figure of Jesus when he is presented in an attractive and effective way. Therefore,



the Church should always endeavour to reflect Jesus Christ. This means humbly acknowledging that some things concretely need to change, and if that is to happen, she needs to appreciate the vision but also the criticisms of young people.

The Synod recognised that a substantial number of young people, for all sorts of reasons, do not ask the church for anything because they do not see her as significant for their lives. Some even ask expressly to be left alone, as they find the presence of the Church a nuisance, even an irritant. This request does not always stem from uncritical or impulsive contempt; it can also have serious and understandable reasons: sexual and financial scandals; a clergy ill-prepared to engage effectively with the sensitivities of the young; lack of care in homily preparation and the presentation of the word of God; the passive role assigned to the young within the Christian community; the Church's difficulty in explaining her doctrine and ethical positions to contemporary society.

Along these lines, the Synod sought to renew the Church's commitment against all discrimination and violence on sexual grounds. This is the response of a Church that stays young and lets herself be challenged and spurred on by the sensitivities of young people.

### **You are the now of God**

The young people are the present of the world; even now, they are helping to enrich the world. The young people are no longer children. They are at a time of life when they begin to assume a number of responsibilities, sharing alongside adults in the growth of the family, society and the Church.

Anyone called to be a parent, pastor or guide to young people must have the farsightedness to appreciate the little flame that continues to burn, the fragile reed that is shaken but not broken (Is. 42:3). The ability to discern pathways where others only see walls, to recognise potentials where others see only peril. That is how God sees things; He knows how to cherish and nurture the seeds of goodness sown in the hearths of the young.

### **Young People in a World in crisis**

The Synod Fathers acknowledged with sorrow that many young people today live in war zones and experience violence in countless different forms: kidnapping, extortion, organized crime, human trafficking, slavery and sexual exploitation, wartime rape, and so forth. Other young people, because of their faith, struggle to find their place in society and endure various kinds of persecution, even murder. Many young people, whether by force or lack of alternatives, live by committing crimes and acts of violence: child soldiers, armed criminal gangs, drug trafficking, terrorism, and so on. This violence destroys many young lives. Abuse and addiction, together with violence and wrongdoing, are some of the reasons that send young people to prison, with a higher incidence in certain ethnic and social groups.

As a Church, may we never fail to weep before these tragedies of our young. May we never become inured to them, for anyone incapable of tears cannot be a mother. We want to weep so that society itself can be more of a mother, so that in place of killing it can learn to give birth, to become a promise of life. We weep when we think of all those young people who have already lost their lives

due to poverty and violence and we ask society to learn to be a caring mother. None of this pain goes away, it stays with us, because the harsh reality can no longer be concealed.

At times, the hurt felt by some young people, for instance victims of sexual abuse, is heart-rending, a pain too deep for words. They can only tell God how much they are suffering and how hard it is for them to keep going, since they no longer believe in anyone. May all the young people who are suffering feel the closeness of a Christian community that can reflect those words of Jesus: 'Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted' (Mt5:4) by its actions, its embrace and its concrete help.

### **Ending every form of abuse**

Recently, urgent appeals have been made for us to hear the cry of the victims of different kinds of abuse perpetrated by some bishops, priests, religious and lay persons. These sins cause their victims sufferings that can last a lifetime and that no repentance can remedy. The phenomenon is widespread in society and it also affects the Church and represents a serious obstacle to her mission. The Synod reaffirms the firm commitment made to adopting rigorous preventive measures intended to avoid the recurrence of these crimes, starting with the selection and formation of those to whom tasks of responsibility and education will be entrusted. At the same time the determination to apply the actions and sanctions that are so necessary must be reiterated and all this with the grace of Christ. There can be no turning back.

Abuse exists in various forms: the abuse of power, the abuse of conscience, sexual abuse and financial abuse. Clearly, the ways of

exercising authority that make all this possible have to be eradicated and the irresponsibility and lack of transparency with which so many cases have been handled have to be challenged. The desire to dominate, lack of dialogue and transparency, forms of double life, spiritual emptiness, as well as psychological weaknesses,, are the terrain on which corruption thrives. Clericalism is a constant temptation on the part of the priests who see the ministry they have received as a power to be exercised, rather than a free and generous service to be offered. It makes the priest think they belong to a group that has all the answers and no longer needs to listen or has anything to learn. Doubtless, such clericalism can make consecrated persons lose respect for the sacred and inalienable worth of each person and of his or her freedom.

Together with the Synod Fathers, the Holy Father, thanks, the gratitude and affection, those who had the courage to report the evil they experienced: they help the Church to acknowledge what happened and the need to respond decisively. Particular gratitude is also due for the generous commitment of countless lay persons, priests, consecrated men and women, and bishops who daily devote themselves with integrity and dedication to the service of the young.

Thank God those who committed these horrible crimes are not the majority of priests, who carry out their ministry with fidelity and generosity. The Holy Father asks the young people to let themselves be inspired by this vast majority. And if you see a priest at risk because he lost the joy of his ministry, or seeks affective compensation, or is taking the wrong path, remind him of his

commitment to God and his people, remind him of the Gospel and urge him to hold to his course. In this way you will contribute greatly to something fundamental: preventing these atrocities from being repeated. This dark cloud also challenges all young people who love Jesus Christ and his Church: they can be a source great healing if they employ their great capacity to bring about renewal , to urge and demand consistent witness, to keep dreaming and coming up with new ideas.

### **A great message for all Young People**

#### *a. A God who is love*

The first truth the Holy Father has for the young people is this: “God loves you,” It makes no difference whether you have already heard or not. He reminds the youth of it. God loves you. Never doubt this, whatever may happen to you in life. At every moment you are infinitely loved.

#### *b. Christ saves us*

The second great truth is that Christ, out of love, sacrificed himself completely in order to save you. His outstretched arms on the cross are the most telling sign that he is a friend who is will to stop at nothing: “having loved his own who where in the world, he loved them to the end” (Jn, 13:1).

#### *C. He is alive*

Finally, there is a third truth, inseparable from the second: Christ is alive! We need to keep reminding ourselves of this, because we risk seeing Jesus Christ simply as a fine model from the distant past, as a memory, as someone who saved s two thousand years

ago. But that would be of no use to us: It would leave us unchanged; it would not set us free. The one who feels us with his grace, the one who liberates us, transforms us, heals and consoles us is someone fully alive. He is the Christ, risen from the dead, filled with supernatural life and energy, and robed in boundless light. That is why St. Paul could say: “if Christ has not been raised your faith is futile” (1Cor. 15:7).

### **Youth Ministry**

YOUNG PEOPLE THEMSELVES ARE AGENTS OF YOUTH MINISTRY. CERTAINLY THEY NEED TO BE HELPED AND GUIDED, but at the same time left free to develop new approaches with creativity and a certain audacity. Young people should use their insight, ingenuity and knowledge to address the issues and concerns of other young people in their own language.

Youth ministry involves two main courses of action. One is outreach, the way we attract new young people to an experience of the Lord. The other is growth, the way we help those who have already had the experience to mature in it.

Any educational project or part of growth for young people must certainly include formation in Christian doctrine and morality. It is likewise important that it has two main goals. One is the development of the kerygma, the fundamental experience of encounter with God through Christ's death and resurrection. The other is the growth in fraternal love, community life and service.

On the other hand, any programme of youth ministry should clearly incorporate various means and resources that help young people grow in fraternity, to live as brothers and sisters, to help one

another, to build community, to be of service to others, to be close to the poor,

### **Suitable environment**

We need to make all our institutions better equipped to be more welcoming to young people, since so many have a real sense of being orphaned.

Along these lines, our institutions should provide young people with place they can make their own, where they can come and go freely, feel welcome and readily meet other young people, whether at times of difficulty and frustrations, or of joy and celebration.

At this juncture we would like to look at more critically the phenomenon of the abuse of the minor and vulnerable adults and the guidelines for the protection of the minor and vulnerable adults in the Church.

### **Guidelines for safeguarding Children and vulnerable Adults**

Before we delve further into the issues of the day 'sexual abuse of the minor and vulnerable adult and guidelines for safeguard of the children and vulnerable adults,' it shall be apposite to clarify and define certain terms to enable proper comprehension;

#### *Who is a Child?*

Article 1 of the United Nations convention on the Rights of the Child, to which Nigeria is a party, defines a child to mean 'every human being below the age of 18 years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier'. Section 277 of the Child's Rights Act 2003 defines a Nigeria child to mean any person under the age of 18 years.

*Who is a vulnerable adult or who are the vulnerable adults'?*

The answer could quickly be found in the legislation enacted by the National Assembly of Federal Republic on the 21<sup>st</sup> day of May 2015 and assented to by the then Commander in Chief/President, Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan on the 26<sup>th</sup> day of May 2015 popularly known as Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act, 2015 (VAPP).

Under Section 46 (PART VI of the Interpretation Section) of VAPP, Vulnerable persons or groups means, “Women, Children, Persons Living Under Extreme Poverty, Persons With Disability, The Sick And The Elderly, Ethnic And Religious Minority Group, Refugees, Internally Displaced Persons, Migrants And Persons In Detention”. It is important to note that it is just for the above listed persons to say “I or we have been abused” it doesn't matter much to argue or say “but she or he consented by the way she/he responded either through bodily or physical expression” reason being that a vulnerable person may sometimes act in a way that may look suggestive though very unintentional while seeking a favor or showing appreciation for favor received. It is rather important that responsible behaviors should be maintained while dealing with children and vulnerable persons and indeed every person.

Suffice also to state here that our responsible behaviour is equally important as regards use of computers and other electronic gadgets, for example a person who communicates information capable of being viewed in the opinion of the court as well as that of the right thinking members of the society as sexual harassment. Inducement or seduction through electronic means such as SMS, Email etc shall be liable for commission of offence as provided in



*Section 84(1)(2a-d) of the Nigerian Evidence Act 2011* which provides "In any proceeding a statement contained in a document produced by a computer shall be admissible as evidence of any fact stated in it of which oral direct evidence would be admissible....."

*What is child abuse?*

According to the World Health organisation, Child Abuse is defined as: "All forms of physical and or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power." Harm is described as "the ill-treatment or the impairment of the health or development of a child. Whether it is significant, is determined by the child's health and development as compared to that which could be expected of a child of similar age".

The following definitions and forms are some of abuses taken from UNICEF/NIG LAW:

*Physical Abuse*

Physical abuse of a child/VP is defined as the intentional use of physical force against a child that results in - or has a high likelihood of resulting in harm for the child's health, survival, development or dignity. This includes hitting, heating, kicking, shaking, biting, strangling, scalding, burning, poisoning and suffocating. It must be noted that much physical violence against children in the home is inflicted with the object of punishing.

*Position of the Law*

Section 33(1) of the 1999 constitution provides that 'every person

has a right to life, and no one should be deprived intentionally of his life save in the execution of the sentence of a court in respect of a criminal offense of which he has been found guilty in Nigeria. It follows then that violence against children/Vulnerable Person constitutes threat to right to life since such violence could in most cases result to murder or grievous bodily harm. The consequences or punishment due for murder is capital punishment and in the case of grievous bodily harm, imprisonment of the accused for a number of years depending on the gravity of the offence. It is obvious that every person especially children and vulnerable persons need protection, as they are human beings with rights to self-dignity as enshrined in the constitution of Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (section 34 (1) (a-c) and are the leaders of tomorrow.

#### *Sexual Abuse*

Sexual abuse is defined as the involvement of a child/Vulnerable Person in sexual activity that he or she does not fully comprehend, is unable to informed consent to, or for which the child is not developmentally prepared, or else that violates the laws or social taboos of society. Children can be sexually abused by both adults and other children who are by virtue of their age or stage of development in a position of responsibility, trust or power over the victim. Acts of child sexual abuse are committed by both adult males and Females. Child sexual abuse can be physical, verbal or emotional and includes: touching and fondling of the sexual portions of the child's body (genitals and anus) or touching the breasts of pubescent females, or the child's touching the sexual portions of a partner's body: sexual kissing, penetration, which includes penile, digital, and object penetration of the vagina.

mouth or anus; exposing children to adult sexual activity or pornographic movies and photographs: making lewd comments about the child's body; having children pose, undress or perform a sexual fashion on film or in person (exhibitionism) 'peeping' into bathrooms or spy on a child (voyeurism). It also includes efforts to encourage children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child/VP in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). This broad definition of child sex abuse captures the complex and many ways that sexual behavior may harm a Child.

### *Spiritual Abuse*

This takes the form of brain-washing the child or the vulnerable adult with adulterated word of God so as to satisfy the perpetrator sexual craves. For example spiritual directions that are aimed at harassing the victim with the word of God so as to sexually gain access or him/her. Abuse of minor/VP using scripture compel him her to the whims of the abuser.

### *Position of the Law in Nigeria*

- ♦ Section 20(b) VAP Act 2015 –'12years imprisonment without fine for offence relating to sexual assaults'.
- ♦ Section 2(c) VAP -joint/gang rape: 20 Years imprisonment. Section 26(I)(2)(3); Indecent exposure of genital organs or part thereof – 1 year imprisonment; 500,000 or both
- ♦ Section 13(1) of NAPTIP 2003 as amended provides that any person who having the custody, charge or care of any person under the age of eighteen years causes or encourages the seduction, unlawful carnal knowledge or prostitution of or the commission of an indecent assault upon any person commits an

offence and is liable on conviction to imprisonment for ten (10) years. See also (Section 18)

- ♦ Section 33(1) of the 1999 constitution provides that 'every Person has a right to life, and no one should be deprived intentionally of his life
- ♦ Section 34 (1) (a-c) provides rights to self-dignity to each person whether child or adult

### *Emotional and Psychological Abuse*

Emotional and psychological abuse involves both isolated incidents, as well as a pattern of failure over time on the part of a parent or caregiver to provide a developmentally appropriate and supportive environment. Acts in this category may have a high probability of damaging the child's/Vulnerable Person physical or mental health, or its physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development. Abuse of this type includes: the restriction of movement; patterns of belittling, blaming, threatening, frightening, discriminating against or ridiculing; and other non-physical forms of rejection or hostile treatment. This is the most difficult to identify type of abuse, this is because there are usually no outward signs of the abuse. It can be in form of intimidation and humiliation.

### *Position of the Law in Nigeria*

- ♦ Section 14(1) of VAP Act 2015 'a person who causes emotional, verbal & psychological abuse on another commits an offence and is liable on conviction to 1 year imprisonment/200,000 fine or both
- ♦ Section 34 of 1999 constitution 'every person is entitled to respect for the dignity of his person...no person shall be

subjected to any form of torture or to inhuman degrading treatment

### *Neglect*

Neglect includes both isolated incidents, as well as a pattern of failure over time on the part of a parent, caregiver or other family members to provide for the development and well-being of the child/Vulnerable Person - where the parent is in a position to do so - in one or more of the following areas: health; education; emotional development; nutrition: shelter and safe living conditions. The parents of neglected children are not necessarily poor, they may be financially well-off. This kind of abuse can occur when a child does not have adequate food, housing, clothing, medical care or supervision. Emotional neglect happens when a parent/guardian does not provide emotional support or deliberately and constantly pays very little or no attention to a child, this does not mean giving a child all that he/she wants such as phones, computers but rather to more basic need e.g., love, education, food, medical, etc.

### *Hate Crimes*

This is another form of abuse that takes the form of hatred. It is usually directed at people; both children and adult just because of their race, religion, abilities, gender, ethnic group, in the recent time between the rich and the poor etc.

### *Position of the Law*

- ♦ Section 43(1) of the 1999 constitution as amended provides that “ a citizen of Nigeria of a particular community, ethnic group, place of origin, sex, religion or political opinion shall not by reason only that he is such a person - (a) be subjected either expressly by or in the practical application of any law in

force in Nigeria or any executive or administrative action of the government, to disabilities or restrictions to which citizen of Nigeria of other communities, ethnic groups, places of origin, sex, religion or political opinions are not made subject.

- ♦ (2) No citizen of Nigeria shall be subjected to any disability or deprivations merely by reason of the circumstances of his birth.

### *Economic Abuse*

This takes the form of exploiting a child/vulnerable adult; it could be best described as “gifts with strings/attachments”. *Section 46 (PART VI of the Interpretation Section) of VAPP* defines Economic abuse to mean 'forced financial dependence', denial of inheritance or succession rights, the unreasonable deprivation of economic or financial resources to which any person requires out of necessity including: household necessities, mortgage bond repayments or payment of rent in respect of a shared residence or the unreasonable disposal or destruction of house hold effects or other property in which any person has interest'.

### *Position of the Law in Nigeria*

- ♦ Section 12(1) VAP – 'a person who causes forced financial dependence or economic abuse of another commits an offence of imprisonment for 2yrs. 500,000fine or both
- ♦ A person who attempts to commit the offence is liable on conviction to a term of imprisonment not exceeding 1 year or to a fine not exceeding 200,000 or both
- ♦ A person who incites aids, abets or counsels another person to commit the offence is liable on conviction to a term of imprisonment not exceeding 1 year or to fine not exceeding

200,000 or both.

Most commonly form of abuse found among Priest/Religious are sexual abuse, economic abuse, Spiritual abuse and emotional abuse. All these abuses have dealt heavy blow to the child, the vulnerable adult and to the Church as an institution.

### **Psychological effects of abuse**

- Personality disorders
- Violence and crimes
- Dissociation
- Eating disorder
- Depression-negative self-image which Can lead to suicide, drug and alcohol abuse

### **Effects on inter-personal relationship**

- Difficulty with trust
- Difficulty in establishing boundaries
- Passive behavior
- Sense of powerlessness
- Most times engaged in abusive behavior
- Fear of intimacy

### **Effects on sexual life**

- Experience negative feeling of anger, disgust or guilt
- Approach sex as an obligation
- Lack of interest, fear and avoidance of sex
- Feeling of emotional distant or absent during sex
- Engage in compulsive or inappropriate sexual behavior
- Have difficulty becoming aroused or feeling sensation

### **Myth in favour of abuse**

In the recent time, many people have advanced argument in favor of abuse among the clergy and Religious, they claim that some persons may not be able to desist from abusive behaviors particularly sexual abuse as a result of the following factors;

### **Genetic determinism**

This view held basically that the abusers of minors inherited such in their genes that they cannot help but be attracted to minors; that it is in their DNA

### **Psychic determinism**

This basically says that the upbringing of a person (cultural context), childhood experiences essentially laid out personality tendencies and character structure, for example some sexual perverts (men/women) have claimed that they are products of their culture, that their culture influences their sexual behavior.

### **Environmental determinism**

Basically says in the case of the Priests and Religious that their sexual abuse of children and vulnerable adults is as a result of their mandatory celibate state which some people considered to be unnatural, therefore they should be allow to marry so as not to engage in sexual abuse anymore. (the proponents of these arguments, Prof. Des Cahill & Dr. Peter Wikinson (former Priests considered mandatory celibacy as one of the major risk factor for child sexual abuse) in their 384 pages of survey on 18“ September 20 I 7 'Child Sexual Abuse in the Catholic Church; An Interpretative Review of Literature & Public Inquiry Reports'



### **Scientific/empirical responses to the myth**

Based on the findings of the FRANKL VIKTOR, a psychologist; In the midst of stimulus and responses, men and women have the following options;

- The freedom to choose
- Conscience/a deeper inner awareness of right and wrong
- Independent will/ability to act based on self-awareness; free from all other influences

Therefore we are all called to responsible behavior as no amount of excuse will exonerate any form of abusive behavior from any person

### **Reasons for safeguarding Children and vulnerable Adults**

#### *1. To protect the children and vulnerable persons:*

Children and vulnerable persons are so dear and central to the heart of God and according to one of the Biblical injunctions in Luke 18:15-16, Jesus said “let the children come to me and do not stop them for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. And Psalm 34 said that “the lowly one called and the Lord heard him”. Therefore, the church and indeed all of us must ensure that our Parishes and our places of work such as schools, hospitals, orphanages, children choir. etc. are places where our children, vulnerable persons and indeed every person are welcomed, Cherished and protected. Aside from children being in the heart of God, they are also the future leaders of the church and of our country Nigeria. And Logically speaking, if a child/vulnerable person is abused, the church and the society are equally abused since every child/person is destined to play a particular role in the

church and in the society. These and many more are reasons, the United Nations on the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Child's Right Act, 2003 in Article 3(1) and Section I respectively stressed that "in every action concerning a child, whether undertaken by an individual, public or private body, institutions or service, court of law or administrative or legislative authority, the best interest of the child shall be of primary consideration"

The Holy Father Pope Francis to buttress how important every human person is to God and indeed to the church particularly children and vulnerable persons; has on the 4th of June 2016, issued an Apostolic Letter (MotuProprio) 'LIKE A LOVING MOTHER'. In this document the Pope said that "the church loves all her children like a loving mother but cares for all and protects with a special affection those who are smallest and defenseless..... the church is especially vigilant in protecting children and vulnerable adults, the duty of care and protection devolves upon the whole church yet it is especially through her pastors that it must be exercised. Canon law already provides for the possibility of removal from ecclesiastical office "for grave reasons".

ARTICLE I. paragraph 1, the Diocesan Bishop or Eparch or one who even holds a temporary title and is responsible for a particular Church or other community of the faithful, that is, its legal equivalent, according to can. 368 CIC or can. 313 CCEO, can be legitimately removed from this office if he has through negligence committed or through emission facilitated acts that have caused grave harm to others either to physical persons or to the community

as a whole... paragraph 3. In the case of the abuse of the minors and vulnerable adults, it is enough that lack of diligence be grave. Paragraph 4. The Major Superiors of Religious Institutes and Societies of Apostolic Life of Pontifical Right are equivalent to Diocesan Bishops and Eparchs.

ART. 5... Everything that I have deliberated in this Apostolic Letter given *Motu Proprio* must be observed in all its parts ...and I hereby set forth that it be published in the official records of *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* and promulgated in the daily edition of *L'Osservatore Romano* and enter into force on 5 September, 2016”.

Recently, in a bid to protect the children, the Irish Bishops (Irish Episcopal Conference) approved in M3) 2017 a guideline known as *“The Principles of Responsibility Regarding Priests who Father Children While in Ministry”* which was written in consultation with Vincent Doyle, an Irish psychotherapist whose father was a Diocesan priest.

According to *The Irish Times*, the guidelines Doyle helped develop attempt “to articulate a position based on natural justice and subsequent rights regarding the children of priests.” They include five general principles.

- a. The birth of a child to a couple brings into being a unique person with a mother and a father. The two parents have a fundamental right to make their own decisions regarding the care of their new born child.
- B. In justice and in love, the needs of the child should be given the first consideration. In the case of a child fathered

by a Catholic priest, it follows that a priest, as any new father, should face up in his responsibilities legal, moral and financial. At a minimum, no priest should walk away from his responsibilities.

- c. Each situation requires careful consideration, but certain principles present themselves on which the decision of the priest should be made:
  - The best interests of the child;
  - Dialogue with, and respect for, the mother of the child;
  - Dialogue with Church superiors.
  - Taking into account civil and canon law
- d. It is vital in discerning a way forward that the mother, as the primary care-giver, and as a moral agent in her own right, be fully involved in the decision.
- e. In arriving at a determination regarding these cases, it is important that a mother and child should not be left isolated or excluded

This guidelines issued by the Irish Catholic Bishops Conference in 2017, may be applied internationally, both by individuals and religious organizations respectively. As of September 2017, the USG, a union religious orders worldwide comprising 200,000 Catholic Priests, ratified and adopted these guidelines for their members worldwide, who “will now apply them according to their Circumstances.”

Aside all the injunctions of the church, Section 33(1) of the 1999 constitution provides that 'every person has a right to life, and no one should be deprived intentionally of his life save in the

execution of the sentence of a court in respect of a criminal offense of which he has been found guilty in Nigeria. It follows then that violence against children/VP constitutes threat to right to life since such violence could in most cases result to murder or grievous bodily harm. The consequences or punishment due for murder is capital punishment and in the case of grievous bodily harm, imprisonment of the accused for a number of years depending on the gravity of the offence. *Again, implementation of safeguarding policies will help to curtail abuse.*

Abuses especially sexual abuse like rape is a killer as it is capable of destroying the whole human person whether male or female. The traumatic experience in terms of psychological, emotional and other forms of psycho social problems associated with the victim who is abused sexual or raped cannot be overemphasized as the evidence is seen in the person's behavior such as unsteady relationships, difficulty in building marriage, imbalance relationship with the opposite sex, sleep disorder that is heavily imbued with nightmares, constant hallucinations, dropping out of school, low self-esteem, touting, doubting attitude, meaninglessness of life etc. all these and more happen to the abused but for a good justice system that protects the vulnerable, loving hands of good counsellors and the healing power of God which brings wholeness into the human brokenness.

## *2. To protect ourselves:*

With reference to the document 'Motu Proprio' by Pope Francis, it then means that failure to institute the necessary polices and guidelines for safeguarding may pose a challenge to any person especially to the Priests and Religious who may inadvertently fall a

victim either by omission or negligence.

Child/vulnerable person's abuse is a Criminal act on ecclesiastical level, a grievous fault, and the sentence punishment is immediate Suspension followed by investigation dismissal/removal based on the fact of each case, measures to be taken could be found in canon 1395, 1397 and 1398.

Again, it is important to state based on the provisions by the CDF (Congregation for Doctrine of Faith) that a person who has been sexually abused at a minor age may make a complaint/denunciation when he/she reaches the age of majority/maturity, that is 18 years, where he/she could not do that, he/she will still have 20years from the age 18 to make the denunciation to the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith. However he/she can still make this denunciation by addressing same to CDF after his/her official time.

In Nigeria- there is no time limit, the matter (sexual offences) can be instituted at any time the victim wishes. In Central Africa the victim has 3 to 10 years to make denunciation, same also by his her parents/ guardian. A minor who is a victim under the age of 17 may also apply to juvenile Rights Association which will bring the case to trial but after 10 years, the matter becomes statute bar. *Again, emphasis on the protection of each and every one of us and the way forward is provision of the necessary policies and protocols.*

### *3. Protection of the church:*

In our country here in Nigeria, there is a principle called VICARIOUS LIABILITY. The concept of vicarious liability

connotes master-servant relationship which states that a master will be liable for any tort committed by his servant in the course of the servant's employment, irrespective of whether the master authorized or ratified the activity complained of, and even though he may have expressly forbidden it. So you can agree with me based on this principle that we need safeguarding policy that will ensure that persons working in the church or for the church whether as priests, religious, volunteers or employers will comply with so as to safeguard the children and vulnerable persons.

Persons in volunteer services In the church such as catechism teachers, choir masters, head of children's liturgy etc. may be meting out different kinds of abuses to the children/vulnerable person in the name of discipline and where abuses of these nature happen and the particular volunteer is sued, the church may be held responsible for the person's bad behaviour and if there are damages to be paid the church may be asked to pay same since the act in question is/was done in the course of the masters' employment, of course the money may be in millions.

### **Standards for safeguarding the Children and the vulnerable Adults**

There are seven acceptable standards for safeguarding children and vulnerable persons.

#### *Standard 1: Creating and Maintaining Safe Environment*

This entails developing a culture of safety that welcomes children and vulnerable persons.

Approaches that ensure the achievement of creation of safe environment are:

- ♦ Having clear guidelines on acceptable and unacceptable behaviors in areas such as:
  - Adult to child vulnerable persons behavior, e.g.; in the parishes where there is catechism classes, in the schools, hospitals, spiritual directions, etc.
  - Child to child behaviour how the children are to relate with one another including vulnerable adults.
  - Physical contact with children/vulnerable persons.
  - Anti-bullying strategic: and protocols.
  - Whistle blowing
- ♦ A clean and comprehensive recruitment and selection policy (this is mostly important in all employment to be done in the parishes and in the different apostolates, thorough selection procedure regardless of who the applicant is) even conducting psychological assessment even in families
- ♦ Clear guidelines on how to organize safe activities with children and vulnerable persons carols, retreats, children's camping/choir exercises, catechism classes, school activities, medical checks etc.
- ♦ Vetting - the policy caters for a declaration for applicants to sign stating that there is no reason why they would be considered unsuitable to work with children. The policy shall also ask them to declare any past criminal convictions and pending cases against them.
- ♦ Signing of the indemnity form – solemn declaration and always being mindful of it.

**NB:** A good induction is essential and mandatory for all personnel engaged with children/vulnerable persons - these include creating basic awareness of the concept of safeguarding and protection



(workshops seminars), introduction to safeguarding policy and procedures, procedures of dealing with grievances and allegations etc. On appointment, each person will be given:

- The name and contact details of the Designated Liaison Person and advised of his/her role.
- A copy of Code of Behaviour for working with children/vulnerable persons.
- Regular updates or training when relevant.

### *Standard 2: Recognizing, Responding and Reporting*

This section guides on how to recognize abuse and on how to respond to all concerns, suspicions, allegations or disclosures of abuse, whether current or historical.

#### *Recognizing Child Abuse*

In order to respond effectively to concerns, suspicions or allegations, all personnel must first be aware of the main forms of abuse: physical Abuse. Emotional Abuse, Sexual Abuse and Neglect.

In order to create awareness the leadership of places such as Archdiocese, parishes, schools, hospitals, etc. must ensure that appropriate training in recognizing and responding to abuse will be organized for all priests, sisters staff and volunteers whose work brings them into contact with children/vulnerable person.

### *Standard 3: Care and Support for the Complainant*

People who have suffered abuse as child/vulnerable persons should be received with compassion and must be offered appropriate support, advice and pastoral care in a nonjudgmental way.

The Church/diocese policy should be committed to establishing safe and caring environments where complainants can report abuse knowing that they will be listened to and heard. They and their families will be offered appropriate care and support at the difficult time in their lives. All allegations will be reported at the statutory services.

*Standard 4. Care and Management of the Respondent*

The impact of abuse on a child/vulnerable persons is recognized as having potentially serious lifelong consequences. Those who are accused of abusing a child/vulnerable persons have right to fair process in the investigation and management of any child/vulnerable person abuse concerns.

Where reasonable grounds have been established that abuse may have occurred, church must put in place a system of support, monitoring and supervision for those who have been accused so that everyone is appropriately protected and supported, to prevent further abuse of Children/vulnerable persons

*Therefore there must be;*

- Guidelines on leave from ministry/apostolate
- Guidelines on case management
- Guidelines on risk management
- Guideline on the sharing of information between dioceses when Priest or sister transfers from one diocese to another

*Standard 5: Training and Support for Keeping Children Safe*

All priests/sisters/staff/volunteers/collaborators should be trained and Supported in all aspects safeguarding relevant to their role, to develop and maintain the necessary knowledge, attitude and skills to safeguard and protect children/vulnerable persons.

It is important to ensure that all training delivered is up to date and relevant. Attention must also be paid in developing a spirituality of safeguarding that roots the church's commitment to child safeguarding in her Christian faith. Resources should be developed that enable the church to reflect on this area and grow in understanding and nurture of compassionate and caring attitude.

It must be ensured that the following receive training appropriate to their role:

- Leadership
- Director of Safeguarding
- Advisory Panel
- Designated officer
- Support Person
- Adviser
- Local Safeguarding Representative
- Safeguarding Committee
- Trainers (where applicable)

Everyone in Archdiocesan owned and administered apostolate has a role to play in safeguarding Children. Everyone working in the Archdiocese in relation to the activities with children will receive an induction into the Archdiocesan Policy and Procedures. To carry out their role effectively, the Archdiocese should provide opportunities for personnel to be supported in acquiring and maintaining the necessary competencies in order to safeguard and protect children. All personnel should take a proactive approach to ensure that their specific training needs are identified and adequately met and that they receive relevant support in their role.

Effective safeguarding requires working in cooperation and

partnership within the Church and with other organizations particularly NGOs and Statutory Agencies. Participation in local and national training initiatives that meet recognised standards should be encouraged.

*Standard 6: Communicating the Safeguarding Message*

The policy and its procedures are only effective if every person, the priests, sisters, staff, volunteers, the children they care for, their families and any others with whom they interact, understand them and know how to use them. Communicating the policy for safeguarding Children/vulnerable persons is crucial then for its effective implementation and ultimately for keeping children/vulnerable persons safe. The following processes shall be in Place to communicate the Safeguarding Children/Vulnerable Person policy: Persons Policy:

- ♦ Ensure that policy is openly displayed and available to everyone.
- ♦ Everyone in the Archdiocese knows the name and Contact details of the Designated Officer(s), of local Child Protection services, such a Health and Social Services, Police. NGOs etc.
- ♦ Develop an annual communication plan detailing how the Safeguarding message will be communicated. This plan should indicate how the message is to be communicated in a child friendly manner and to people with special communication needs.
- ♦ Display clearly their safeguarding policy on their website
- ♦ Safeguarding is addressed in our internal newsletters/ meeting point

- ♦ Have copies of their policy available to share with interested groups,
- ♦ JDPC/ JPIC coordinators share the policy with other groups

*Standard 7: Implementation and Monitoring*

Appropriate policies, procedures and plans have to be implemented across to keep children/vulnerable persons safe. In order to do this, the necessary human and financial resources must be allocated. Reviews and audits are also needed to ensure that this is happening consistently. The views of those involved within the Church as well as those in the statutory authorities or in relevant NGOs can help to improve the effectiveness of these measures taken to safeguard children/vulnerable persons.

It shall be important to;

- ♦ Develop a two/three year plan of action to implement and monitor the effectiveness of the steps taken to keep Children\vulnerable persons safe. This action plan is reviewed annually.
- ♦ Conduct self-audits annually using the self-audit form method or by any other relevant means.
- ♦ Explore ways of organizing an external review of safeguarding practices every two/three years (eg. peer reviews with other diocese)