



FISHERS

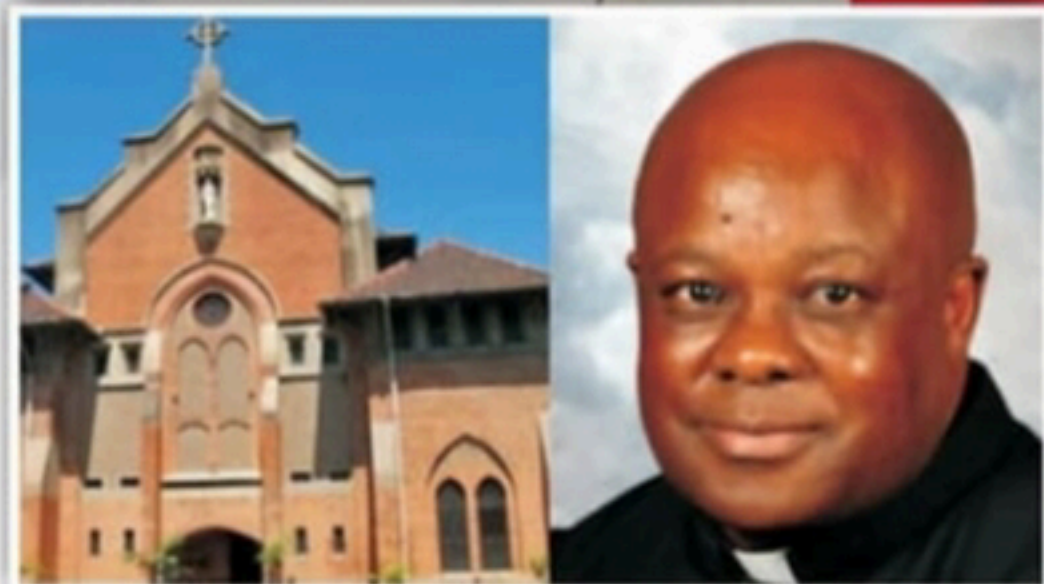
Vol. 1 No. 1 Dec. 2018



WITNESSING

IN THE AGE OF

Secularism



His Holiness, Pope Francis Names Bishop Abel Gaba of the Catholic Diocese of Kimberly Coadjutor Archbishop of Durban Archdiocese, Republic of South Africa

Published by the Seminarians and Friends of Missionary Society of Divine Paraclete

FROM THE

editorial suite

FISHERS is a publication of Missionary Society of Divine Paraclete. It is in line with our social communication apostolate to advance the history of eternal goodness with renewed zeal against the unfortunate ordeal of secular vision of life and existence. Set in a multicultural milieu, we wish to make the contents of Fishers very contextual and pragmatic from our various pastoral experiences.

EDITORIAL

The Church & Secular Vision of Life

Sincere Christians everywhere are deeply troubled by the fiery onslaught of secularism against the Church and the Word of God. While the world has always stood against the Church and the gospel, the Enlightenment era of the eighteenth century brought on a whole new twist such that had never been felt before. It is insistently fighting to relegate religion and the Word of God to the background in the social and political affairs of nations. Instead, humanism and the resultant skewed notion of human rights are taking the centre stage. Whereas human rights and moral principles should be understood and applied from the point of view of the philosophy of seamless garment, the secular vision of life is rather inconsistent, selective and selfish in this regard. Against this backdrop, hedonism and unguarded materialism often closely associated with consumerism become acceptable social norms.

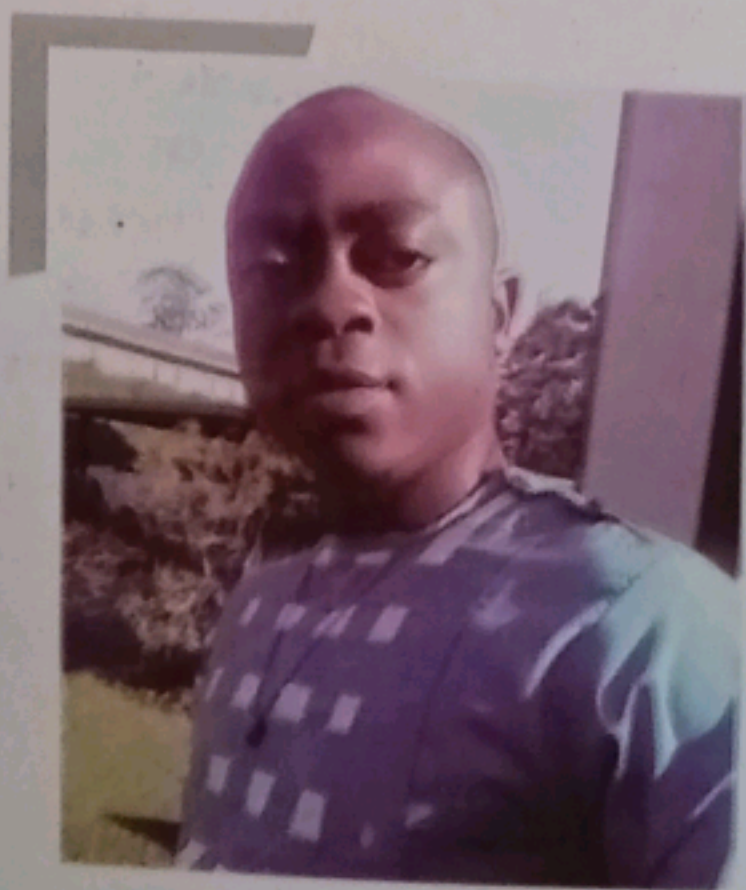
Regrettably, the secular notion of human rights in many instances, portray a vengeful rebellion against Christianity and all it holds dear. While the Church unapologetically asserts and upholds the dignity of the human person, she however, unequivocally rejects every notion of human rights that runs contrary to the Word of God and the Tradition of the Church.

A matter of grave concern is the noticeable disconnect between what Christianity teaches and what Christians do. This is hypocrisy which the gospel condemned vehemently. For many, the Church is no different from every other social or political association where the goal is satisfaction of some selfish ego. Christians must be wary of prosperity gospel devoid of the Cross and new life in Christ. Christians

must also watch the fast rising trend in gospel music where artistes are in stiff competition to outdo Pop and Rock singers in suggestive costumes and make ups.

Ministers of the gospel must become shepherds and not wolves to the flock among whom they serve. On the one hand, pastoral agents must reconsider their motivations and purify their intentions. On the other hand, they must return to their 'First Love' by recommitting themselves to the gospel values in order to become men and women led only by the Holy Spirit.

Indeed, the world needs role models more than it needs preachers. In this age of secularism, the Church should never relent in teaching her children to remain firmly on the path of holiness even when this goes contrary to accepted secular norms. Christians should never be carried away by worldly cares and allurements. They must always keep in mind that they are in a war not against flesh and blood but against principalities and power, against the rulers of the world of this darkness and against the spirits of wickedness in the high places (cf Ephesians 6:12).



Ikenna Denis Ekwerike
Editor

VISION

To become a proactive mediator with the signs of the times.

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To promote authentic African witnessing for Christ.

EDITORIAL

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EDITOR

DENIS EKWERIKE

PRODUCTION MANAGER

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GRAPHIC DESIGN

LUKE OSUAGWU

ADVERT

JOHNBOSCO ORAH

CIRCULATION MANAGER

INNOCENT IROAGANACHI

EDITORIAL ADVISER

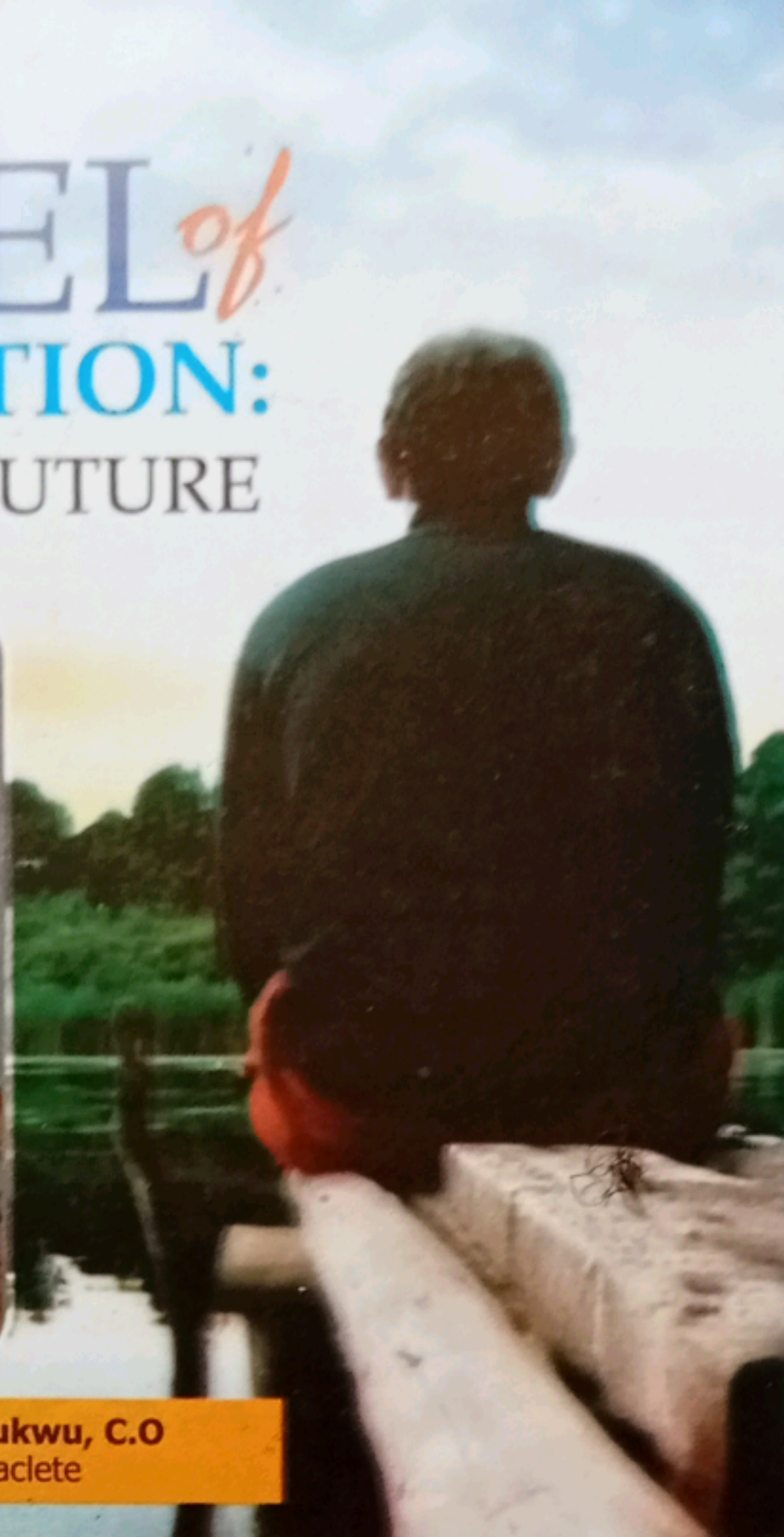
DR MAZIBUKO SIZA

Send letters to the editor and comments on previous issues to fisherseditor@gmail.com

GOSPEL *of* REGENERATION: HOPE FOR THE FUTURE



Rev Fr. Stephen Okwuchukwu Ilechukwu, C.O
Founder, Missionary Society of Divine Paraclete



Introduction

This topic profoundly resonates with the call to recognize the signs of the times (Luke 12:54) and the need to cooperate in the goals and objectives of building a future which envisions and usefully understands indications of world-wide change towards communion between God, humanity and all creation. Today's emerging realities in the secular sphere of life clearly capture the truth about evils plaguing this generation and the high effects of worldly enslavement upon humanity. Even when we look around at the news which the secular media daily present to us, it seems that the world is marked by evil.

The most striking unfortunate phenomena in the world today begin with the human search for power, prestige and pleasure which initiates acts of jealousy, envy and selfishness in the political, economic and social world. This causes the growth and revival of unjust structures where rivalry and discrimination facilitate hatred, wars, etc.

Around the world, Christians face deep and intense persecution for the faith. Hence, Ed Stetzer maintains that "Persecution isn't something we just read about in history books. It's unfortunately alive and very well." Drowning in a society that is flooded

with fear, anxiety and immorality, corruption caused by some selfish individuals, families, government officials and institutions remains the bedrock of crimes that opens the floodgates that would destroy our peoples and nations.

The Urgency of Regeneration

It is necessary to highlight the bold view of the then Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger about the unfortunate effects of liberalism and secularism which have robbed humanity of hope in the midst of storm and on every threshold of darkness and pain. He identifies this as a new form of godless culture flourishing in our society which subtly pollutes the conscience of humanity and weakens the moral fabric of our socio-cultural system. He recalls the crisis of the age of radical Enlightenment against Christianity. In his outcry against modernity and the dictatorship of relativism which he believes that are highly responsible for promoting aggressive secularism, consumerism and hedonism in Europe, he believes that most problems in the world can trace their roots to "unresolved European problem". His primary concern therefore focuses on creating a space for God if we are to remain humane. Hence, Europe should rise

from its decline and embrace the need to regain its Christian roots and identity in order to resolve this crisis which could be the beginning of saving the world.

Meanwhile, in spite of the fact that the world has made tremendous progress in the fields of technology and science, it becomes evident that our sufferings today are the prelude of the effects of philosophy of life that does not stress the reality of sin in the world, thereby conceding to the pseudo-progress which divides the human family opening a series of problems that gradually and deeply destroy the vital fabric that has sustained our human existence in its multicultural richness. Such tension that characterizes our modern world requires certain capacity for boldness and creative responses that stand in radical contrast to its resolutions and effects which do violence to history and the sacred character and purpose of humanity and entire creation.

Regeneration experience strives to eliminate from the world all types of discrimination among peoples and opens new horizons which enable humanity to see the presence of God in all the temporal realities. Such perspective is extremely useful and deserves to be placed at the heart of deep discourses that favour integral human development, systematic reflection.

This is to be a point of invitation that *issues a reminder that the Church is at the service of the least ones, and as the light of the world*, should implore means to witness to the truth and fight evils with which to overcome the scandal of indifference and to make the proclamation of the Gospel more effective. Drawing attention to this, the Venerable Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen stresses that: "The refusal to take sides on great moral issues is itself a decision. It is a silent acquiescence to evil. The tragedy of our time is that those who still believe in honesty lack fire and conviction, while those who believe in dishonesty are full of passionate conviction." A model for this task is precisely expressed in the life and mission of the Church which is closely related to the world into which Jesus sent his disciples to continue the task entrusted to him by the Father (cf. *Gaudium et Spes* n.1).



Humanity's ultimate purpose is central to grasping a sense of beauty that will save the world. This extends an illuminating principle which sheds a whole new light on the Gospel of Regeneration of eternal goodness as the ultimate answer to today's social issues whereby God calls humanity whom He created in goodness to receive His love which inwardly transform him and let that love bear fruit. This Gospel affirms that God's goodness can be found everywhere even in the midst of griefs and pains.

Faced with the realities of violence, cruelty, and destruction of human dignity in today's world, humanity continues a restless search of a future that can assure them security, happiness and peace. God always provides us with a protecting space where His Holy Spirit can act. Thus, when Pope (St) John Paul II constantly made call to New Evangelization as a message of hope at the threshold of the 21st Millennium, he was clearly reliving the approach of Jesus to His disciples on the shores of the Sea of Galilee (cf. Luke 5:4). The principle of the apostolate of *Duc in Altum* (Put out into the Deep) comes no less from this scriptural mandate. Given the perspective of the rapid degeneration of human progress, the missionary setting of this apostolate calls for extensive evangelization efforts with apostolic eagerness, tireless missionary zeal and firm but adaptable friendly character in the modern world.

In the light of the New Evangelization, the charism of regeneration is seen as a new conversion experience for humanity in the present age – humanity living out the faith with new expression, new zeal, new fervor pointing out the much felt need for a renewal in the Church which requires a new approach, new methods and a new ardour and growing in the faith in a new way. It is inextricably linked to the missionary apostolate of *Duc in Altum* which the Missionary Society of Divine Paraclete advocates for in the order of divine grace in this new springtime of evangelization.

Conclusion

During our own day and time, God, too, is calling the Missionary Society of Divine Paraclete to do specific mission of advocating tenderly and compassionately on behalf of the needs of others through her charism of Regeneration of eternal goodness which stimulates a missionary culture and spiritual atmosphere enlivened by the missionary disposition of her members. They

know where their inner drive comes from as they grow in their faith and express in a new way the same missionary resolution of St Francis Xavier: "I will go anywhere and do anything in order to communicate the love of Jesus to those who do not know Him or have forgotten Him". With deep conviction, they seize the grace of the present moment to become instruments of God's concrete love who cultivate a positive attitude toward the past and toward the future with confidence knowing the joy of the Lord as the source of their inspiration and strength to face the challenges of witnessing to the goodness of the Lord and fostering His love in the communities that they serve.

The call for the regeneration of the Spirit provides hope for the future of the world in the midst of an age and times continuously marked by lack of charity, violence, degradation of the soul, injustice, etc. How do we properly live this gospel of regeneration in our present age? St Paul offers very practical advice: "Remind everyone to be submissive to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for any honest work, to speak evil of no one, to avoid quarreling, to be gentle, and to show perfect courtesy towards all men. For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by men and hating one another; but when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Saviour appeared, he saved us, not because of deeds done by us in righteousness, but in virtue of his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal in the Holy Spirit, which he poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Saviour, so that we might be justified by his grace and become heirs in hope of eternal life" (Titus 3:1-7).

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New LABOURERS IN THE Vineyard

This year, two members of the Missionary Society of Divine Paraclete joined our Oblate formation community at St Joseph's Scholasticate, Cedara. The brothers fully participated in our formation program. Good formation programme helps to prepare good missionaries. In the Oblate Constitution and Rules, it is stated:

Whether preparing for priestly ministry as scholastics or for service as Brothers, new Oblates will live out their consecration in such a way that it permeates all aspects and activities of their daily life. Helped by the formation team their spiritual advisors, they will gradually become men of God, missionaries rooted in Christ, who are ready to give themselves totally through their perpetual Oblation.(C.65)

The goal of formation then is to help scholastics to "gradually become men of God, missionaries, rooted in Christ, who are ready to give themselves totally." In order to realize this goal, there are four cardinal points to consider for the smooth running of the formation programme. These are: mission,

power, structures, and resources.

As the Superior of the Scholasticate, the first question that comes to mind is about vision and mission: "What is our mission, our purpose, our ultimate goal?" For me, our purpose as a Scholasticate is to help young Oblates "to gradually become men of God, missionaries rooted in Christ, who are ready to give themselves through their perpetual Oblation." This is done by presenting a programme that looks at various aspects of the life of young Oblates in formation, such as personal growth, community life, spiritual life, academic life, pastoral life and vowed life. Each candidate responds to such a programme according to his own disposition. This year, in our young Oblates, I have seen men who are serious about their religious life.

The next question has to do with power. Who is empowered to help the community move toward its mission? Who has authority? Now, we know that authority is for service. Those in positions of authority are called to animate the community in its various activities. This is true for a formation programme and for a programme to



Fr Joseph Phiri, OMI
Scholasticate Superior,
St Joseph's Oblates of Mary Immaculate
Scholasticate, Cedara, Republic of South Africa.

run smoothly, power must be shared. Scholastics must be exposed to leadership positions and coordinate activities, such as community activities, sports, liturgy, or transport. I believe a programme cannot run smoothly without the cooperation of scholastics who have been invited to fill positions of authority in a community. Scholastics in position of authority share in the power of the superior to animate a community moving toward its mission.

The next question we need to address is that of structures. Visible structures in community life must be in place. The question to continually ask is: How are we/should we be organized to help us move forward to fulfil our mission? For example, here at SJS, the large community of 55 Oblates is divided into seven communities/houses. Fifty Scholastics are housed in six separate community/houses.

The seventh house comprises the formators. At these levels, I believe

It has been wonderful to accompany the brothers of Missionary Society of Divine Paraclete.

real formation takes places. In small houses, new Oblates practice Oblate values, particularly the values of hospitality and generosity. In these small houses, scholastics take formation into their own hands.

The last question to be addressed is



that of resources: What resources do we have that we can bring to the accomplishment of our mission? Here we focus on human resources (formators, scholastics, auxiliary staff members and collaborators); financial resources; and community assets (buildings and vehicles). Without these resources, it would be difficult to achieve the mission of the formation program.

In conclusion, for the formation goals to be realized, the mission of

the group must be clear; and those who have the power, must realize that their power is for the service of the mission. Structures must be put in place, and resources must be managed prudently.

It has been wonderful to accompany the brothers of Missionary Society of Divine Paraclete. As you begin this project, I wish you God's grace to participate in God's mission, keeping in mind that the formation of new members is the key to the future of the Society.

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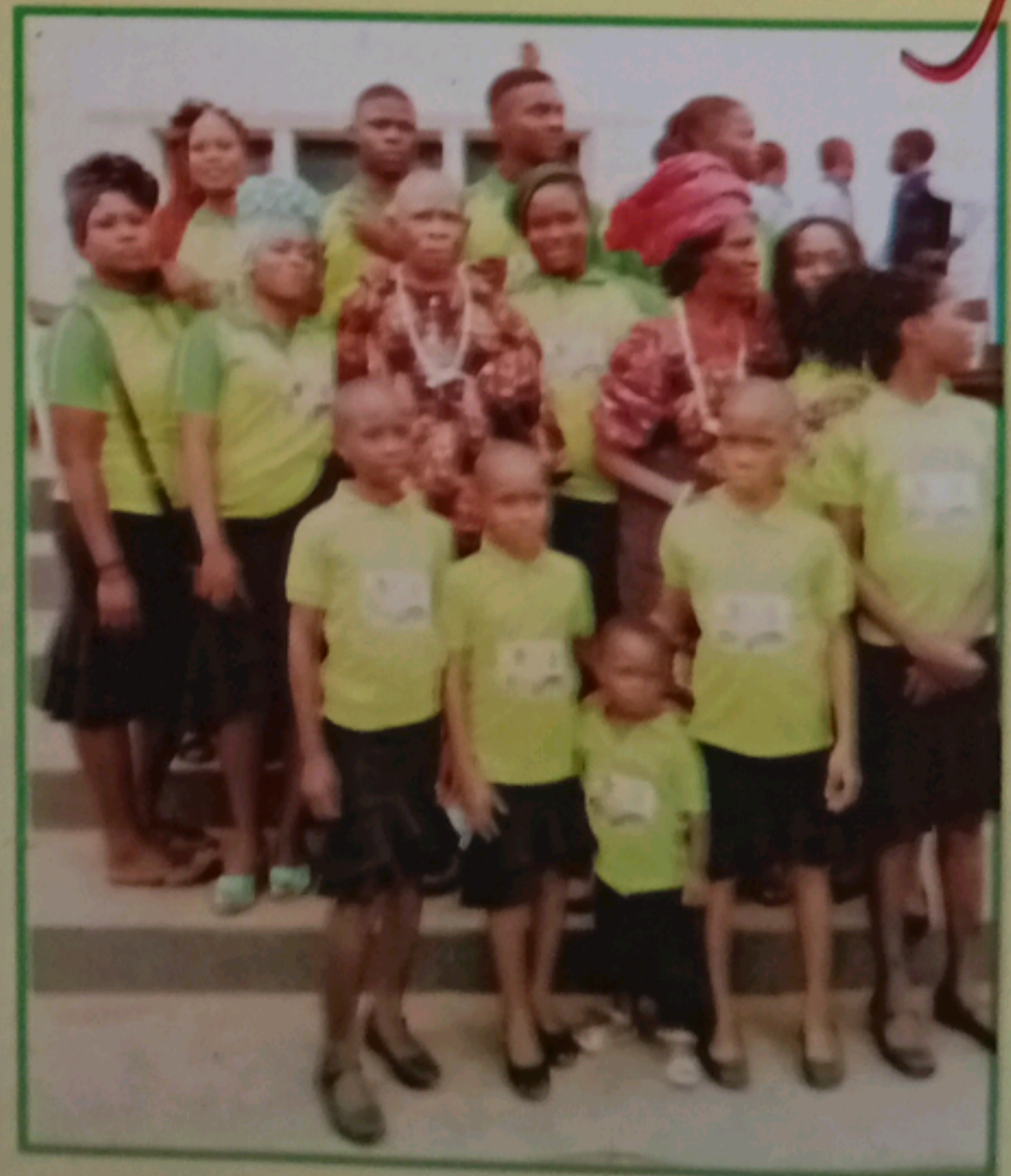
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Goodwill Message



The family of **Mr & Mrs Everest Ihesinulo** congratulates the **Missionary Society of Divine Paraclete** on this evangelisation feat through its **Fishers magazine**. May God grant the Society all round rapid growth in Jesus name. Amen.

THE CHALLENGE OF FAKE NEWS TO CHRISTIAN COMMUNICATOR

Rev. Fr. Prof. Joseph Oladejo Faniran
Dean, Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences,
Catholic Institute of West Africa, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria



Introduction

While inviting me to make a contribution to this maiden edition of FISHERS magazine, the Editor suggested that I discuss the phenomenon of fake news in the light of current scandals rocking the Church. After a careful consideration, I eventually decided to examine the challenge the phenomenon of fake news poses to a Christian communicator. I consider this to be more appropriate for a new entrant into the practice of journalism because fake news has emerged in recent time as one of the great threats to the time honoured profession of journalism.

For instance, within the short space of two years after its emergence, the term "fake news" rose from obscurity to being voted 2017's Word of the Year in the United States of America (Carson, 2018). Little wonder that the Holy Father, Pope Francis (2018) devoted his message for 2018 World Communication Day to the issue of fake news. Indeed, such an issue deserves a look that is more than cursory.

Hence, the following paragraphs will attempt to answer questions like: what is fake news? How has it evolved to become such a dominant

issue in the world today? What challenge does it pose to a Christian communicator? How can the challenge be tackled?

Fake News, what is it?

Observing that fake news has multiple variants, from different actors and with different motives, Carson, nonetheless, summarizes the variants in six categories:

- Those with commercially-driven sensational content, very often with absolutely no grounding in fact, but whose key goal is to drive web traffic and generate advertising.
- Nation state-sponsored misinformation whose goal is not revenue but to sow division, give the illusion of support for a particular candidate or idea, either domestically or abroad, and at times, mixed with true or sensational stories.
- Highly-partisan news sites that can conflate fact and opinion, nakedly supportive of one political viewpoint or party and often position themselves as alternatives to mainstream media.
- Social media networks consisting swarms of Twitter bots posting doctored or misleading photos, adverts on Facebook paid for by intelligence outfits, video on YouTube claiming that terrorist incidents are hoaxes.
- Satire or parody in form of light-hearted publications.
- News stories from mainstream media that turn out to be hoaxes or mistakes, but had genuinely good intentions behind them

when published.

Its evolution

The question here is how fake news has become so rampant. Adavize (2018) merely observes that fake news has long been in existence. Pope Francis traces its root back to the dawn of human history when the "crafty serpent", the skilled "Father of Lies" employed the strategy of "mimicry, that sly and dangerous form of seduction that worms its way into the heart with false and alluring arguments," to deceive the woman and lead both the man and the woman to their fall. The result is the insatiable greed manifested in the thirst for power, the desire to possess and enjoy, which ultimately makes humans victims of the deceptive power of evil (Francis, 2018). As if to buttress this point, Carson (2018) recalls how Octavian used a campaign of disinformation to aid his victory over Marc Anthony in the final war of the Roman Republic.

Though the emergence of new forms of mass communication in the twentieth century fuelled the growth of propaganda and persuasive power, it did not last long. With the fading of ideological struggle and the subsequent waning of the blatant bias with which the media used to carry the struggle, coupled with the population becoming more media savvy and the information distribution networks becoming more expensive, government regulation and self regulation on the part of media practitioners becoming





popular, the spate of fake news went down considerably and even became difficult to spread (Carson, 2018).

Subsequently, added Uja, it became an accepted doctrine to maintain that the duty of the press is to educate, inform, entertain and build up politically conscious citizens who can make informed decisions. The press was even looked upon as the "fourth estate of the realm." Here, Uja cites as an example the code of ethics for Nigerian journalists that says "journalism entails a high degree of public trust. To earn and maintain this trust, it is morally imperative for every journalist and every medium to observe the highest professional and ethical standard" (2018).

However, the rapid development of the technology of communication, with particular reference to the emergence of the social media has changed all that. Initially the development came with a lot of promises bordering on rendering communication mechanisms to be instant, participatory and global in scale. Many people are now able to communicate effortlessly with wider audience both within and outside national boundaries. Developing events around the world can now be tracked on the go.

Ironically, the same social media is assuming a destructive dimension that is threatening the human society. As more and more people gain access to the internet, they become purveyors of information and disinformation with the supersonic power of social media. Falsehood, conjectures, pernicious propaganda or half truth are intentionally passed on as truth, authentic information or stories intended to mislead and achieve sinister objectives or financial gains. Hence, Adavize contends that:

Social media which was

seen not long ago as a nemesis for rogue, unpopular and authoritarian regimes and corrupt officials is now turning out to serve their interest. Rogues and fantastically corrupt individuals, some of them who had been displaced and disgraced are being currently pushed to the frontline on the strength of fake news spiraling on social media (2018).

Consequently, the spread of fake news is provoking a crisis of trust, and not just trust in a single piece of news or publication, but in the entire editorially controlled news media. It is casting shadows of doubt over the credibility of the media, making people doubt every news or information. This can be destructive to any society and can signal the beginning of social breakdown, and a threat to democracy and social reality.

By virtue of his/her baptism, the Christian communicator is called to be faithful to his/her conscience that is formed and informed by the moral principles of truth, human dignity, solidarity, and the common good.

The situation where anyone and everyone with access to social media can become a journalist is eroding the crucial role of the gate-keepers of the mainstream media who exercise the power over what gets shown or reported in the media. This power is gradually slipping away from their hands and thereby reducing them to mere gate-watchers. Vulnerable to the threat posed by social media to their economic survival, the gatekeepers often succumb to the temptation of fake news dissemination. The frightening consequence is that, without questioning its validity, the vast

majority of people often take fake news as prophetic revelation, especially when it serves their own interest.

Its challenge to Christian communicator

Since media do nothing by themselves, but are instruments used as people choose to use them, fake news poses a great challenge to the Christian communicator, whether professional or not. As I have explained elsewhere, by virtue of his/her baptism, the Christian communicator is called to be faithful to his/her conscience that is formed and informed by the moral principles of truth, human dignity, solidarity, and the common good. Armed with such a conscience, he/she sees his/her use of media not solely in terms of money or pay-packet, as important as this may be, but as a means of bearing witness to Christ (Faniran, 2007, pp. 413-416).

The conclusive words here go to Pope Francis (2018) who spelt out the challenge authoritatively thus:

The best antidotes to falsehood are not strategies, but people; people who are not greedy but ready to listen, people who make the effort to engage in sincere dialogue so that the truth can emerge; people who are attracted by goodness and take responsibility for how they use language. If responsibility is the answer to the spread of fake news, then a weighty responsibility rests on the shoulders of those whose job is to provide information, namely, journalists, the *protectors of news*. In today's world, theirs is, in every sense, not just a job; it is a mission. Amid feeding frenzies and the mad rush for scoop, they must remember that the heart of information is not the speed with which it is reported or its audience impact, but *persons*. Informing others means forming others; it means being in touch with people's lives. That is why ensuring the accuracy of sources and protecting communication are real means of promoting goodness, generating trust, and opening the way to communion and peace (2018).

RECONSTRUCTING MISSIONAL FORMATION TOWARDS EMPOWERING AFRICAN CLERGY



Puseletso C. Mokone

Introduction

The reconstruction of all structures be it political, economic, social or religious, is a necessary process that countries of Africa and the Catholic Church in particular need to administer if there is to be justice, peace, and development in the continent. The Catholic Church is a system that has run for two thousand years experiencing challenges, struggles and victory throughout centuries. In the continent of Africa, the Catholic Church has gone through the same experiences of the universal church. The challenge of the church in the democratic era is to find new ways, new systems and new expressions of faith. All African countries are officially independent from the colonial rule, and the leadership is in the hands of Africans in both the government and the church. The new model of the church and a new expression of faith has to emerge from Africa's soil in an answer to 'the suffering Body of Christ' experienced in the sufferings of the poor materially, intellectually and spiritually. Using Du Toit's (Du Toit 2018:29) words, "Black people themselves [have] a responsibility to respond to their own

challenges.

Crux of the Matter

In order to embark on this journey, ground breaking steps need to be taken. Episcopal Conferences need to reconstruct their pastoral plans to encompass the family ministry as the core of all ministries in the Church. Traditionally "the family unit served as an important structure for knowledge provision and acquisition" (Mosweunyane 2013:51). Western education took away this responsibility and "did not consider cultural transmission as part of the educative process" (Mosweunyane 2013:51) preventing African societies from functioning efficiently and effectively. The missionary outreach of the Church in Africa ought to start with the restoration of the family structure for the protection of children, the development of youth and for dedicated vocations to priesthood (Africae Munus 2011:43). The family is the cradle of all life and faith, "In the family, faith accompanies every age of life...." (Lumen Fidei 2013:72). Pope Benedict XVI (Africae Munus 2011:42), writes: "The family is the 'sanctuary of life' and a vital cell of society and of the Church." Without the family unit there is little hope that development, moral values and expression of authentic Christian faith is possible in Africa.

The dysfunction of the family is the dysfunction of the society and the church. The missionary outreach of the Church based specifically on the restoration of the Biblical role



of the mother, father and children and extended family members in a family would make the mission of the church relevant, appropriate and practical. The families of candidates to priesthood ought to be integrated at different stages in the process of training and formation of their sons to act as a support body and knowledgeable of the requirements of priesthood.

The second step ought to be the reconstruction of seminary curriculum to be more practical in its outlook. The seminary curriculum ought to be entrenched within the philosophy of self-sacrificial service not entitlement. What can be learned from the African system of education is that intellectual knowledge was combined with manual labour providing skills that were immediately put into use (Mosweunyane 2013: 53). To build a self-supporting or reliant church ought to mean primarily the empowerment of the clergy to be humanly confident, spiritually mature and intellectually open to change. The process of formation ought to decolonise the minds of the seminarians helping them to find an authentic style of an African priest. Kgatla (2018:151) quoting Biko states that "the colonised should throw away the shackles of the images deposited on their brain by the coloniser by consciously becoming what they really are."

Priesthood is not status but the Sacrament of Ministry, of service. Missionaries had their own style of living based on their cultural background but this is not the pattern for the universal Church. Missionaries had a specific mandate to fulfil and African priest need to fulfil the needs of the church in time and place. The Lord Jesus lowered himself to take our human nature in order to bring us back to God. African priests ought to live the style of life saturated with prayer, simplicity, acceptance and integrity as part of witnessing by example. The shackles of the missionaries' way of doing things ought to be a thing of the past. They have to "dispense with the notion that, in all things, Europe is a teacher and Africa is pupil" (Mosweunyane 2013: 51). Priesthood in Africa ought not to take the form of maintenance of the missionary structures, style of doing things and living but to be revolutionary, and always prophetic.

The aftermath of a materialistic style of life begets forgetfulness of missionary mandate of the Church, evangelisation of people and an option for the poor materially, intellectually and spiritually. The curriculum ought to help candidates to break away from the shackles of the western style of priestly living, ministering and embrace communal sharing of work and resources instilling the spirit of Ubuntu as an African paradigm. Western education encourages individualism and materialism creating inequality in the society (Mosweunyane 2013: 54).

What holds many Africans captive is lack of basic necessities

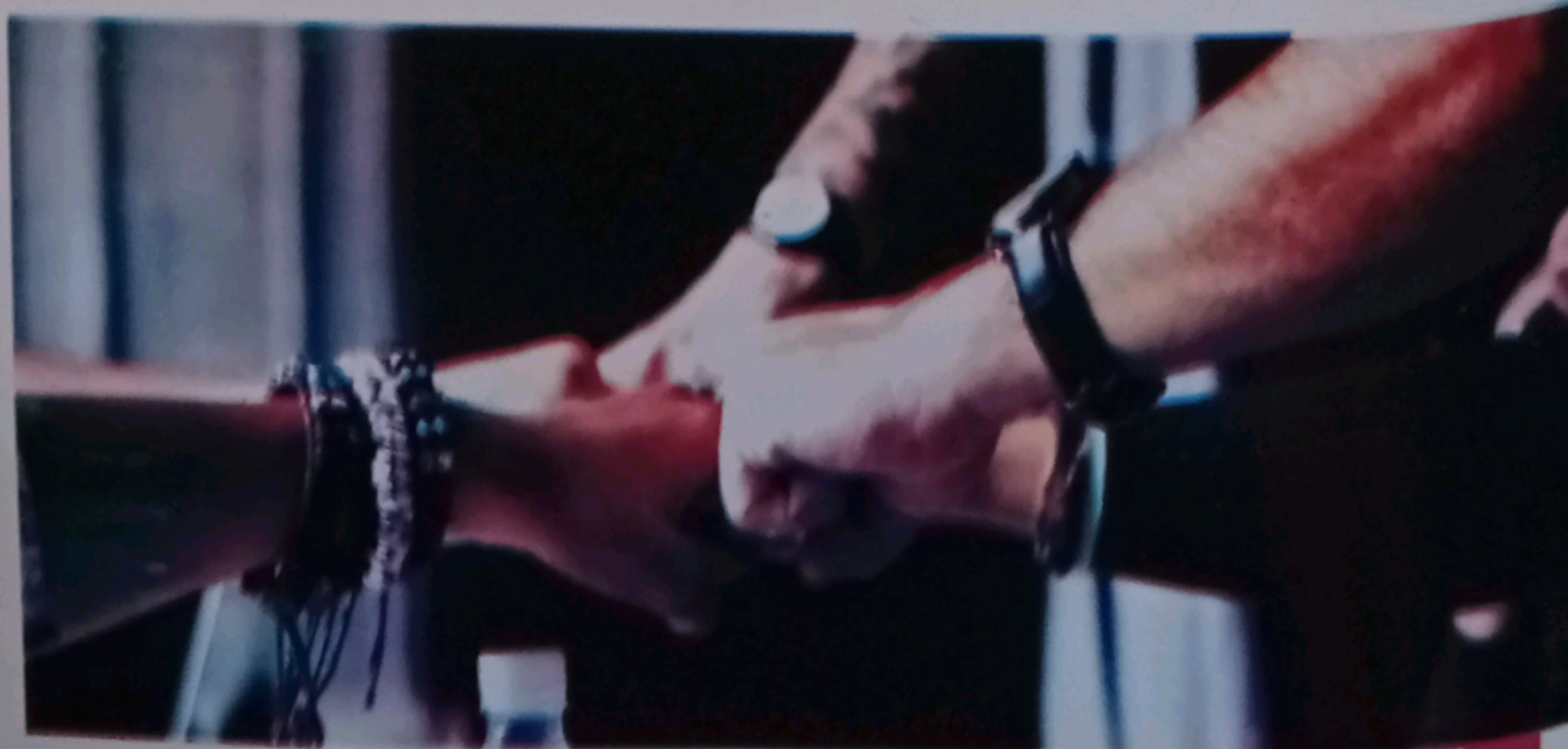
including material, spiritual and intellectual (Oyeshile 2009:39). Ongoing formation of the laity ought to be the norm of the day including human, spiritual, intellectual and practical

Priesthood in Africa ought not to take the form of maintenance of the missionary structures, style of doing things and living but to be revolutionary, and always prophetic.

expression of faith. Training and formation for discipleship and apostleship would express growth in the Christian faith in Africa. Witnessing Christ in all strata of society effecting change and development will offer the continent a model for leadership and governance. Philosophy of work includes servant-leadership and commitment to serve. A self-supporting church is only possible if the congregants are themselves self-supporting. The level of development of a self-supporting church is that of a 'priest-supporting' church to the detriment of the poor who form the majority of congregants.

Restructuring of the curriculum is a matter of urgency if the Church is to be prophetic and relevant in carrying out her mission. The perpetuation of western structures and systems of training and formation is the downfall of Catholic formation in Africa and South Africa in particular with majority of people still living in poverty.

This article is based on a personal observation of parishes at a diocesan level over two decades as a diocesan catechetical coordinator and six years as a diocesan financial administrator. This paper might be subjective calling for empirical research to answer the following questions: is priestly training and formation affording priests to be efficient and effective in their ministry in an African context. The second question is what options are there for priests to be self-supporting in Africa with majority of people living in poverty. Thirdly, what influence do priests have on their parishioners and society concerning human, spiritual and intellectual formation helping the laity to participate fully in the mission of the church? Reconstructing missional formation towards empowering African clergy is overdue for the relevance of the church in Africa.



RISING POVERTY – A PERPETUAL STAIN ON THE SOUL OF GLOBAL ECONOMIC GROWTH



Dr. Peter Tabot AYUK

Peter.ayuk@milpark.ac.za

(Head of Executive Education at Milpark Business School and Parishioner at St. John's Catholic Church, Northriding, Johannesburg)



Introduction

Last Sunday, 2nd December 2018, the skies of Johannesburg were lit by the meeting of international A-list artists, Heads of state, industry icons and leaders in other spheres of society for the Global Citizen Festival: Mandela 100. Organised as part of Mandela's centenary celebrations, the aim was to solicit commitments and raise funds towards various human development initiatives around the world. The rich and famous used the grand platform to shine their generosity (or is it?) to the billions of fans watching around the world. Speaker after speaker echoed the same sentiment – no one is (economically) free until we all are! In the end, 58 pledges worth approximately ZAR100 billion or USD7 billion were made, set to affect some 137 million people around the world.

Then, as patrons departed the event venue – the iconic FNB stadium that hosted the finals of the 2010 soccer world cup, they

were candidly reminded of the reality, a stark difference from the euphoria that had just gripped them inside the stadium. Those who were privileged enough to access Uber services were hit by uncharacteristically high fares and many of those who could not, were mugged by petit criminals desperate to eke out a living from vulnerable pedestrians. The events of that night summed up the reality of millions around the world, who can only read about unprecedented levels of wealth growth, yet cannot afford or access the essential needs for a decent life. Whether clad in the well-knit suits of political and economic champions or the streetwise attire of *totsis* typical of the urban poor of Johannesburg, the impact of immoral wealth accumulation and dispossession of the vulnerable are the same, namely, making our world the poorer.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) estimates current (2018) global GDP growth at 3.8%. Despite overall positive growth decade after decade, poverty and inequality continues to worsen in many parts of the world. This piece explores the curse of meaningless growth – its conceptual foundations, how it manifests and how the prevailing paradigm might be changed.

Contrasting ideologies, same outcome

For five decades after the Second World War, America and Russia led their allied nations around the world through an ideological

battle, the Cold War, with the imminent threat of a catastrophic physical manifestation. Essentially, the world was split between the proponents of American-led Capitalism – which asserted that society was best organised through the exercise of freedom of choice and the profit motive and Russian-led Communism which believed that humanity was better off if the means of production were owned and controlled by the state for the good of all. The fall of the Berlin wall in many ways epitomized the end of the cold war. Despite the bitter ideological contestations, the outcomes are evidently the same – growing aggregate wealth, yet worsening individual poverty and inequality across the ideological divide. Both sides produced

For many around the world especially in countries with high levels of poverty and inequality, there is often a disjuncture, and importantly among the privileged, between what they believe, what they preach and what they practice.

oligarchs who today lord over the earth's resources and opportunities. Thus, neither capitalism nor communism can be exonerated from the stain of

meaningless growth. Today, we witness new forms of friendships among erstwhile foes (Trump and Putin?), which only serve parochial interests. We find out that the real enemy is not the ideological choice, but the prevalence of a fundamental vice, greed!

A shot at the numbers

Africa, more specifically, sub-Saharan Africa bears the brunt of poverty and inequality. Recent reports by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) highlight that the lowest ranked 20 countries by Human Development Index (HDI) all come from the region. Many African governments perpetuate inequality. For example, while in Norway, one of the countries with the highest HDI legislators earn on average 1.3 times the national per capita GDP, the same ratio is 64 times in Nigeria, 60 times in Kenya and 15 times in South Africa. So, while Nigeria and South Africa dwarf their poor African neighbours in respect of GDP growth, state-sponsored and corporate greed deliberately or otherwise, collude to concentrate wealth in the hands of a privileged few. So, where did humanity go wrong? How could we change this gloomy picture?

The educated response

Many in higher education (HE) have wondered why despite the increased professionalization of management and related professions, corporates and governments alike continue to fail society. It was horrifying, for example, to hear the current US President - Donald Trump defend his delinquent prior business and tax behaviours as not breaking any law; simply exploiting the loopholes allowed by his 'less competent' predecessors. HE's response therefore has been to appeal to the conscience of the



educated, not to use their advantaged position of knowing to blind-side the less privileged, but rather to serve with integrity, mindful of the greater good.

A manifestation of this response has been the heightened emphasis in management and leadership training and research on notions such as ethical leadership, socially responsible investment and spiritual intelligence competency. This approach aims to shift the underpinning motives of business education and practice from the traditional values of growth and competitiveness to moral rectitude. However, despite these well-intentioned discourses in lecture rooms and boardrooms, the rot continues unabated, as recently exhibited, for example, by the role of KPMG (Klynveld Peat Marwick Goerdeler), a high profile management consultancy firm in corporate and state failures in South Africa. So what needs to change?

A human response is required

For many around the world especially in countries with high levels of poverty and inequality, there is often a disjuncture, and importantly among the privileged, between what they believe, what they preach and what they

practice. Leaders, whether in the academy, business or government often preach one thing and do the other. Many believe that it is ok to pursue profits at all cost in the ordinary course of work and then preach the care for others on days of religious obligation or at the occasional social responsibility roadshows. There exists an unhealthy compartmentalization of our spiritual and secular beings. It appears that the current higher education interventions are made too late to effect meaningful reformation. It seems that the values that underpin how we define fulfilment as a society need to be instilled much earlier on as part of early childhood formation. To be effective, this needs to be consistently replicated in all arenas where children gain education - at schools, places of worship and very importantly, at home. As parents, teachers and other leaders of society, we must model what we expect the future generations to look like, while giving them an opportunity to be even better. A reconceptualization and remodeling of the notion of social security is required, as evidence abounds that no empire, no oligarch ever protected their wealth from ruin in perpetuity, except by the collective will of the people.

NIGERIAN MULTICULTURALISM: UNITY IN DIVERSITY



Br. Osuagwu Uchechukwu Luke

Preamble

The question of the multiplicity of cultures has been an age long concern that cannot be over emphasized. Anyone searching for the root of the problem with Nigeria will not need to look anywhere else than in the Nigerian cultures. When we say culture in Nigeria, we tend to think of language, religion, music, clothing, arts and literature of a people. Though culture consists of these, they are really products of the culture of a people.

The culture of Nigeria is shaped by the multiplicity of ethnic groups. Nigeria has about 527 languages and 1150 dialects and ethnic groups. The six largest ethnic groups are the Hausa and Fulani in the north, the Igbo in the southeast, and the Yoruba predominates the southwest, the TIV people of north central Nigeria and the Efik-ibibio, the Edo people are found in the region between Yoruba land and the Igbo land. Much of the Edo tends to be Christians while the remaining 25 percent worship deities among whom is ogun - the god of thunder. This group is followed by the Ibibio, Anang, Efik people of the coastal south eastern Nigeria and the Ijaw of the Niger Delta.

What is culture?

Etymologically, the word culture stems from a Latin root 'cultura' meaning 'cultivation or to cultivate'. That is to cultivate a character or behaviour of identity. Culture is the arts, customs, lifestyles, background and habits that characterize a particular society or nation. It is the value, belief, behaviour that constitutes a people's way of life. There are many definitions of culture. One of the most celebrated is Taylor's definition, as that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities

and habits acquired by humanity as members of the society.

Nigerian Multiculturalism

As earlier explained the Nigerian system cannot be pinned down to a particular culture but has different cultural heritages that are based on the different ethnic groups and the subgroups in the country. More than 500 languages and a whopping 1000 dialects are spoken in Nigeria. It is a miracle how these different people live under the idea of one civilized nation.

Multiculturalism is a practice of giving importance to different cultures in a society. Let us take a look at the basic features of culture in Nigeria.

Language: is the most dynamic element of any culture or society. Language is very vital for transmitting knowledge, worldview and verbal arts over the years. The official language of Nigeria, English, was imposed by Britain to facilitate the cultural and linguistic unity of the country during colonialism. The major native languages spoken in Nigeria represent three major families of African languages - Niger-Congo languages, such as Yoruba, Igbo; the Hausa language is Afro-Asiatic; and Kanuri, spoken in the northeast, primarily Borno State, is a member of the Nilo-Saharan family. Even though most ethnic groups prefer to communicate in their own languages, English, being the official language, is widely used for education, business transactions and for official purposes.

Religion: in Nigeria plays a major role in the life of the people. To some, it is

Anyone searching for the root of the problem with Nigeria will not need to look anywhere else than in the Nigerian cultures.

candle light; it gives them insight, wisdom, knowledge and faith is increased through the study of scripture, books and prayers. Religion is as old as humankind in Nigeria. Initially, everybody worshiped



whatever they wanted until the introduction of Islam to the northern part of the country in as early as the eleventh century.

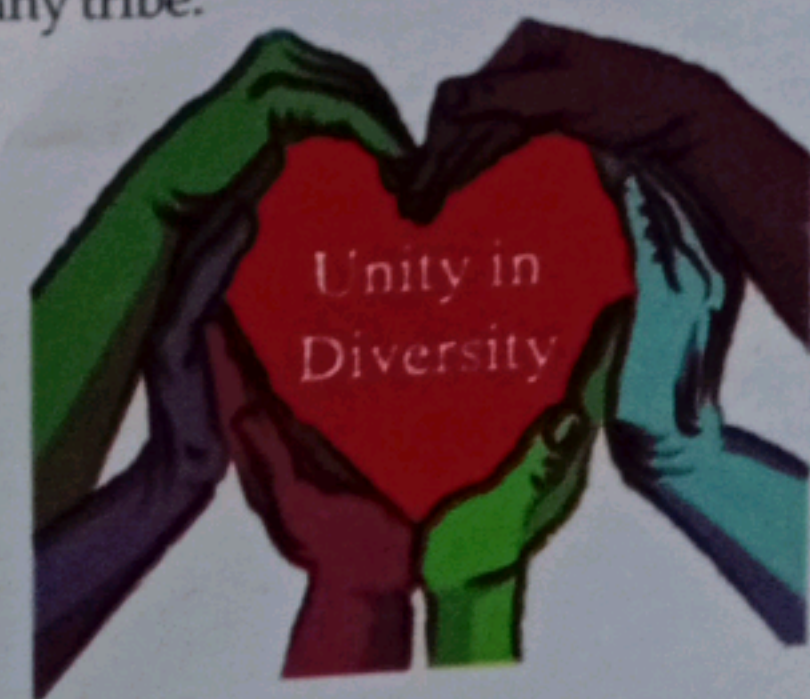
Christianity is said to be the most popular and most advertised religion in Nigeria. It was introduced into Nigeria in the middle of the nineteenth century by devoted missionaries from Britain. Today we have the traditional religions in Nigeria, as well as Islam and Christianity.

Dress Code: In the area of dressing, Nigeria is characterised by the diversity of its traditional attires. It is fashionable for Nigerians to wear the traditional dressing of their ethnic groups of origin.

Others are art and literature, music and dance and tourism and hospitality

Conclusion

According to Fr. Samuel Odoh, culture is the sum total of what individuals learn in common with other members of the group to which they belong. Therefore, in the cultural context of Nigeria, there is the practice of cultural relativism, where no culture is seen as good or bad until the traits are considered within the context they operate: hence, looking at one culture as being inferior amounts to ethnocentrism. This can be seen in marriage, politics, economy, aesthetics, religious norms and modes of organisation. Today there is a concept of unity in the diverse nature of the multiplicity of Nigerian cultures. People now develop interest in other cultures to the extent of speaking different languages, taking names from other tribes, and freedom to marry from any tribe.





THE CHURCH AND SOCIETY: How Far, So Far? The Nigerian case

Ezenagu Daniel



Introduction

The Church is the whole body or congregation of persons who are called by God the Father to acknowledge the Lordship of Jesus, the Son, in word, in Sacrament, in witness, and in service, and through the power of the Holy Spirit to collaborate with Jesus historic mission for the sake of the kingdom of God. She is a defined institution, a community of the people of God 'a mystery, the mystical body of Christ of which He is the head' (LG 17). The Church is a voice and fine veritable voice. The Church is on mission; the mission of the Church is real in Nigeria. The fact remains that the Church has an enormous task in building up a nation like ours, in other words, there must be a healthy Church-state relationship to realize this. As Nigeria celebrates her 56 years of independence, the question remains, how far have we gone so far?

THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH

Even though we have understood the Church implicitly as divine above, yet she exists within time and space in the world, in human society. The Church is made up of humans both sinners and saints, it is a human family and as such is affected by the fact and issues concerning all of humanity. The members of the Church are human beings, feeble and weak, this is also to say that whatever temporal affairs, because the temporal is the activity of human beings, in a living society, the nation concerns the Church because the members of the Church are the citizens of the nation. Thus, the Church has a significant role to play in building up the nation, is bound to respond

to the numerous problems facing humanity. Pope Paul VI in this line of thought says that "a disembodied Church separated from the world would no longer be the body of Jesus Christ. The Church on the contrary interests herself closely in very generous road to heaven, but also in search for well being for justice, for peace, and happiness on earth" (cf. Address to Diplomatic, corp. Jan, 1967).

The role of the Church in building the Nigerian nation is to make it possible for God's kingdom to come in all its righteousness. The task of the Church can be seen from these viewpoints; the Church must be herald of God's kingdom of justice and peace, and must help every person to join in all the trains of the kingdom. The Church must itself be an active physical agent and not just the announcer, in other word, the Church can say what should be done but it must also be found to be

The role of the Church in building the Nigerian nation is to make it possible for God's kingdom to come in all its righteousness.

doing those things, she must teach by example as a gadfly. The Church must strive to re-orientate, transform and reform her members and the nation at large.

In an oppressed society like ours, the Church must make its members aware of their oppressed condition and must help them do something about it. The Church must work for unity, reconciliation, social justice and peace. In the words of Gustavo Gutterrez, he writes, 'as a sign of liberation of man's history, the Church must signify in its own structures the salvation it announces to others, the Church itself in its concrete existence ought to be a place of liberation, the break with an unjust social order" (A Theology of Liberation, 1972, p. 261). The Church must be a place where justice and peace reigns before it can propose same to the nation, the Church must as a duty assist the oppressors to liberate themselves from their sins.

THE CHALLENGES FACING THE CHURCH

The task and challenges before the Church are enormous. The problem of social injustice, concern for families and the poor, equity and right, war, violence and terrorism are among the immediate major problems challenging the Church. The Church cannot lose sight of the mission in this regard making the world a more peaceful arena for the habitation of humanity. The Church stands out as a gadfly to challenge the insensitive and corrupt rulers. She remains the voice of the voiceless. In the recent past, the constrictive criticism of the Church on the poor condition of the citizenry, suffering, abject poverty, hardship, neglect, dejection, impoverishment, dehumanization, bribery, corruption, structural and social injustice, election malpractice etc has brought some malicious

accusations on some of the ecclesiastical hierarchies who summon the courage to speak out against these inhuman practices. Be it as it may 'a human society can be neither well ordered nor prosperous unless it has some people invested with legitimate authority to preserve its institutions and to devote themselves as far as it necessary to work and care for the good of all' (cf John XXIII, *Pacem In Terris*, 1963, n. 46).

The Church as 'Mater et Magistra' stands out to ensure that the whole human family enjoys good governance. Thus, she alleges interference in politics, portrays her deep show of care and concern for the welfare of her flocks. She has this authority which she received from God, to feed His Lamb and sheep both spiritually and materially.

NATION BUILDING

The situation in Nigeria is like a hydra-headed monster, as we are experiencing it. The matters arising are numerous, from the families, to the civil society and the environment. The Nigeria case is unique because, she is on a great distress. Distress as a word is synonymous with Nigeria, and the Church is to play a great role in this distressed nation, this is a very difficult task.

Nigerians have become insensitive to anything, death, corruption, faith, abuse, etc. Nigerians have become very aggressive, hostile unto their fellow citizens at the least provocation. Cheating is the order of the day in the bid to survive. In fact, only in Nigeria that every negative is possible, name it. In politics, we harvest: dictatorship, electoral malpractice, intimidation, thuggery, sycophancy, unlawful imprisonment etc. Education: Moral decadence, cultism, poor remuneration, low standard, etc. In religion: Rivalry, proliferation of Churches, etc. Every facet of Nigeria is affected. John Odey captured the situation well in his book, 'The Saga of a nation in Distress', he says: 'today in Nigeria, corruption has

become a structural sin so contagious that it hardly leaves anybody without a smear. And since the country was justifiably stigmatized as a den of corruption, all Nigerians both the guilty and the innocent have been paying very costly for it'.

THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE CHURCH: SO FAR, HOW FAR?

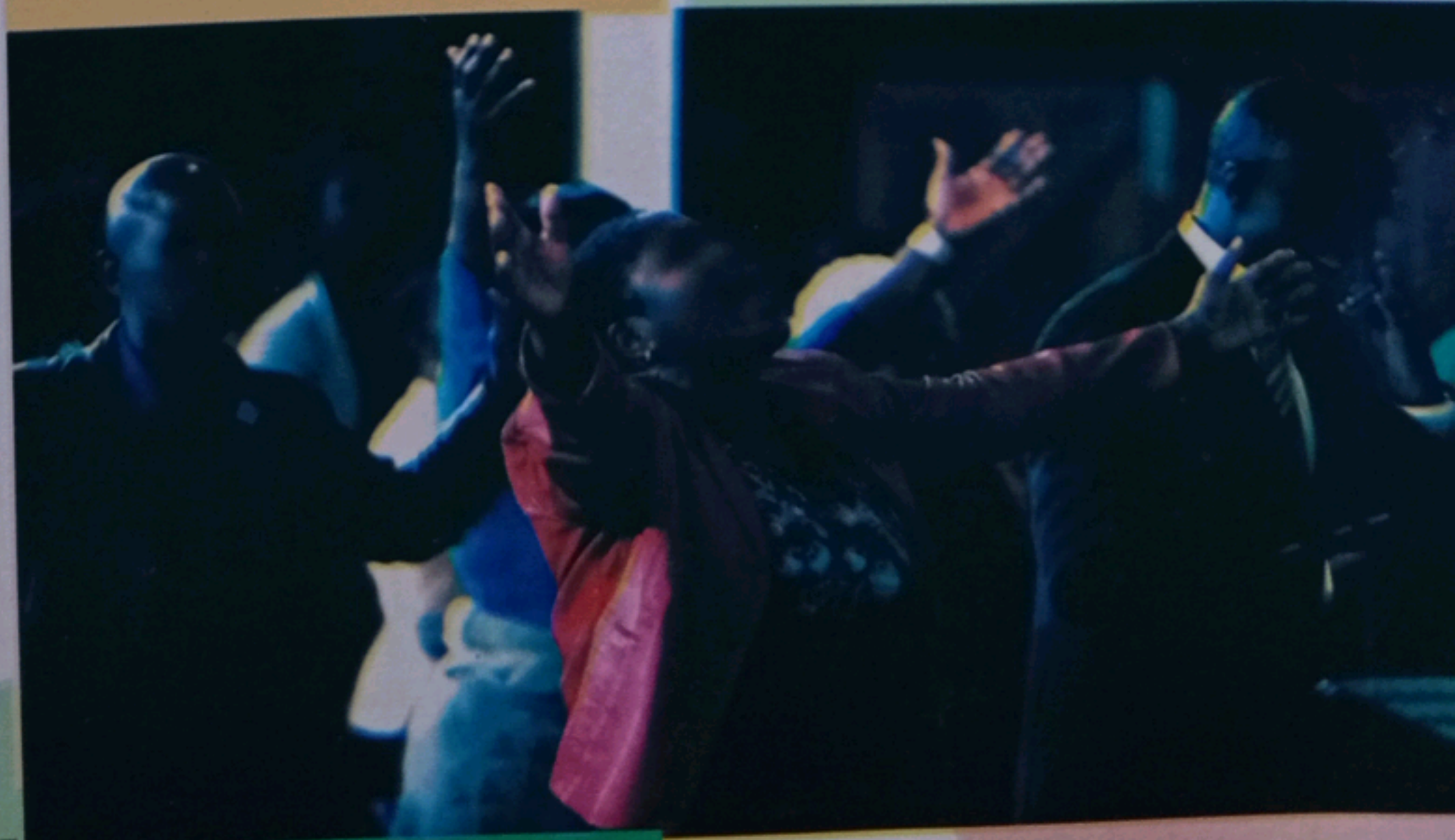
In line with the mission of the universal Church, the Church in Nigeria has over the years undertaken to articulate the concerns, the legitimate aspirations and just expectations of the Nigerian people. The Church is making all effort to eliminate all forms of distress in Nigeria.

On the whole, the Catholic Church has tried to demonstrate through the corpus of her social doctrine, her deep sentiments of concerns for the welfare of humanity at large. In line with the above statement, Pope John II has this to say 'the Church's social teaching is itself a valid instrument of evangelization. As such, it proclaims God and his mystery of salvation in Christ to every human being. In this light, does it concern itself with everything else. The human rights of the individual, and on particular of the "working class", the family and education, the duties of the state, the ordering of nation and international society, economic life, culture, war and peace, and respect for life from the moment of conception until death' (cf. *Centesimus Annus*, n.54).

This singular crusade is yielding a lot of positive results and should be supported. The Magisterium has consistently defended the primacy of the rule of law and respect for the fundamental human rights, including the right to life and the means of sustaining it. The Vatican II Council Fathers declared that the 'the joy and hope, the grief and anguish of the men of our time, especially those who are the joy and hope, the grief and anguish of the followers of Christ as well' (GS 1). In the words of Ehusani, 'the Church has spoken out loud against arbitrary rule and dictatorship in most African countries, and in the case of the present day Nigeria, against religious intolerance, ethnic bigotry and corruption in high places' (A prophetic Church, p. 103). The Church has sought to defend the welfare of all in such a way that priority is given to the person rather than the state.

CONCLUSION

The Church must continue to assist the government in building the Nigerian Nation. The Church as mother and teacher must continue to provide the society with ethical guidance needed for a well ordered and peaceful society. To achieve this, there must be a healthy relationship between the Church and the state. The leaders of the state should always listen to the voice of the Church and make provisions for her. The Church must be united and speak with one mind.



CONSERVATISM AND SECULARISM: FINDING THE MIDDLE GROUND.

Br. Ogbonna Kingsley Obumneme



Introduction

The response to this prayer: 'Glory be to the Father, to the son and to the Holy Spirit', which is: 'as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be world without end', has been used in pejorative sense to ridicule what is often termed the conservative nature of the church. The church, many say, is one of the institutions that have strived to maintain the status quo till date.

Conservatism is a philosophy that advocates traditional value or that maintains status quo. Secularism from Merriam - Webster's dictionary is the indifference to rejection, exclusion of religion and religious consideration. It seeks to interpret life on principles taken solely from material world, without recourse to religion.

Is the church a conservative institution? The church (Catholic) is at once conservative and liberal, as the case may be. On the one hand it is conservative with regards to delayed acceptance of trendy ideas. She often takes her time to study new discoveries and ideas. Fr. Martin Luther was a victim of this conservative nature of the church. His reformation met a stiff resistance from the authority of the Catholic Church. There has been no or little change in the way of action, belief and general teachings of the church. The present Pope's rejection of ideas raised by some liberal minds on issues on family and ordination while upholding age-long tradition and the teachings of the church is a clear indication that the church is conservative.

On the other hand, the church is liberal because there have been a number of clearer interpretations of Divine revelation and doctrines in accordance with the signs of the times. The church, in a way has undergone several reformations and it is always in need of reformation. There had been many councils called for the reformation of certain teachings and beliefs of the church. Though some of those councils were not convoked merely to bring change in the teachings of the church, some were called for an affirmation of the truth that the Church teaches. Great changes came with the second Vatican council; this in a way put the church in the path of growth and

diversity. The important point here is that, although the church is conservative, she gives a listening ear to suggestions and ideas but will only give assent to them after a long careful consideration in the light of scripture and tradition. Pope Francis has shown that the church harkens to the voice of her children by freeing some difficult rules that can hinder someone from tapping from the love of Christ in the sacraments.

The Wave of Secularism

Considering the psychological stages of development, the West is claiming of being in a post scientific era which has small or nothing to do with metaphysical dependence. Things are taking the place of God in our society: youths prefer football training, sports betting, and cinemas to the things of God. Our society is rapidly relegating God to the trash bin only to be celebrating things that are material. We are living in a society being dominated by gross acceptance of material things. People of the so called first world are taking the lead; they have abolished any form of inclination to morality that can be traced to the metaphysical. Most beliefs and ideological modifications in our society are clear indication that most people are no longer interested in the things of God. The acceptance of same-sex unions, assent to transgender doctrine and LGBT community in general is a strange definition of what marriage and love is not. The bible and other holy books have lost their place in the minds of people; they are no more an authority to make reference to when making considerations.

For a peaceful co-existence of nations, the church has to be involved at all levels of world politics.

The Church and the Society

The role of the church in keeping society in check cannot be over emphasized. The church can then be said to be the moral-pointer and conscience of society. The church in

the past has shown that she is involved in the affairs of the secular society. The visit of Pope Francis to recent past American President that brought an end to the cold war between America and Cuba is a clear example. For a peaceful co-existence of nations, the church has to be involved at all levels of world politics. The members of the church are part of the secular society. The church ought to grow/develop along with society to avoid considering her as an outdated institute. The church is the soul of society. She should get involved in every aspect so as to be able to instill sanity in the society.

Conclusion

Even though the church is said to be conservative, she still gives a listening ear to good suggestions and ideals that cannot hurt the teachings of Christ. The church is seen to be the soul of society which implies that for a proper development of society, the church has a great task before her. Our society is not just becoming a place where God is seen to be unimportant; it has become a place where God and metaphysical ideals are seen to be outdated.

The church must see this as a great challenge to the work of Christ. She ought to practice the calling back of people's consciences towards the things of God to avoid a total relegation which may undermine the efforts she has made over the years. The church ought to find out ways of making her gathering appealing to the youths who are the future of the society. The strict traditional hymns and quiet worship can be freed to a warm celebration with new musical instruments. Sports can be said to be in great contest with the church. Church should not see this as being a no issue she should see it as a threat to souls and devise a means of bringing in sports as part of her activities so as to woo our youths. Being among the youth in those places of sporting and praying for them before and after their exercises is also a way of placing God above all thereby making them conscious of God's presence and love.

GAINS AND CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED BY CHRISTIANS LIVING IN CONTEMPORARY SECULAR SOUTH AFRICA

D.P MOLYNEAUX

1. Secularism is an indifference to or rejection of religion and religious convictions. Secularism shifts the focus from religious values to nature, reason, science and human development. It imposes political and social values.
2. The SA (South African) Constitution makes it clear that South Africa is a secular society. The Constitutional values are political and social and are the reference point for attitudes and morals for people living in South Africa. The Constitution is not based on Christian values as such but rather on secular values such as human rights, human dignity, an espousing of non-racialism, non-sexism, equality and self-fulfilment. The Constitution places Government at the centre of human development committing it to ensure the realisation of these goals and other rights as well as to enforce rights and duties owed by citizens to each other in terms of the Constitution. This naturally leads to dependence by citizens on Government both from a law point of view and from economic necessity mostly seen in the granting of subsidies to the sick, old and disabled. The mind-set is one of a welfare state with little reference to Christianity or Christian morals or

ethics.

3. An affirmation in the Constitution of the Christian value placed on the sanctity of human life is a gain for Christians living in South Africa. This is the so-called

"Right to life" which means that, in principle, unlawful killings are prohibited. However, while protecting life on the one hand, the Constitution takes away this right in the name of a further right being the right to bodily integrity. This latter right has allowed the Government to pass a law allowing abortion on demand on the basis that this gives effect to the mother's right to control her body. This is a bending of the knee to socio-economic views favouring abortion which results in the sanctioning of the killing of the most innocent form of life, the unborn child, so that the mother can live out her pursuit of self-fulfilment. This is obviously a huge challenge for any committed Christian. Of course, a Christian is not obliged to agree to an abortion but it realises a view which is anathema to traditional Christian values.

4. A gain is that the Constitution does not expressly allow euthanasia-mercy killing. The "Right to life" does not constitute the "Right to die" a dignified death in terms of the Constitution.
5. The Constitution also confirms the right to practice the religion of your choice. In that it is a gain. However that right is restricted in that the practice of your religion must not interfere with the rights of others practising their own religion or those who have no religious beliefs. This can mean that the practise of religion cannot take place in certain public areas.
6. Both education and medical treatment in South Africa were initially provided by Christian missions



BIRTHDAY SHOUT-OUT

Hurray!!!

God's love has been so great to my life and I appreciate all His goodness in my life, my family and my vocation. As I celebrate my birthday in this season of our Lord's own birth, I pray His love and grace abide with me till the end. Amen!

Happy birthday to me

Compliments of the Season!

Ewuzie Joseph



where committed Christians served tirelessly as a service to humanity. This has over time fallen away with the State taking over these services. The Constitution recognises this by requiring the State to provide these services mostly to the poor. This is, on the face of it, a gain. But the challenge arises with the delivery of these services as there are many complaints that the state servants employed to provide education and medical services are not competent or diligent and the emphasis has come to be more on the rights of the unionised workers than on the persons needing the services. An example of this is the strikes which occur despite the pressing needs of patients and learners. The end result is that education and medical services are subject to disruption and the level of service provided is poor-amongst the lowest in the world-despite huge amounts of public money being channelled to these services. As a result, it is a challenge to obtain proper education in South African public schools.

advance social justice for "past inequities". But fair compensation must be paid. The challenge here is that a

However, while protecting life on the one hand, the Constitution takes away this right in the name of a further right being the right to bodily integrity. This latter right has allowed the Government to pass a law allowing abortion on demand on the basis that this gives effect to the mother's right to control her body.

certain covetousness has arisen for the property of others and demands are being made for property to be taken without payment of any compensation. This undoubtedly leads to a climate of fear and hatred- the very antithesis of Christianity. Also the property of foreigners

living in South Africa has been increasingly violently plundered and in some cases destroyed in xenophobic incidents. This all feeds into a climate of lawlessness and lack of respect for the lives and property of others.

9. The lawlessness extends to increasingly violent attacks on others to take their property with little success on the part of the police services to catch and convict the culprits. A life dedicated to respecting the law and the property of others is increasingly missing. Criminality and corruption is seen as the correct path to riches and a good life. This is a most definite challenge to Christians.



7. The socio-economic rights guaranteed in the Constitution – such as the right to housing (including providing hundreds of thousands of houses for free) old age, child and disability grants (to more than 17 million of the population) has created a dependency by citizens on the Government and the political party in power. While this may seem to be a gain in some ways, it reduces the belief in and dependence on God.

8. The Constitution envisages no arbitrary seizure of property without payment of adequate compensation. This is positive. However a sub-clause ostensibly allows any property to be seized by the State and redistributed in an effort to



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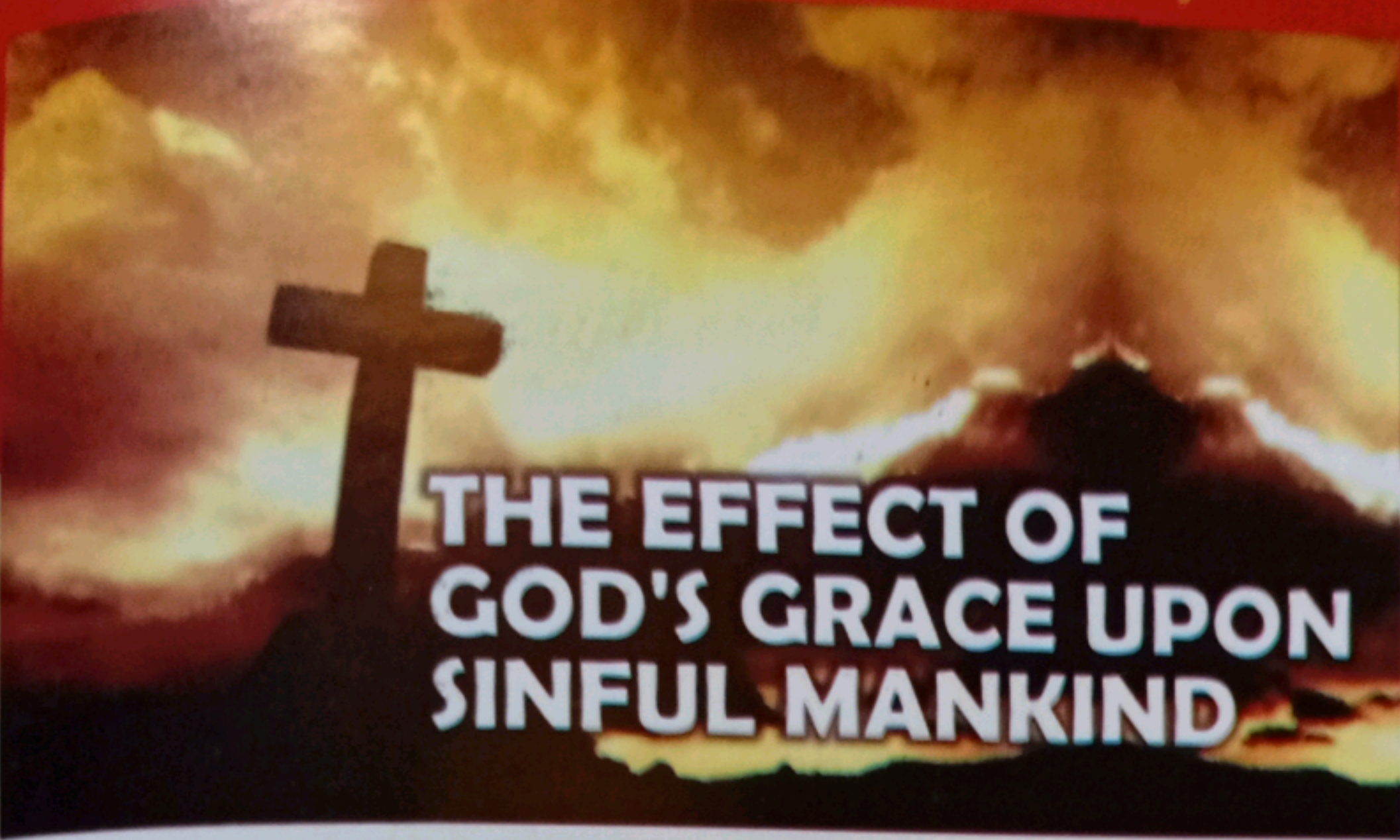
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THE EFFECT OF GOD'S GRACE UPON SINFUL MANKIND



Agbo Johnvianney

INTRODUCTION

Since time immemorial we often say and hear people of different tribes, race, culture and religions say: "By God's grace" or "If not for grace". We tend to attribute every of our good works, experiences, survival, success and every of our good actions to the grace of God. By this we mean that we were able to gain all our achievements by this same grace of God. Thus, the grace of God upon our lives cannot be overemphasized. The grace of God has always been and will always be the source of everything good we experience in this our life's journey. By the grace of God we are alive, by the grace of God we are healthy, by the grace of God we are surviving despite all the calamities that befall us, by God's grace we are where we are, by God's grace we overcome trials and temptations. After seeing and hearing of the grace of God upon our lives we then ask: What is grace? What are the effects of this grace upon our lives despite our sinfulness? The answers to such questions are the aim of this write up as we will succinctly expose the meaning of grace and some of the effects of grace upon the sinful mankind.

WHAT IS GRACE?

The word grace comes from the latin word "gratus", meaning pleasant or enjoyable. The word grace is identified with many meanings.

Firstly, grace is synonymous with humor and in this sense it speaks about a person with grace or wit to express that which is funny and has a humorous quality. At the same time, grace equals elegance (a person having the special grace to sing/dance). In the area of law, grace is the forgiveness granted by way of exception (for example, the release of a prisoner for a special reason). In the area of finance, grace is seen as an allowance of time granted for a debtor during which he is free of at least part of his normal obligation towards his creditor. Finally, grace has a religious sense and grace in the religious sense is the center of our discussion here and in this sense it is referred to as Divine grace.

**The grace of God
has always been
and will always be
the source of
everything good
we experience in
this our life's**

The idea of grace divine in the Christian or religious sense is part of the attitude of God towards men, that is, God's unconditional love. God gives men and women a special gift,

grace, since it allows them the knowledge of the supernatural.

In other words, the grace that God has given us is the element that allows us to connect our soul with God himself.

In the Christian/Catholic tradition, grace is received through the sacrament of baptism. However, this gift strengthens the human soul serving through prayer and the sacraments. The Catechism of the Catholic Church makes us to understand that, Grace is favour, the free and undeserved help that God gives us to respond to His call to become children of God, adoptive sons, partakers of the divine nature and of eternal life (CCC 1996). The Christian theology presents grace as the road to salvation. It is through the grace of God that we are empowered and inspired to live a good and virtuous life despite the moral decadence in our modern society. It will not be wrong to say that without the grace of God in our lives we are helpless.

THE EFFECTS OF GOD'S GRACE UPON SINFUL MANKIND

Collin Dye in his article titled: *The amazing effect of Grace* wrote that, God's amazing grace has set us free from the penalty and power of sin. By grace we have been saved through faith. By grace we walk the walk of faith. By grace we are set free from every bondage and impediment of the devil. And by grace we serve God through faith, as we depend on his

OVERVIEW OF CHRISTIAN MISSIONARY LANDSCAPE IN CONTEMPORARY NIGERIA



Br. Stanley Oranulu

power working so energetically within. Dye said that he don't believe grace produces lazy Christians. People will labour hard giving their lives for many different things - for money, for success, for promotion and for fulfilment in life. But the greatest motivation of all is the love and grace of God.

St. Thomas Aquinas enlisted five(5) effects of grace viz:

1. Grace heals our soul:
2. Grace gives us staying power to keep going:
3. Grace enables us to break through to glory:
4. Grace gives us the desire to do good:
5. Grace work effectively through us to carry out good:

CONCLUSION

Grace teaches us to be selfless workers for God, not out of duty or fear, but out of love. St. Paul said that he owed everything he has to the grace of God. He also said that it was grace that had led him to live a life of total service to God. This was the effect of God's grace.

But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me. 1 Corinthians 15:10

With all these in mind, it is worthy to conclude with the clarion call from Nancy Ward saying that, we should make Christ's love our own believing that he loves us more than we could ever imagine. Let us accept and embrace God's love for us. Love is who God is. We can't make him stop loving you despite the weight of our sins, even if we never surrender our will or cooperate with his plan. But we can allow him to empower us with his grace by opening ourselves to all He intends for us.

Introduction

Nigeria is made up of many people, cultures and ethnic groups, having rich historical backgrounds and traditions. This wealth and variety are brought into our praise of God and the review of our Christian life. Before our contact with Christian traders and missionaries from Portugal our lands had been in touch with Arabs from North Africa. Trade in hides and skin, salt and other commodities existed with North Africa before the shameful trade in slaves and later in palm oil and palm kernel. These contacts became channels through which both Islam and Christianity emerged in Nigeria to exist side by side with the many forms of African traditional religions.

The challenge for Christianity everywhere is the demand to bear witnesses both by word and deed. The need for deep renewal of our lives makes it imperative for us to begin a review of our lives with the narration of our common Christian history. Christians are not only called to witness to outsiders, they are challenged, every day, to give account of their very selves of the hope given in their faith (1 Peter 3:15).

The Christian Mandate

Evangelisation is the task Jesus entrusted to his church at the point of his departure from this world to return to the Father. He gave the mandate to his apostles to "go, therefore, make disciples of all nations; baptise them in the name of the father and the son and the Holy

spirit, and teach them to observe all the commands I gave you..." (Matt 28:19-20; Mk 16:15). From that moment "the task of evangelising all people constitutes the essential mission of the church... Evangelising is in fact the grace and vocation proper to the church, her deepest identity. She exists in order to evangelise" (Evangelii Nuntiandi 14).

After the apostles, successive generation of Christians have continued to respond to the call to evangelise. With the passage of time, the good news spread across Europe, North Africa, Asia and into Americas. Finally, some one and a half centuries ago, the Christian gospel reached the shores of what is now Nigeria following a failed attempt four centuries earlier to implant Christianity in that region.

The Purpose of Evangelisation

The purpose of evangelisation is contained already in the mandate Jesus gave to his Apostles. It is to "make disciples of all nations." The purpose is therefore not merely to bring as many people as possible to the baptismal font or to cover an ever increasing geographical area on earth with the Gospel message. These two are indeed part of the purpose of evangelisation, but they are not all of it. Stating the purpose of evangelisation, Pope Paul VI said the following: for the church, evangelising means bringing the good news into all the strata of humanity, and through its influence transforming humanity from within and making it new; "Now I am making the whole of the creation new." (Rev 21:5, cf 2Cor 5:17, Gal 6:15). Continuing the same Supreme pontiff

also said that evangelisation is a question not only of preaching the Gospel in ever wider geographic areas or to cover greater numbers of people, but also of affecting and as it were upsetting, through the power of the Gospel, mankind's criteria of judgement, sources of inspiration and models of life which are in contrast with the word of

Essential to changing our world is changing our view of the world and then living in the light of the new vision.

God and the plan of salvation. It follows from all the foregoing that the aim of evangelisation is conversion, an inner transformation of the individual and collective lives of men and women through the proclamation of Good News of Jesus Christ.

Some of the Challenges Hampering Evangelisation in our Era

Many of the church ministers who have taken it upon them to make the gospel known and accepted have encountered a lot of difficulties in the process.

1. **There is no priority of evangelisation:** it may sound too self-evident; but churches that do not make evangelisation a high priority are really making it no priority at all.
2. **Many laypersons believe that to evangelise is what we pay the clergy and religious to do:** such a perspective is first unbiblical and, second, unproductive. Evangelistic churches always have enthusiastically evangelistic laypersons
3. **Many churches have an excuse mentality:** so the clergy blame it on the laity. The laity blames it on the clergy. And both blame it on culture, the denomination, or some other external scapegoat.
4. **Too many church members do not connect prayer with evangelisation:** many members are pretty good at praying for those who have physical needs. But many are woefully lacking in praying for those who have the greatest need; a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.
5. **Too many Christians fail to be compassionate and Christ-like to others;** evangelisation always ultimately includes a clear articulation of the gospel. But too many Christians never get that opportunity to share the gospel, because they fail to show Christ in their actions and compassion.
6. **Most church ministries are not intentionally evangelistic:** the church should always seek to make certain and all ministries include intentional efforts to share the gospel.

Conclusion

The purpose of developing a Christian view of the world is not merely to evaluate and judge the world, but to change it. By our actions each of us, each human being is changing the world in which we live. Ultimately, Jesus Christ will introduce a radical change to our world when he comes in glory. But until that time, he is using his people to change the world. This indeed happens to one person at a time, but it also happens to one family at a time, or one school at a time, or one church at a time, or even one nation at a time. Wherever you are, you have an opportunity to participate in changing the world for Jesus Christ.

The place to begin, of course, is with us. The gospel of salvation by grace which is basic to the Christian worldview teaches us that before we can change the world for Christ, we must trust in him to bring us into a relationship with the father (John 14:6) and to begin making us into sons and daughters of God who mirror the love of God's eternal son Jesus Christ (Rom 8:28). In this age of the gospel, God is not calling together mere servants or "employees" to work for him, but raising children who will participate in the "family business" out of sense of love and mutual commitment. Essential to changing our world is changing our view of the world and then living in the light of the new vision.

Goodwill message



IMACO 2005

Friends of the
MISSIONARY SOCIETY OF DIVINE PARACLETE
congratulates the editor and his team on the
success of the maiden edition of

FISHERS
Magazine

Together we shall launch deeper at the command
of the Master for a greater catch.



DonatusMary Richard Essien

RECHRISTIANIZING THE WORLD: PRAGMATIC EVANGELISATION AND THE SELF THROUGH MARY AGAINST SECULARISM

It is in Christ Jesus that creation has been redeemed, and thus finds its existence, meaning and life only in Christ the Saviour. Evangelisation through Mary is the church's exertion and call to new life in Christ, new evangelization and fresh approach to re-Christianize the world of secularism. Our Lord Jesus Christ as the Saviour did not only ransom man for God but also sanctified all creatures with his redemptive blood. Through his work of redemption, everything has been configured in Him - Christ - both time, season and all things. The cycle of creation is re-configured to Christ and finds its fulfilment in Christ.

Like St. Francis of Assisi, the initiative towards evangelisation makes sense, where he instructs his brothers to "preach always and use words when they are necessary", that is, their ways of life must be the living gospel message. As such, the church urges us to make Christ the centre and summit of our daily calendar and to inspire persons to emulate the same, the life of Christ. In his encyclical letter in the 1990's, the apostle of New Evangelization St. Pope John Paul II,

following his prophetic emphasis on New Evangelization which led to the "office of New Evangelization" in the Vatican dicastery, called for a re-evangelisation of the Christianised area of the world such as: Europe and North America. He observed also that Christianity is no longer at the heart of persons who claimed to be baptized, even though many persons profess faith in Christ but their lives neither centre on Christ nor mirror the teachings of Christ.

Secular living (secularism) seems to be the routine of the day; thus, the inspiration of the Holy Spirit upon Pope John Paul II (to whom he dedicated the New Millennium and also to the Virgin Mother of God) guided him to declare that the 90s were the advent of New Evangelisation. The mission to make Christ the centre of everything, the soul of every culture and the universe should be a daily priority for every catholic and by extension, the Christian family. We should strive to make our Lord Jesus Christ the centre and soul of our Christian lives in the New Millennium. We believe that the

message of Christ has been announced to many nations and largely to the ends of the earth. The best way to make Christ the centre of everything is to evangelise with the use of the 'self'; be mirrors of Christ-like reality to people. That is the ~~the~~ ecclesiastical journey you can embark upon. The early missionaries emphasized conversion to Christ, ours is to make Christ the centre of everything, by so doing, secularism which seems to be the order of the day will be a thing of the past.

According to the mystic, St. Theresa of Avila in her book; *the interior castle*, one of the ways of Christian perfection is to enter into a mystical marriage with God. There are three necessary steps in marriage: courtship, engagement and marriage.

Courtship - a moment to encounter a person which opens a relation and both persons begin to know each other. As they progress, they express their desire to be bound to together by the ritual called "Engagement". This leads to better understanding and acceptance of each other, and deepening of relationship. **Engagement** leads to marriage, where they become bound to each other

The mission to make Christ the centre of everything, the soul of every culture and the universe should be a daily priority for every catholic and by extension, the Christian family.

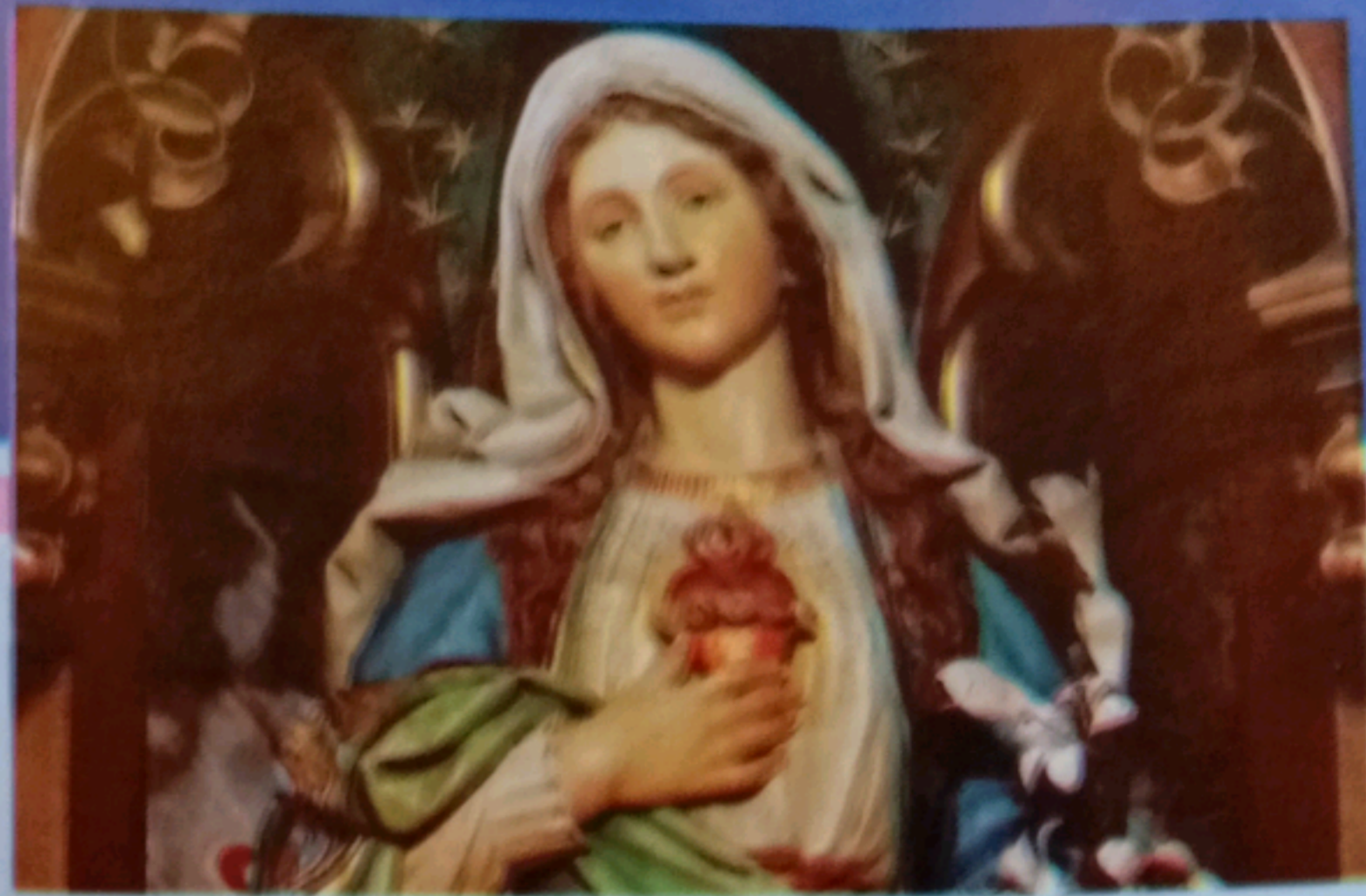
inseparably in the sacrament of marriage. Christian life should also embody the same steps. Normally, a soul begins the journey with the conversion to Jesus Christ (as courtship). Then this leads a person propagated in the life of Christ to a sort of horarium.

Time should be lived from the point of view of the Divine; seen as continuous unfolding of creation, incarnation, resurrection of Jesus Christ using a systematic approach. Christians should be immersed in this rhythmic union, thus living a daily life that reflects or mirrors the mysteries and person of Jesus Christ, God with us, and evangelize others

to make Christ the centre of their lives. They should imitate Mary mother of Christ, the only role model of the life of Christ, whom by the grace of the Almighty God, serves the mystery of redemption and Mediatrix of all graces (LG 56). Christians should live their lives in total consecration to Jesus' mission. Mary lived the mystery of Christ, she accompanied Christ her son from conception to ascension, Pentecost, with great devotion. Christians will imitate Mary's disposition as they make Christ their career and life. Christians should live their lives in the full cycle of creation and redemption in Christ who is the dawn and source of new creation, "for in Him were all things created in the heavens and earth, things visible and things invisible – Col. 1:16. Christ reveals Himself in a continuous connected series of mysteries, which will be demonstrated in a week creation-redemption-cycle, just as creation took place in a week cycle; redemption of creation in Christ will be lived out according to the full span of creation-cycle. Right from the birth of Christ, creation has been reconfigured to Christ, "for in Him we live, move and have our being - Acts. 17:28.

Christologisation: Is a sanctification of all things in Christ, including the whole universe and re-grounding of everything in Christ which the method of "New Evangelization", Christians should demonstrate this reality only in theological concept, and work towards its practical realization as the days and events of the day become centered on the person of Christ.

Dr. Scott Hahn's View: This brilliant American theologian rightly reviews that the attempt to Christianize the modern society is more than evangelisation, but a commitment to inculturate the Gospel; to transform the traditional cosmic week into the Lord's week is one attempt to Christianize the entire universe. Furthermore, Christian conversion is more than asking persons to accept Jesus in their lives, leading persons to daily communion with Jesus Christ.



THE TRIUMPH OF MARY OVER SECULARISM: THE EFFECTS OF THE CONSECRATION OF RUSSIA TO THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY

The major ideas in this brief reflection were derived from two sources: first, Pope Pius XI's Encyclical Letter, *Divini Redemptoris* [Of the Divine Redemption], and second, Barb Ernster's interview with Dr. Victor Khroul, an associate professor at Moscow State University, who grew up under Soviet rule.



Nchedo Martin-Mary Umeatuegbu

This reflection aims at showing how the consecration of Russia to Mary's Immaculate Heart remains a valid means of overthrowing the plans of the Evil One to rule the world with ungodly principles, as a way of encouraging us to embrace our Heavenly Queen with perseverance in our true devotion to her. It was in Her 1917 Apparitions at Fatima to the little shepherds, Lucia, Francisco and Jacinta that the Blessed Mother appealed that Russia be consecrated to her Heart. This begs a serious question: What is it about Russia? Yet, somehow the answer is contained in Mary's words: "At the end my Immaculate Heart will triumph, and Russia will be converted". Before then Mary already warned that if Russia is not prayed for, it will spread its errors throughout the world. Again we ask: why this reference to Russia? What are its errors that can corrupt the entire world?

Secularism means total rejection of God and everything about Him, the dethronement of religion, suppression of faith, and enthronement of human reason, placing it superior, while God and every idea about Him remain inferior, if not in oblivion. At the time of Fatima Apparition, human history was experiencing the First World War. Russia was on a march of destruction which was to affect the whole world as its target. What happened? Prior to then, Russia was ruled by Tsar Nicholas II, whose government oppressed the lower classes. On November 7, 1917, he was overthrown by Bolshevik party led by Vladimir Lenin, and between July 16-17, 1918, Tsar Nicholas and his family were

executed. Lenin's government revolted against religion and capitalism (a system of individual ownership of property), while they imposed atheism and communism (a system of ownership of property by the state), which implies that the state's decision is superior to God's. On December 20, 1922, they formed the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). This was the gateway by which their plan was to spread to the world. Lenin died on January 21, 1924, and was succeeded by Joseph Stalin, whose rule became worse. Historians estimate that up to 60 million deaths occurred in the USSR under him. In his *Divini Redemptoris*, Pope Pius pointed out and summarized up to ten doctrines and propaganda of the Communists. He also identified and defined the dangers of atheistic communism seen in their rule in Russia. He called it a "Satanic scourge" which "tears the very idea of God from the hearts of men", given that "they are necessarily urged by their passions to the most atrocious barbarity". The Holy Father mentioned that its spread was by various means such as books, cinema, theater, radio, schools and universities, which are avenues by which they planned to de-Christianize the world. He also raised alarm that these doctrines penetrate into all classes of people, while few are aware of its poison, and that there exists a "conspiracy of silence" among large section of the non-Catholic press in the world.

By the Grace of God, on March 25, 1984, Pope St John Paul II consecrated the whole (which includes Russia) to Mary's Immaculate Heart. Sister Lucia confirmed this Consecration as "accepted by Heaven". The Communists never achieved their goal of world domination, though they were able to influence countries like China, North Korea, Cuba, Vietnam and Cambodia. One important point about this Consecration is that it can be viewed from a logical horizon - a logic

that comes from God's Wisdom. The logic is this: Since Russia possesses these satanic errors, and given that the whole world is its target, it follows that the whole world should be consecrated, for Russia itself is part of that whole world. Therefore, if the world was consecrated to Mary, then

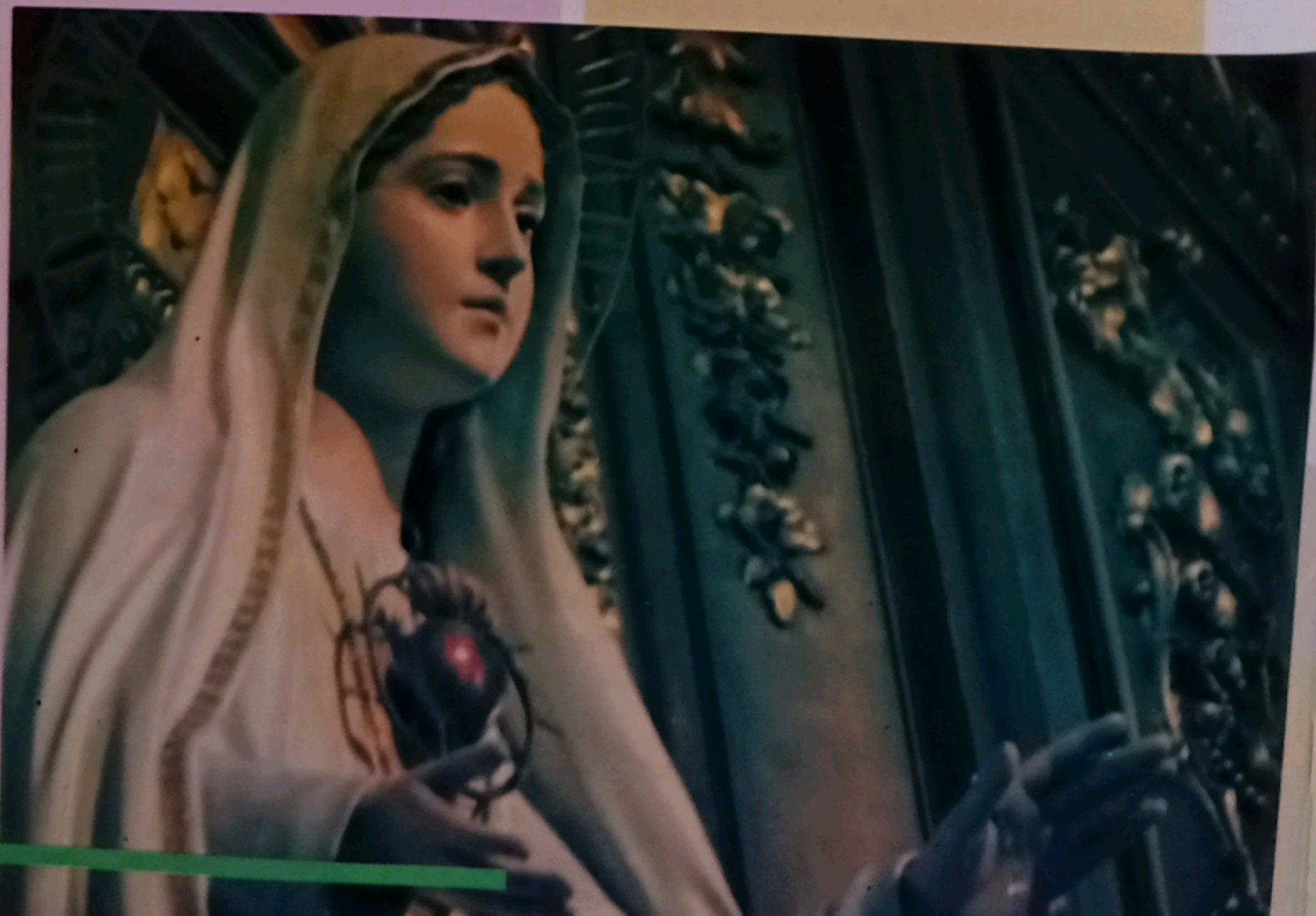
citizens, while some other pertinent moral/life issues are being revisited through the dialogue between the state and the Church (which includes Roman Catholics and Russian Orthodox, who even recognise the Fatima message). The devil confessed to the Roman exorcist, Fr Gabriele

Amorth in one of his exorcisms that the invocation of Pope St John Paul's name terrifies him, because during his papacy, he suppressed his plan of realisation of a communist world by that Consecration. So, even the devil confirmed the validity and effect of the Consecration of Russia and the world to Mary. In fact, here the devil recognised that Mary crushed his head (cf. Genesis 3:15) by subduing his plans.

Indeed, by her Apparition, Mary becomes she that comes forth as the morning rising, fair as the moon, bright as the sun, and terrible as an army set in battle array (cf. Song of Songs 6:10). Let this encourage us to be always confident in Mary. True devotion is an end to all our problems, especially spiritual ones. This was why St Alphonsus Maria de Liguori said that: "True devotion to Mary consists in three things: confidence, veneration and love".

Therefore, if the world was consecrated to Mary, then Russia was consecrated to Mary.

Russia was consecrated to Mary. And if Russia was prevented by this Consecration from spreading these errors, then the whole was saved by God. What makes this logic Divine is that it is for the sake of salvation of souls. The effect of this Consecration, therefore, is that Russia was indeed converted. Today, Russia is a state that now permits Christian values. Unlike during the reign of Communists, it now grants freedom of religion to her



Re-imagining Religion in a Secular Age

Ogbenna Andrew



Introduction:

Re-imagining religion in a secular age challenges us to question the way we think of secularity and its effect on faith and spirituality in our contemporary world. Let's take Nigeria as case study. Attacks on Christianity and the church are rampant in today's society. Unbelievers once revered the church and its teachings, but today they scorn them. Sects go about destroying churches and burning down places of worship.

Films such as *Da Vinci Code* and organizations such as *The Jesus seminar* attack the credibility of Jesus and the bible. But how do Christians answer these attacks on Christianity. What is destroying the moral, faith and spiritual foundation of today's society, I believe, firstly, is secularism. Secularisation generally holds that religious ideas, institutions, and interpretations have lost their social significance. People liked the idea of a secular society and a secular government. But in terms of moral values and ethics, they never checked into the internal assumptions of secularisation that made it wide open to almost any view on any subject. Beginning in the 1960s, the moods of secularisation ultimately led to society's loss of shame.

Being spiritually minded was okay as long as people kept their faith and spiritual beliefs private and did not bring them into public arena. The irony of this was the fact secularisation had its assumption on absolutes and anything of the metaphysical nature was not allowed in to public place. But anyone who believed in a spiritual essence, and ultimate reality, and the fact there were transcendental absolutes that needed to be adhered to was told to keep those beliefs private. That ultimately paved way for the loss of meaning.

Secularism brought about loss of shame, loss of meaning, and as a result, everything became pragmatic. Philosophers and naturalists stepped in. In this new century, we have lost all definitions of what it means to be human, and what sexuality, life, and the home are all about. We are on the high

seas, battling the storms of conflicting worldviews without a compass.

FAITH AND SPIRITUALITY IN THE FACE OF SECULARIZATION

The world is undergoing religious polarization. With more adults shedding their religious affiliations, as evidenced in the latest result from the Pew Research Centre, the world is becoming more secular. In the past seven years, using the new Pew data, persons who identify with a religion declined 27 percentage points. Overall, belief in God, praying daily and religious service attendance have all dropped since 2004.

Religion is a wonderful thing: it provides hope, generates community, promotes charity, offers comfort, and creates a connection to the divine. And yet millions of people today want little or nothing to do with it. Despite the fact that most humans are religious, believe in God, find solace in prayer, wisdom in ancient scriptures, guidance in prophets, comfort in rituals, and inspiration in faith – a growing chunk of humanity is opting out.

To be secular is to live one's life without belief in anything supernatural – be it God, Jesus, hell, miracles, jinn, or reincarnation. It also means being quite open to awe and mystery, wonder and bliss, or mystical pondering, and yet always (to paraphrase David Hume) proportioning one's belief – in anything – to the evidence at hand. The current lack of spiritual sophistication is not new. Pleasure-seeking, selfishness and materialism have been issues for millennia. As King Solomon wrote, "All things toil to weariness ... the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing."

THE NEGATIVES EFFECTS OF SECULARISM

i) Sense of powerlessness in religious institutions which had historically maintained control over governance for centuries. ii) Religious people becoming concerned about the moral compass of the nation. iii) Militant demand by secularists to ban religion in

totality (something counter to the principle of allowing religious freedom in secularism) borne out of resentment for religious institutions. This generally happens when the secular nation is under a dictatorial communist/socialist regime. iv) Violence caused by conflict between different religious groups in a diverse country with followers of a religion feeling victimized by "preferential" treatment given to another religious group (again counter to equal treatment of religion by the state). In short, appeasement politics by so-called secular political parties. v) Yearning for a return to a religious order among some religious people. Glorification of history and an image of a "perfect nation" among the followers of the religion. vi) Increasing religiosity among the masses in a secular country can give rise to movements that try to topple a secular government.

CONCLUSION.

The idea of 'living by faith' is often frowned upon in society today. For some, it is perceived as more logical, even beautiful, to only live by facts and scientific evidence – the rationality of reason being the major weapon that modern doctrine has at its disposal.

Whilst scientific evidence undoubtedly gives us a good understanding of the world around us, it could be argued that at the root, faith is needed to really investigate and prove a fact. For instance, the general consensus has been that faith is only exerted when we hold to a particular belief system or ideology – but do we all use faith in our everyday lives?

The most radical atheist would probably disagree that they ever use faith. Despite this, I would say that we all have faith in something, as we all have something that we believe to be true. For the Christian, there is a belief in God and Jesus Christ's atonement for sin on the cross. For the atheist there is the belief that no God exists. Both of these require faith in order to believe that they are true.

RELIGION AND INSECURITY IN NIGERIA

The word Religion is derived from the Latin words either *Ligare* 'meaning to bind,' *relegare* "meaning to unite or link together" and lastly "*religio*" which means relationship. Technically, though religion has no universally acceptable definition but, it has been defined in different ways by deferent people. Alfred North whitehead defines it as "the art and theory of the internal life of man so far as it depends on the man himself and on what is permanent in the nature of things. He also defined it as what the individual does with his solitariness.

William James defines it as "the feelings, act and experience of humanity in their solitude so far as they comprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider Divine.

Insecurity: Insecurity is the state of being subject to danger or injury; the condition of being susceptible to harm or injury, it is the state of being insecure or unsafe, want of securities or stability. Religion Fuels Insecurity by way of religious riot, religious segregation, sectarian violence etc.

Religious crisis in Nigeria is prevalent owing to a number of reasons. The Jos crises, Boko haram terrorist attacks are examples of the various religious crises that have plagued the country in recent times. Here I briefly examined some root causes of religious crises in Nigeria and how they can be mitigated. It is often argued that religious crises are more political than religions.

Overview of Religious Violence in Nigeria

Beginnings of Christian - Muslim strife in modern Nigeria can be traced back to 1953. Today, religious violence in Nigeria is dominated by the Boko Haram insurgency, which aims to impose Sharia in the Northern parts of the country. The Igbo Massacre of 1966 in the North that followed the Counter - Coup of the same year eventually turned out to be a full blown tension between Christians and Muslims. This was a major factor in the Biafran

secession and the resultant civil war.

The 1980s saw an upsurge in violence due to the death of Mohammed Marwa (Maitalsine). In the same decade the erstwhile military ruler of Nigeria, General Ibrahim Babangida enrolled Nigeria in the organization of the Islamic conference. This was a move which aggravated religious tensions in the country, particularly among the Christian Community. In response, some in the Muslim Community pointed out that certain other African member states have smaller proportions of Muslims, as well as Nigeria's diplomatic relations with the Holy See.

Since the return to democracy in 1999, Sharia has been instituted in the main body of civil and criminal law in 9 Muslim-majority States beginning with Zamfara State.

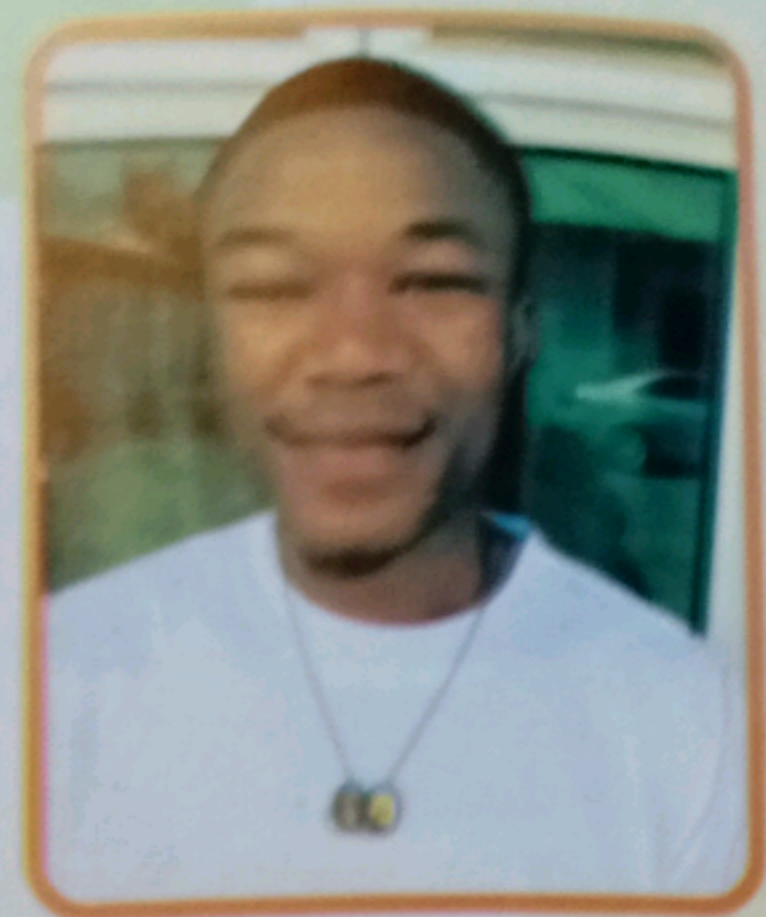
1980s

In the 1980s serious outbreaks between Christians and Muslims occurred in Kafanchan in Southern Kaduna State in a border area between the two religions, propagated by extreme leaders who were able to rally a young, educated group of individuals who feared that the State could not protect their religious interests. The leaders were able to polarize their followers through speeches and public demonstrations.

Since the restoration of democracy in 1999, the Muslim dominated Northern Nigerian States have implemented strict Sharia Law. Religious conflict between Muslim and Christians has erupted several times since 2000 for various reasons, often causing riots with several thousands of victims on both sides.

Since 2009, the Islamist movement, Boko Haram, has fought an armed rebellion against the Nigeria military, sacking villages and towns and taking thousands of lives in the battles and massacres against Christians, students and others deemed enemies of Islam.

Root Causes of Religious crises in Nigeria Poverty and Ignorance: Poor people have little or no access to proper education. Poor youths are taken



ARIRIGUZOH MALACHY C.

advantage of by people that want to cause chaos in the country. They are taught doctrines that are based on violence and murder all the name of religion. Since the poor are not really exposed, they accept such doctrines hook line and sinker. Youths are made suicide bombers after being enticed with money for their families and assured of a heavenly reward. This is predominant in the Northern part of the country.

Mass unemployment: educated but idle youths are also used as tools to wreak havoc. Idleness exposes them to bad companies. They become easy to be bribed and bought over.

Fear of Domination: religious crises can also come about when it seems the minority religious group in a particular area is afraid of domination by the dominant religious group.

Solutions to Religious crises in Nigeria Dialogue: Religious groups, indigenes, and settlers should always resort to dialogue and mediation if any issue arises between them. This will prevent crisis and unwanted religious violence in Nigeria.

Sanctity of life: All religious groups should always preach about the sanctity of life as God does not delight in the death of his creation.

Job Creation: Youth should be taught how to start up their own businesses. This increases creativity and engages the youths. Governments should also work on avenues to create more jobs. This should be done with a view of reducing the poverty rate.

In conclusion, Religion greatly fuels insecurity and the earlier the world started practicing a mono religion (one religion) the better for the world as there is only one God who is not an author of violence and division.

Goodwill Message



Hon. Chief & Lolo Ikechukwu Chilaka

(aka The Good Shepherd) Ochi Nanwata Mbaise, A philanthropist based in South Africa and Associate of the Society of Divine Paraclete congratulates the entire members on the success of the maiden edition of **FISHERS MAGAZINE.**

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ST JOSEPH'S

SCHOLASTICATE ANNIVERSARY

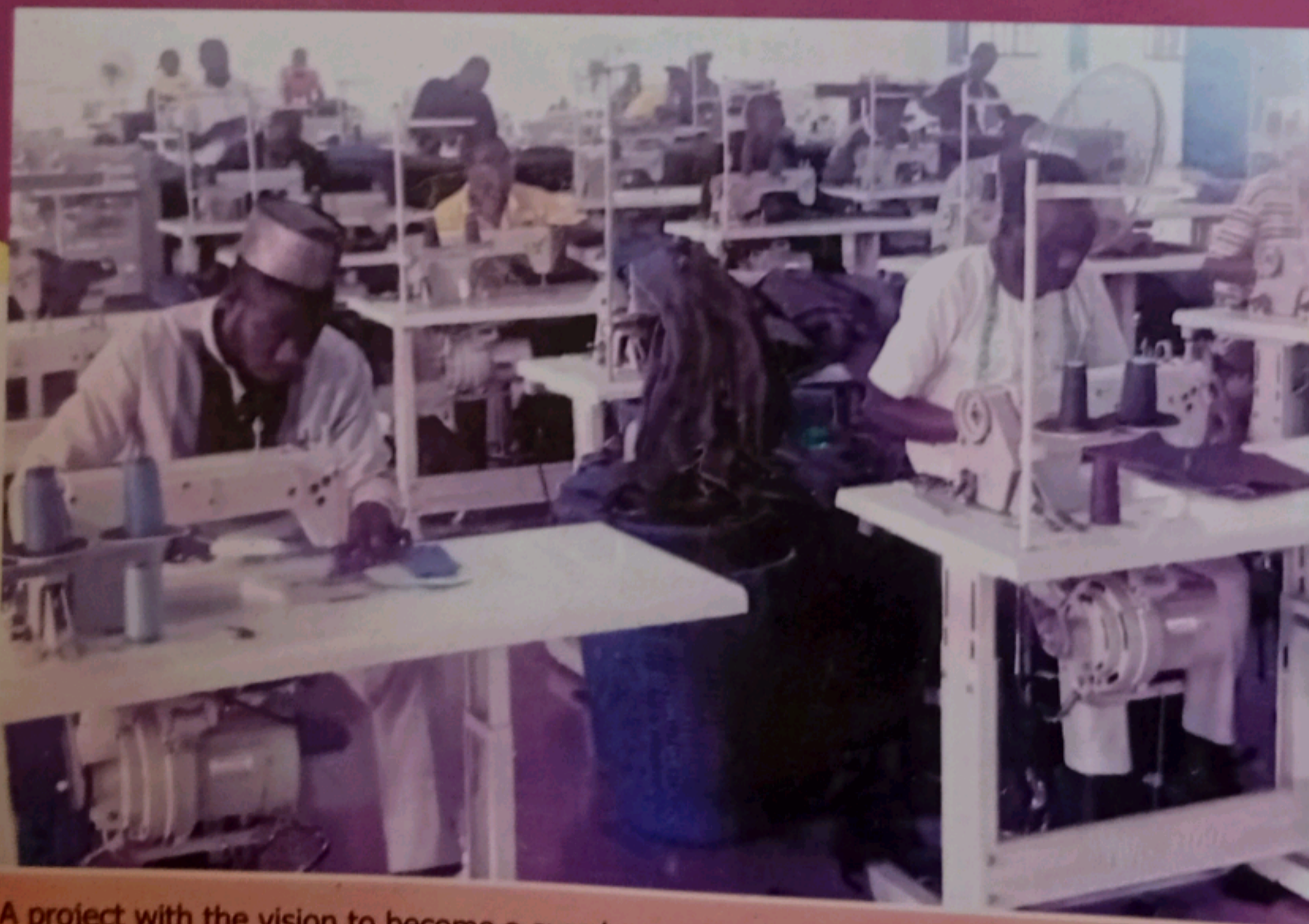


St Joseph's Oblate Scholasticate, Cedara, Republic of South Africa, celebrated its 75th



Anniversary on the 8th of September 2018 in the Oblate year of Vocations.

PROPOSED PROJECT: **DIVINE PARACLETAN CENTRE** (COMFORTER OF THE AFFLICTED)



A project with the vision to become a sure hope of a better life for underprivileged youths and women while also rendering quality services to the public requires the assistance of God's people and all men and women of goodwill to come alive.