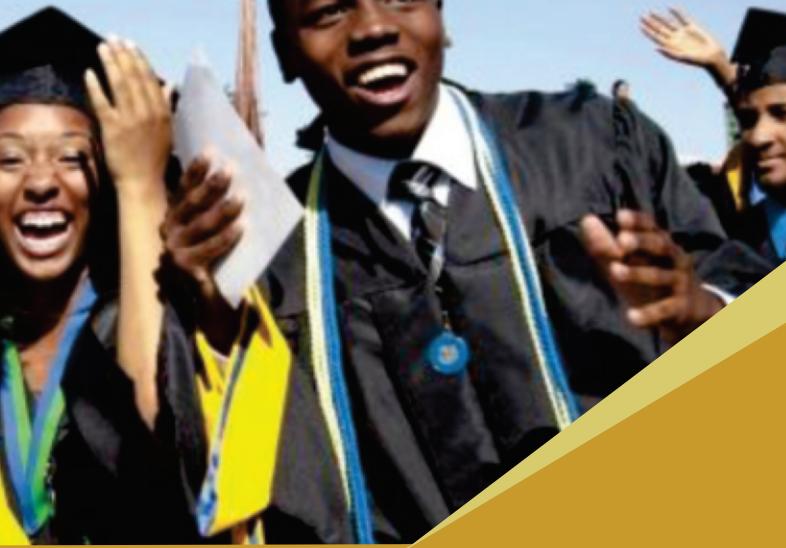


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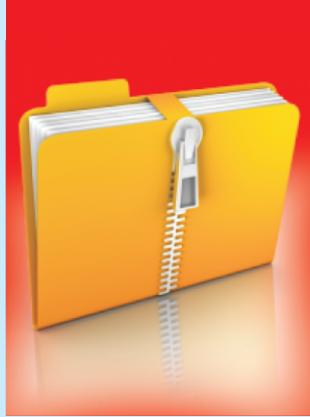


SPECIAL EDITION:

Flag off of the Golden Jubilee
of the Foundation of
Daughters of Divine Love



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Editor's NOTES:

Mary Gloria C. Njoku, DDL

ACTIVE LOVE

Does it appear to you that our world is loosing sight of active love seen in the life of Jesus Christ? When you turn on the radio, television or surf the Internet for news, you are inundated with news of violence in all the regions of the world. Even the developed countries seemed to have been caught in the loveless mess as they battle to save their countries from immigrants. Xenophobia is on the increase now and yet people struggle to move away from war-ridden countries to these developed countries in search of basic need, safety. The world is indeed on edge. This 2018 issue of Rooted in Love Magazine with the theme, "Living Divine Love", explores love and offers examples of active love in the midst of the consternation we face in our world today.

In "Laying Down our Lives for other People", Sr. Blessing Maris Okere shares the rudiments and rewards of living divine love through laying down our lives for other. The love of Christ, she says, should urge us to put others first and make their needs more important than ours.

The entire world is fortunate and blessed by the recent Apostolic Exhortation of His Holy Father, Francis, *Gaudete et Exsultate*, which he issued on 19th March 2018, the feast of St Joseph the Worker. Through this exhortation, Pope Francis renews and explains the universal call to holiness to all people. Sr. Dr MarySylvia Nwachukwu's review of this document draws out the salient messages of the Holy Father's invitation to us to find the practical way of holiness in the Beatitudes.

This edition also presents titbits of the take-off ceremony commemorating the golden Jubilee of the foundation of the Daughters of Divine Love Congregation. Indeed, we dedicated this 2018 edition to "Living Divine Love" as a special issue for the golden Jubilee. Daughters of Divine Love was established on 16 July 1969 during the Nigeria/Biafra war. The Daughters labored to share divine love with the people of Biafra who suffered horrendously because of the war. The Daughters have continued to respond to God's call to love and care for his people. A conversation with Rev Mother Maria Ifechukwu Uدورah, the first Mother

General of the congregation, recalls the graceful events of the foundation and life of the Daughters.

Health care ministry is a vital aspect of the mission of the Daughters of Divine Love. In "Advancing the Care Ministry of Christ through the Application of the Biopsychospiritual model of Health", Mary Gloria C. Njoku introduces us to a new model of healthcare that addresses the biological, psychological, social and spiritual dimensions of healthcare and proposes ways healthcare settings can implement the health model for optimal health outcomes.

Sr. Margaret Mary Onwu explores how healthcare professionals join in extending God's healing mission.

In "Teaching with Love", Sr. Ifechidere Uzonna shares how we can express active love through our teaching. Teaching is more than a noble profession, she says. It is a vocation, a calling, which must be carried out with love.

Susan Wiland of Society of St. Vincent de Paul in "Actions Inspired by Love" reminds us of the active love project conceptualized and established by a 20 years old university student, Frederic Ozanam. The project named Society of St. Vincent de Paul is working in all the regions of our world. We are inspired to express our love and respect for the sacredness of human life wherever we find ourselves.

Rev. Fr. Dr. Sylvester Nnaso writes about practical love in establishing a modern library to serve the needs of his community, particularly, empowering secondary school students to gain information and communication technology and reading skills. In sharing his story, Fr. Nnaso leads us to understand how dreams, mission and shared vision coalesce into concrete active love.

Kingsley C. Ezechi in his article titled, "Love as the Primary Responsibility of Husbands in the Home" examines the role of husbands in expressing love in the home.

The political history of Nigeria might sound discouraging for all who love the Nigerian nation. Joachim Oforchukwu, PhD, leads

us to see sparks of hope in his carefully carved write-up on the Success of Democracy in Nigeria.

It is interesting to read stories of heroic missionary activities of the Daughters. In "Being Aware of God's Ever-present Love", Sr. Maria Olufunanya Agu shares with us the beginning of the work of the Daughters of Divine Love in Gabon Region.

I invite you to enjoy other entertaining tips in the magazine and the jokes collected by Sr. CynthiaMaris Okoye. From the articles in this edition, we learn that love can be promoted and shared in varied works of life and through different media. We can love people by being present to them, teaching them, providing empowering resources, donating food and clothing, praying, and sharing stories. We hope that you will find the inspiration you need to begin or continue your mission of love and thus become an example of living divine love.

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Sr. Mary Gloria C. Njoku, DDL

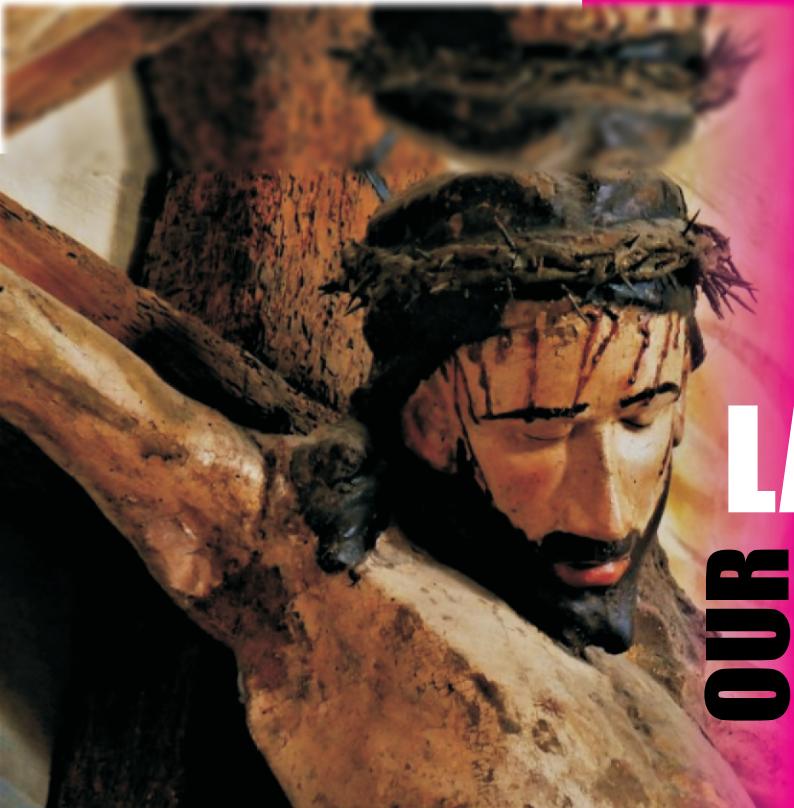
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LAYING DOWN OUR LIVES FOR OTHER PEOPLE

BLESSING OKERE, DDL
Gabon Region

The fact of this statement never comes true without 'Love'. Laying down our Lives for other people cannot be done without love, and there is no half way to it. Therefore laying down our lives is a total commitment of 100% of our lives. It is all about living a life ruled by love. JESUS has shown us a pattern of love by laying down His life for us when He said 'Greater love has no one than this, to lay down His life for His friends' (John 15:13). Then He said this I command you, that you love one another as I have loved you. John applies this as an obligation upon all believers when he talked about us laying down our lives for the brethren. In Romans 12:9-10, He said, 'Honour one another above yourself'

Therefore, laying down our lives for other people practically means the following:

a) Self must be denied for the benefit of others. Losing our own identity and identifying with others is necessary in order that we can serve them where they are. In other words, we have to make ourselves and all we have available for others. By laying

down our lives for others, we no longer claim absolute right of possession, nor absolute right to say what we will do with what is ours; but we release those things into the totality of the body of Christ, as St Paul puts it 'let each of you look not to his own interest but also to the interest of others' Phil 12:3. It entails putting others first and making their needs more important than yours. I learned a long time ago that 'I can't say I love you 'and still put myself first'.

b) There must be Sacrifice: living a sacrificial life is fulfilling many levels and is ultimately what we are made for. Primarily it means we must go out of our way to be there for others, even when we do not have time in our busy schedules. This implies giving ourselves until it hurts a totality of one's self. There are many ways of making day-to-day sacrifice; this includes: giving out the little you have to help others in need,

interceding for others in times of trouble, providing shelter for the homeless, caring for the sick, etc. St John made it clearer when he said whoever has the world's good and beholds his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him?. Therefore, the idea of making sacrifice or helping others is a part of a meaningful life, as Aristotle once wrote "finding happiness and fulfillment is achieved by loving rather than been loved".

1 John 3 tells us that as JESUS laid down his life, so should we as we pass by those in need. There must be a life of service when one decides to lay down his life for others and life revolved around serving others. By laying down our lives for other people, we find life worthwhile and I believe that a life of service to others is what truly brings meaning. Those who feel like their lives have meaning are more motivated to help others.

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For example being a religious cause people to be helpful and experience meaning in their lives. In John 13, Jesus washes his disciples feet. He tells us that this is an example of how we should treat one another. A life of true happiness is only found in living our lives for others. Choosing to serve others is actually the pathway to true success and greatness.

THE BENEFITS OF LIVING FOR OTHERS

In living our life for others:

We become more fulfilled, more complete

We find true happiness

We find life meaningful

We become bigger than ourselves

We sleep better at night

We give back to those who served us

We make the world a better place

We find less stress and less frustration

We find greater relationships

We experience real love

All these are achieved when we lay down our lives for others.

Humility is the key to laying down our lives for others because it is in humility that one may be able to give his life in service of others. Humility literally means 'lowliness'. And anyone who is humble sees himself as nothing. It is the opposite of you owe me. We owe service to people rather than them owning us.

Imagine Christ counting us greater than himself when He said in the gospel of Luke 22:27-'But I am among you as one who serves. In Phil 2:6-7 "He became more humbled and took the nature of a slave to be a man like us. God wants us to serve other people, to love and esteem them above ourselves. When we do this, we show God's love and are laying down our lives for others. There must be extraordinary love which brings about heroic forgiveness. Giving mercy when it appeared undeserved. "Christ died for us while we are still sinners" love without limitations. It is only by doing these that we can lay down our lives for other people. This is never easy to do but in the long run it can be immensely rewarding for the other person and for God's glory.

THE BEAUTY OF LOOKING OUT FOR OTHERS' INTEREST

- It was beautiful when Christ put our interest above his own earthly comforts and died for us (Phil 2).
- It was beautiful when Paul suffered every day to plant the churches that brought us the gospel.
- It was beautiful when Timothy served side by side with Paul putting the interest of others first.
- It was beautiful when Epaphroditus risked his life to complete the Philippian service to Paul.
- It was beautiful when several heroic teachers are being credited for saving the life of their students by literally lying on top of these children to shield them from the deadly flying debris (May 2013).

• It was beautiful when our Father founder, His Lordship Most Rev. Dr. Mary Paul Okoye CSSp in the midst of agonising, ravaging war went hectare skater despite all odds to bring our noble congregation into existence.

• It was beautiful when our four Sisters who were sent on mission to Gabon on 10th of October 1980,strive to withstand the challenges of language, culture, climate and mentality of the people and through their witnessing, the congregation gave rise to other four countries which makes up the Gabon Region (Mali, Chad, Cameroon and Gabon

• It was beautiful in the history of Mali when Sr Mary Gloria Cecilia a Franciscan nun stands in for a younger sister in her community(March 2017) and she is still in hostage in the hands of ISIS.

• Above all, it will be beautiful if we as Daughters of Divine Love called to return the Love of Christ to the whole world in the spirit of our Father Founder, begin to put others first and make their needs more important than ours.

In conclusion, laying down our lives for other people is all about Sacrifice and Self-denial which enhances Humility, Heroic forgiveness and Service. So, I consider this to be the root of our ministry and I believe that is what we are supposed to do, to effectively minister to the brethren and also to the world in dear need of us.

GAUDETE ET EXSULTATE

**Apostolic Exhortation of the Holy Father, Francis
ON THE CALL TO HOLINESS IN TODAY'S WORLD**

AN ABSTRACT

by: MarySylvia Nwachukwu, DDL

God is eternal newness. He impels us constantly to set out anew, to pass beyond what is familiar, to the fringes and beyond. He takes us to where humanity is most wounded, where men and women, beneath the appearance of a shallow conformity, continue to seek an answer to the question of life's meaning. God is not afraid! He is fearless! He is always greater than our plans and schemes. Unafraid of the fringes, he himself became a fringe (cf. Phil 2:6-8; Jn 1:14). So if we dare to go to the fringes, we will find him there; indeed, he is already there. Jesus is already there, in the hearts of our brothers and sisters, in their wounded flesh, in their troubles and in their profound desolation. He is already there (§135).

The excerpt above describes very succinctly the programme of holiness which Pope Francis spells out in the exhortation, Gaudete et Exsultate. The call to recognize Christ in the poor, the suffering and the stranger is the very heart of Jesus' mission and the heart of the gospel. In describing this programme of holiness, the Pope invites us to follow without fear the guidance of God's word which will lead us to becoming like God and to the goal of happiness for which God created us. The exhortation is replete with references from the Bible, and this is evidence that

the holiness being described is founded on the word of God. Moreover, the Pope cites a host of beatified and canonized saints who had trod the part of holiness and whose life of heroic witness are examples for us.

Gaudete et Exsultate is written with the language and fervor of all of Pope Francis' teachings. Besides his encyclicals, Pope Francis has written three exhortations, each of which has the terminology of joy and rejoicing: Evangelii Gaudium (Joy of the Gospel), Amoris Laetitia (Joy of Love) and Gaudete et Exsultate (Rejoice and be Glad). The joy of the Lord has indeed marked his papacy and it has become a cliché for his preaching of the gospel. He has consistently preached the gospel of joy and of mercy. This exhortation was issued on 19th March 2018, the feast of St Joseph the worker, a special dedication that draws attention to the holiness achieved through responsible acceptance of our proper mission, just as St Joseph did.

The title of the exhortation is derived from a section of Matthew's version of the Sermon on the Mount that reads:

Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice

and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven (gaudete et exultate quoniam merces vestra copiosa est in caelis), for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you (Matt 5:11-12).

At the beginning of Gaudete et Exsultate, Pope Francis expresses clearly the goal of the entire exhortation, which is not to write a treatise on holiness, but "to re-propose the call to holiness in a practical way for our own time, with all its risks, challenges and opportunities" (§2). Pope Francis invites us to find this practical way in the Beatitudes. He says in §64 of the exhortation, 'The word "happy" or "blessed" thus becomes a synonym for "holy". It expresses the fact that those faithful to God and his word, by their self-giving, gain true happiness."

The exhortation has 177 paragraphs, spread out in five chapters, with an introduction (§ 1-2 and conclusion (§ 176-177).

Each of the chapters treats a particular aspect of holiness.

Chapter One: The Call to Holiness (§ 3-34)

Chapter Two: Two Subtle Enemies of Holiness (§ 35-62)

Chapter Three: In the Light of the Master (§ 63-109)

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Chapter Four: Signs of Holiness in Today's World (§ 110-157)
Chapter Five: Spiritual Combat, Vigilance and Discernment (§ 158-175)

The Call to Holiness (§ 3-34)

The Pope renews for the church the call to holiness which God had addressed to his people, Israel, the holiness that is defined according to God's nature as a holy God: "Be holy, for I am holy" (Lev 11:44; 1 Pet 1:16). He confirms that this call to holiness is not for a selected few. It is universal. In fact, Vatican II document (*Lumen Gentium* 11) says, "all the faithful, whatever their condition or state, are called by the Lord – each in his or her own way – to that perfect holiness by which the Father himself is perfect".

Pope Francis also draws attention to the heroic witness of beatified and canonized saints whose lives should inspire us and who accompany and encourage us. However, he says, everybody should find his or her own path to holiness, which God assigned to each. There are signs of holiness in our midst, for instance, the holiness found in the next-door-neighbor, those whom the Pope calls the "middle class". It is present in those parents who raise their children with immense love and patience; it is present in those men and women who work hard to support their families, in the sick, in elderly religious who never lose their smile, in the humblest people who bear witness to Jesus by means of a life of faith and charity. Pope Francis makes a special mention of holiness found in women, who in a manner unique to their genius, nurture and spend their lives for people around them (§ 11-14). Therefore, everyday life can lead to holiness.

Holiness is fruit of the gift of the Holy Spirit who helps one to accomplish small heroic gestures, giving listening-ear to others, prayer, refusing to speak ill of others, the hand of forgiveness, living our lives with love and by

bearing witness in everything we do. With all the examples from the next-door-neighbor and from daily life, we are assured that holiness is not a goal too high to reach. It is the goal to which God created us. It is an encounter between our weakness and the power of God's grace.

The call to holiness is a call to become witnesses. In order to do so, we must begin to see our lives as a mission. Everyone's personal mission is inseparable from the building of God's kingdom. Every mission derives its meaning in Christ and can only be understood through Christ. Therefore, holiness entails reproducing in our own lives various aspects of Jesus' earthly life: his hidden life, his life in community, his closeness to the outcast, his poverty and other ways in which he showed his self-sacrificing love (§ 19-24).

Two Subtle Enemies of Holiness (§ 35-62)

Chapter Two discusses two great obstacles to holiness. These are modern forms of Gnosticism (from the Greek word gnosis to know) and Pelagianism. Gnosticism is an ancient heresy that says that what matters most is what one knows. Pelagius, a 5th century theologian, says that we can take care of our salvation through our own efforts. Even though the way of life and attitudes these ideas propose appear as harmless, strict and authentic, they are false spirituality that does not concern themselves with the mystery of Jesus Christ.

The church has always believed and preached that salvation is a gift born of God's gracious initiative. The gospel of grace permeates the Bible; it is appreciated by many Fathers of the Church, and reiterated more firmly by Vatican II. Paul says in Rom 11:6, "if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works; otherwise, grace would no longer be grace". Modern forms of Gnosticism and Pelagianism

reject the path of grace and mercy. These are ideas that lead to elitist self-concept based on possession of knowledge, rigid obsession with law, complacent trust in one's abilities and enslavement to church rules and structures bereft of true love. Pope Francis reminds us that the best way to discern ideas that inspire true spirituality is to judge to what extent our decisions consider human weakness and give space to mercy (§ 109).

In the Light of the Master (§ 63-109)

For this programme of holiness, Pope Francis says "the Beatitudes are like a Christian's identity card" (§ 63). Its teachings run counter to the way things are usually done in our world which extols entertainment and pleasure and discourages the cross, suffering and any form of mourning. Chapter three of *Gaudete et Exsultate* answers the question of the meaning of holiness in our contemporary world. Of all possible answers, the Pope directs attention to Jesus' words and to how he Jesus explained with great simplicity what it means to be holy when he gave us the Beatitudes (cf. Mt 5:3-12; Lk 6:20-23).

a) "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven". Spiritual poverty is closely linked to what Saint Ignatius of Loyola calls "holy indifference". It is to share in the life of those most in need, and ultimately to configure ourselves to Jesus who, though rich, "made himself poor" (Luke 6:20; 2 Cor 8:9). Being poor of heart: that is holiness.

b) "Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth". These are strong words in a world that from the beginning has been a place of conflict, disputes and enmity on all sides, where we constantly pigeonhole others on the basis of their ideas, their customs and even their way of speaking or dressing. Instead of being constantly upset and impatient

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with others, Jesus invites us to regard the faults and limitations of others with tenderness and meekness, without an air of superiority, just as Saint Thérèse of Lisieux tells us that “perfect charity consists in putting up with others' mistakes, and not being scandalized by their faults”. Reacting with meekness and humility: that is holiness.

c) “Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted”. Those who mourn are those who see things as they truly are; who sympathize with pain and sorrow and who are capable of touching life's depths and finding authentic happiness. Such persons are unafraid to share in the suffering of others; they do not flee from painful situations. They feel compassion for others in such a way that all distance and social boundaries vanish. Such persons are consoled, not by the world but by Jesus. In this way they embrace Saint Paul's exhortation: “Weep with those who weep” (Rom 12:15). Knowing how to mourn with others: that is holiness.

d) “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled”. Many people suffer injustice, standing by powerlessly before their oppressors. True justice comes about in people's lives when they themselves are just in their decisions, and in their pursuit of justice for the poor and the weak. Today, more than ever, we must heed the word of God who tells us through Isaiah, “Seek justice, correct oppression; defend the fatherless, plead for the widow” (Is 1:17). Jesus says that those who hunger for justice will be satisfied, and he invites us to cooperate to make that possible, even if we may not always see the fruit of our efforts. Hungering and thirsting for righteousness: that is holiness.

e) “Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy”: Mercy has two aspects. It involves giving, helping and serving others, but it

also includes forgiveness and understanding. Giving and forgiving means reproducing in our lives some small measure of God's perfection, which gives and forgives superabundantly. “Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful. Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven...” (Luke 6:36-38). Seeing and acting with mercy: that is holiness.

f) “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God”: The human heart is the seat of conversation with God as the prophets say, God wants to speak to our hearts (cf. Hos 2:16); there he desires to write his law (cf. Jer 31:33). In a word, he wants to give us a new heart (cf. Ezek 36:26). A pure heart is sincere, capable of love of God and neighbor (cf. Mt 22:36-40), genuinely and not merely in words. It admits nothing that might harm, weaken or endanger that love. Keeping a heart free of all that tarnishes love: that is holiness.

g) “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God”: Many endless situations of war pervade our world. Through gossip and calumny, we are also often a cause of conflict or of misunderstanding in our immediate environments. To those who sow peace Jesus makes this magnificent promise: “They will be called children of God” (Mt 5:9). This evangelical peace calls for great openness of mind and heart because it excludes no one but embraces even those who are a bit odd, troublesome or difficult. Building peace is a craft that demands serenity, creativity, sensitivity and skill. Sowing peace all around us: that is holiness.

h) “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven”: Through the beatitudes, Jesus invites us to challenge society by a different logic of life. He warns us that the ways of the kingdom is different from the

ways of this world.: “whoever would save his life will lose it” (Mt 16:25). When the New Testament tells us that we will have to endure suffering for the Gospel's sake, it speaks precisely of persecution (cf. Acts 5:41; Phil 1:29; Col 1:24; 2 Tim 1:12; 1 Pet 2:20, 4:14-16; Rev 2:10). Accepting daily the path of the Gospel, even though it may cause us problems: that is holiness.

I regret that ideologies lead us at times to two harmful errors. On the one hand, there is the error of those Christians who separate, from their interior union with him, from openness to his grace. Christianity thus becomes a sort of NGO stripped of the luminous mysticism so evident in the lives of Saint Francis of Assisi, Saint Vincent de Paul, Saint Teresa of Calcutta, and many others.

We cannot uphold an ideal of holiness that would ignore injustice. Prayer is important for intimate relationship with God but we are reminded that we cannot give glory to God only by our worship and prayer, or simply by following certain ethical norms. The ultimate criterion on which our lives will be judged is what we have done for others.

i) On Mercy: The criterion of final judgment

The Pope makes an ardent appeal to Christians to acknowledge and accept this teaching in a spirit of genuine openness, that is, without any “ifs or buts” that could lessen their force. His appeal springs from the conviction that holiness cannot be understood or lived apart from these demands because mercy and justice are “the beating heart of the Gospel”. Therefore, these Gospel demands must not be separated from our personal relationship with the Lord. Pope Francis ends the beautiful interpretation of the beatitudes by drawing attention to the criterion of final judgment (Matt 25:31-46): “I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was

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naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me". He says, "The powerful witness of the saints is revealed in their lives, shaped by the Beatitudes and the criterion of the final judgment. For "mercy is not only an action of the Father; it becomes a criterion for ascertaining who his true children are".

4. Signs of Holiness in Today's World (§ 110-157)

Within the framework of the holiness offered by the Beatitudes and by Matthew 25:31-46, the Pope mentions five (5) spiritual attitudes which, irrespective of already known sacramental means of sanctification, are meaningful today. In the light of certain dangers and limitations present in today's culture, the beatitudes will gradually guide our efforts to following and becoming more like Jesus. These spiritual attitudes are:

a) Perseverance, patience and meekness: which gives us the inner strength to persevere amid life's ups and downs, but also to endure hostility and betrayal and failings on the part of others. "If God is for us, who is against us?" (Rom 8:31).

b) Joy and a sense of humor: In today's individualistic and consumerist culture, fraternal love increases our capacity for joy as Saint Paul tells us: "Rejoice in the Lord always; I say it again, rejoice!" (Phil 4:4). It is the supernatural joy that endures hard times, borne from assurance of God's infinite love and which brings deep security, serene hope and a spiritual fulfillment.

c) Boldness and passion: This boldness describes apostolic enthusiasm and fervor and the freedom to speak out without fear. Jesus' promise that he will be with us always (Mt 28:20) enable us to go forth with the same courage that the Holy Spirit stirred up in the Apostles. Major obstacles to courageous evangelization are lack of fervor,

individualism, spiritualism, intransigence, rigid dogmatism, pessimism, complacency, hiding behind rules and regulations.

d) In community: Growth in holiness is a journey in community, side by side with others. The ability to live or to work alongside others is surely a path of spiritual growth, as Saint John of the Cross told one of his followers: "You are living with others in order to be fashioned and tried". Sharing the word and celebrating the Eucharist together fosters fraternity and makes us a holy and missionary community.

e) In Constant Prayer: Prayer is of vital importance to us because in that silence, we can discern, in the light of the Spirit, the paths of holiness to which the Lord is calling us. Many saints offer examples of life permeated with prayer, for instance, Saint John of the Cross and Saint Teresa of Avila. We are invited to consider the different shapes which prayer can take: (i) Prayerful reading of God's word, which enables us to listen to the voice of the Master and to use it as lamp for our steps and a light for our path (cf. Ps 119:105). (ii) Prayer of supplication which is an expression of a heart that trusts and depends completely on God. (iii) Prayer of petition which calms our hearts and helps us persevere in hope. (iv) Prayer of intercession which is both an act of trust in God and an expression of our fraternal concern for others by which we embrace their lives, their deepest troubles and their loftiest dreams. (v) The Eucharist, which is the greatest form of worship, where prayer attains its greatest efficacy, where we renew our covenant with God and allow him to carry out ever more fully his work of transforming our lives.

Spiritual Combat, Vigilance and Discernment (§ 158-175)

Finally, the pope puts forward two important ways of making steady progress in spiritual life. Firstly, we must always know that Christian

life is a constant battle, and secondly, we must arm ourselves with discernment.

With regard to the battle, he says, spiritual life demands constant vigilance and courage to withstand the temptations of the devil. The battle is not simply against the world and worldly mentality or against human weakness; it is also a constant struggle against the devil, the prince of evil. The devil's destructive aims is not a myth; we must believe that it is real in order not to let down our guard. "Like a roaring lion, he prowls around, looking for someone to devour" (1 Pet 5:8). The fight does not admit a neutral attitude, mediocrity, defeatism or a state of dull lethargy. For this spiritual combat, we can count on the powerful weapons that the Lord has given us: faith-filled prayer, meditation on the word of God, the celebration of Mass, Eucharistic adoration, sacramental Reconciliation, works of charity, community life, missionary outreach (§158-162).

Growth in spirituality further requires that we arm ourselves with discernment. This has become urgent, given that contemporary life offers immense possibilities and presents all of them as valid and good. Discernment helps us to know when something comes from the Holy Spirit or if it stems from the spirit of the world or the spirit of the devil. It also gives us access to the concrete means that the Lord provides in his mysterious and loving plan, to make us move beyond mere good intentions.

Pope Francis concludes his reflections by taking our minds to Mary, the woman who lived the Beatitudes of Jesus as none other, and who treasured everything in her heart, who let herself be pierced by the sword, who teaches us the way of holiness and who walks ever at our side.

INTERVIEW WITH REV. MOTHER MARIA IFECHUKWU UDORAH, DDL

RLM: Good Afternoon, Mother.

Mother: Good Afternoon, my dear.

RLM: The Daughters of Divine Love have flagged off the celebration of the Golden Jubilee of the foundation of the congregation. We witnessed the beautiful occasion and we thank God. This 2018 edition of Rooted in Love is dedicated to this Jubilee. Could you please help us to answer some questions that would help our readers to understand something about the Daughters, their foundation and their mission.

Mother: Welcome! With all pleasure!

RLM: When was Daughters of Divine Love Congregation founded?

Mother: The Congregation was founded on July 16th 1969 amidst the devastating, organizing and ravaging war of Nigeria and Biafra from 1966 to 1970. Our Father Founder was moved with pity for the suffering people of Biafra and

in addition desired to safeguard the sprouting vocations of young girls caught up in the war.

RLM: How was it possible for your Founder to begin a



religious congregation in the midst of a war?

Mother: Our Father Founder was a man with deep love of God and neighbor. He had a large magnanimous heart. He staked his life for the people during the war soliciting for food and clothing for the refugees. It was for his charity work that he undertook very risky flights in and out of Biafra,

using the rough airstrip in Uga town of Anambra State as a base. It was from this base that very bad kwashiorkor children were flown to Libreville in Gabon. The other kwashiorkor children and their families were fed with relief foods from Caritas International at various centers in Biafra. Propelled by the Holy Spirit and divine love, he sewed a seed of love, made real and put into action by founding a congregation that will forever commemorate the infinite love of God and return love for love, thus counteracting the spirit of hatred that caused the war.

RLM: Tell us more about the Founder of your congregation.

Mother: There is so much to say about him and I do not know where to begin and how much I could say within the limits of time for this interview. Bishop Okoye loved God and God's people so much. He was a man with the heart of God; he loved the priesthood and spoke of its glories; He was a great theologian, a mystic and a visionary leader. He was a man gifted with very many virtues; he had great courage, foresight, wisdom and trusting fear of the Lord. A prince of the Church. He was a man of firm faith, proud of his priestly vocation. He was charitable to a fault. The Daughters of Divine Love are fortunate to be his spiritual children and spiritual legacy. I always ask God to grant us the grace to live out the spirituality and charism he bequeathed to us.

RLM: What is the nature, inspiration and purpose of

INTERVIEW

your congregation?

Mother: We are an international congregation of women religious of pontifical right, founded to commemorate the infinite love of God. Bishop Okoye was inspired by God to heed the cry of His children suffering massacre, hatred and deprivation in a genocidal war. It was an attempt to respond to a cry with reassuring love and care for various needs of God's children that he founded the DDL. Impelled by the Gospel of Christ and the spirit of our Founder, we combine contemplation and apostolic action. The compelling motive force of our institute and our members is continuous ardent response to God's call to love Himself and our neighbor. We take the three evangelical vows of Poverty, Chastity and Obedience. We dedicate ourselves to contemplation in order to commune with God by listening to Him in search of His Will and also draw strength from Him with which to serve Him in our brothers and sisters in our various activities. Our vocation is love. Our trademark is divine love.

RLM: What does being founded to commemorate the infinite love of God mean for the Daughters?

Mother: It means a lot for us. It is also a huge mission that demands of us to continuously epitomize the love exemplified by our Lord Jesus Christ Himself: His unconditional love, compassion, kindness, humility and so on, and to be extension of Christ's care and

love to the world in our various apostolates. Our mission is the mission of Christ and the mission of the Church.

RLM: As the first Mother General of the congregation, how did you ensure that daughters understood their mission?

Mother: I think the initial favors of our foundation and the spirit of the Founder played a great role in this regard. My role was to constantly remind the Daughters of our mission and encourage them to stay the course our Founder has channeled for this congregation through observance of our constitution and his conferences and other legacies he left for us. The members, on their part, were zealous and bent on the survival of the congregation and living up to the expectation of our Father Founder for the congregation and our holy Mother, the Church.

RLM: What challenges did you encounter doing this?

Mother: Yes I had a number of challenges that kept increasing as the number of Daughters increased. They included: accommodation for the Daughters, feeding of the Daughters and clothing them, training the Daughters, providing adequate healthcare.

RLM: You were very young when you were elected as the first Mother General of DDL. How did you manage to leave your studies behind and take on the duties of Mother

General?

Mother: Leaving my studies behind was not a big problem because my primary concern in accepting to answer the call of God was to love Him in return for His love for me and to do whatever He directed me to do. I realized that through it Jesus challenged my love for Him, and so I preferred to face the challenge. It was He, the Lord who made it possible for me to do so. I was advised to apply to the University for a leave of absence for three years, and I did so.

RLM: Tell us about the situation that led to the chapter that elected you.

Mother: The situation that led to the birth of our first general chapter was the unexpected and untimely death of our Father Founder on 17th March, 1977. We had two novice mistresses who were released by their monasteries under certain agreement with our Founder. When the first novice mistress, Mother Charles Anyanwu, OSB completed her term, she left us to found a branch of her monastery at Amoji Nike. Mother Patricia Alufuo, OSB took over from Mother Charles Anyanwu and was already discussing with our Founder the conditions for her stay with us when he died. After his death, Mother Patricia in consultation with Archbishop Obiefuna convened our first general chapter in May 1977 to choose a leadership team who will take care of, and manage the group. It was a most trying period but the Lord

took control.

RLM: How did the Daughters manage their affairs after the death of Bishop Okoye?

Mother: The Daughters managed their affairs very well after the death of our Founder. In a spirit of solidarity and oneness with me, all hands were on deck. They trusted God and believed we would survive, encouraged and supported by the grace of our ever loving and caring God. We were all committed and dedicated ourselves to our common good, practicing what we were taught. We tried to continue what our Founder started for us with only £500, saved from the condolence gift to Sr. Patricia Alufuo by Cardinal Francis Arinze. We farmed, we made vestments, we did pastoral and secretarial works with meager income. We received help from generous Christians mainly friends of our Father Founder. Archbishop Ukpø was of great assistance at this point in time. We were satisfied with the little we had and some of our parents were very supportive too. It was at this time that the friends of D.D.L came on board under the leadership of Dr. Winifred Kaine. Rev. Msgr. Charles Ikeme was and is still one of our outstanding friends. Late Msgr. Aso and late Fr. Dominic Aduaka were strongly behind us. No doubt, the spirit of our Father Founder hovered protectively over us.

RLM: Looking today at the congregation, compared to the early beginnings, what would you want us to know about the

congregation?

Mother: I see a continuous progressive growth from our very humble beginning to the present. It is like the proverbial mustard seed and the Lord has been tending and nurturing her to date and He expects all of us to be good stewards, faithful and trusted in His vineyard of the Daughters of Divine Love. He expects us especially now to bear witness to His love for humanity by our prayerful lives and actions especially to one another. I would say we have come thus far by faith and divine providence led by Jesus. Undoubtedly, the spirit of our Founder has continued to abide with us. Our Congregation is a gift to the Church at large.

RLM: As you celebrate 50 years of existence, what advice do you have for the current leaders of your congregation and the members?

Mother: At 50, my advice to our current leaders is that they remain authentic and discharge their duty with love and justice in accordance with the will of God. Let us keep the vision and the mission of the congregation fixed in our eyes and mind and let us continue to live them out to the greater honor and glory of God. I thank God for the gift of them all and thank them for all they have done so far, while I say more grease to their elbows. I pledge my unalloyed prayerful support for them, for all Daughters and for our congregation. Kudos at 50!

RLM: What advice do you have for our readers?

Mother: My advice to our readers; I say thank you and ask that you join us in thanking God every day for you and for us. Pray for us as we pray for you. Forgive our shortcomings and commend them to God who can right wrongs. Thank you again. And to all the Daughters, I say let this song be our daily song and reflection. "One is our Master....." especially the chorus.

RLM: Thank you, dear Mother, for your time and for this beautiful contribution!

Mother: Thank you and May God continue to bless and keep us all, Amen.

*"If a building will stand,
it depends on the
foundation, and the
higher the building the
deeper the foundation,
and this congregation is
not one of half
measures....it is one by
which you enter into the
very life of the Blessed
Trinity, His infinite love,
Caritas Christi, Urget
Nos!" (Founder's Talk,
vol 1:20)*

**BISHOP GODFREY
MARYPAUL OKOYE**

GOLDEN JUBILEE FLAG OFF EVENTS/ FIRST RELIGIOUS PROFESSION



GOLDEN JUBILEE FLAG OFF EVENTS/ FIRST RELIGIOUS PROFESSION



ADVANCING THE CARE MINISTRY OF CHRIST THROUGH THE APPLICATION OF THE BIOPSYCHOSOSPIRITUAL MODEL OF HEALTH

SR. PROF
MARY GLORIA NJOKU, DDL

The biblical interpretation of health shows it signifies wholeness; meaning that health is a combination of physical, spiritual, social and psychological wholeness, and that it is health for an individual as well as for institutions. Jesus' examples indicate that he is a divine healer who restored health to all human beings. Jesus did not only heal people's physical, spiritual, social and or psychological illnesses, he restored people to wholeness. Sometimes, Jesus healed people by speaking the "word" to them, sometimes, he touched them, sometimes he forgave their offences and sometimes, he used mud mixed with saliva to restore health. We can extrapolate from these examples Jesus' recognition of varied approaches to restoration of health.

It is in the light of this understanding and current scientific findings that we

introduced the biopsychospiritual model of health (Njoku, 2014). The biopsychospiritual model postulates that the four components of health, namely, biological, psychological, social and spiritual health ought to be considered in providing healthcare services. My position is that if a condition, illness or disease could be traced to a specific biological factor, the physical body should be treated using biological methods. But if the biological problem arose from a spiritual matter, the spiritual issue ought to be treated using spiritual methods. For example, if a patient has stomach ache that is due to a spiritual belief (e.g., believing that spiritual forces are causing his stomach ache), the spiritual matter should be treated. If a biological symptom like headache is due to psychological or social problem, the psychological or social factor should be treated. If all the components of health require

attention, then the treatment should incorporate the four components.

The application of the biopsychospiritual model of health requires some adjustments to current healthcare practices. There are three possible ways of making the psychospiritual model an integral part of healthcare practice. One way is to modify the curriculum for the training of medical professionals to include all the dimensions of health and enable the trainees to develop appropriate skills to manage all these dimensions with the collaboration of relevant professionals. Another way is to structure the consulting room to be multidisciplinary consulting rooms. In this regard, a patient might be seen by a team comprising medical doctor, psychologist, sociologist or social worker and pastoral counselor. Another option is to ensure that we have the relevant professionals for the four components of health and then ensure that these professionals work collaboratively in generating and implementing treatment plans for patients. This third option does not require all the professionals to see the patient at the same time. The expectation is that all the professionals will review the case and make their own input.

The application of the biopsychospiritual model of health holds promises for optimal healthcare services. It will take care of conditions, illnesses or diseases that have multiple presentation such as cancer and other chronic diseases that often touch all components of health. For example, in addition to the physical body pains associated with cancer, those who have the illness often struggle with psychological problems (such as anxiety and depression), spiritual issues (such as dealing with questions of why God allowed the disease to happen) and social problems (such as availability of caregivers and friends). Clearly, this type of illness requires multidisciplinary care for optimal outcome. The biopsychospiritual model of health will be appropriate in this case. This model will also be relevant to other types of illnesses because of its ability to promote all the components health.





THE EXTENSION OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS: GOD'S HEALING MISSION



**Sr. Margaret Mary Onwu, DDL
New York**

Introduction:

This paper will attempt to bring out the meaning of our understanding of health Professions, and the expectations required of them in helping to continue God's mission of healing in this planet earth, and possibly render some possible solutions to help improve the healing mission of God on earth. The expressions here are based mainly on personal view and a few reflections from outside source. The ideas here are not exhaustive, but are meant to give us food for thought.

What do we understand as Health Profession?

In lay man terms, health profession may simply mean all

those who work to improve the health of people through various channels such as hospitals, clinics, spiritual houses and the like. In a dictionary explanation "A health professional, health practitioner or healthcare provider (sometimes simply "provider") is an individual who provides preventive, curative, promotional or rehabilitative health care services in a systematic way to people, families or communities." (<https://en:Wikipedia.org>). In essence, the main job of a health professional is to provide all those services that will give optimum wellbeing to an individual and their families or to the people in the community. It is expected that the health professional will perform their duties in the best way humanly possible. These professionals are bound by laws and ethical values that guide their standard of practice. It is, therefore, imperative that these professionals carry out their duties well. Failure to do that sometimes results in serious

malpractice law suits. Any malpractice has consequences that result in the suspension/revoking of professional license. The whole idea is to give maximum care within the scope of practice. Therefore, health professionals should exercise diligent care in carrying out their duties. How can one see this care of health professionals as an extension of God's healing mission?

Jesus came into this world going about doing good, curing people of their diseases/infirmities, casting out demons, raising the dead, and healing all those with all kinds of illness, and assures us that He came into this world that we may have life and have it to the fullest (Jn:10:10). This is a mandate that Jesus gives for us to continue what he has started. This healing ministry of Jesus is entrusted to care givers known as health professionals and others in the spiritual, physical and mental health.

What is the trend in our world today?

The Politician, the pharmaceutical company, the Pastor, every small business or stakeholder responsible in providing health care services have ultimate goal of making profit from those entrusted in their care thereby making individuals seeking access to health care services pay huge amount for services rendered or do not receive adequate services needed for optimum health. This makes the President of the Advisory Commission on Consumer Protection and quality in health care industry have this to say that "today, even in America, there is no guarantee that any individual with particular health problem will receive high quality care partly due to inefficiency of systems as noted (1998:21)." Systems being referred here

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are institutions of health like hospitals, clinics, health centers, homeopathic center, home care facilities and many other skilled nursing facilities. Some of the reasons given for these inefficiencies include but not limited to:

1. Poor design of systems and processes.
2. The systems inability to respond to changing patient demographics and related requirements
3. Failure to assimilate the rapidly growing and increasingly complex science and technology base
4. Slow adoption of information technology innovations needed to provide care
5. Little accommodation of patient's diverse demands and needs, and
6. Personnel shortages and poor working conditions (Institute of Medicine, 2001).

According to the former President of the Institute of medicine (IOM), Ken Shine, some of these health institutions operate like big cottages with state-of-the art technologies to care for patients when in reality they are like robots that don't talk to each other; their culture of maximizing profit affects the quality of care provided by the health professional (Shine, 2002). This makes providers focus more on moving from one level of care to another without paying attention to issues of quality assessment (Naylor, 2002). These statuesque poses challenges to health professionals in disseminating their duties adequately. In the midst of the challenges facing health professional in their

scope of practice, how can they see their services as an extension of God's healing mission?

Recommendations:

The Physician, the Pharmacist, the Registered Nurse, the Nutritionist, the vendor that supplies material to hospitals, health facilities, and every stakeholder all contribute to the extension of God's healing mission. The question each professional should ask is 'how do I as a health professional see my job as an extension of God's healing mission on earth?'

Here are few suggestions:

- a. When the health professional recognizes and see the individual seeking for health services as God's creation that is in need of optimum health and attend to the person as another body of Christ; it is only then can one claim that they are contributing towards the extension of God's healing mandate to "live life to the fullest."
- b. When a sick person presents to the doors of our health facilities without down payment or health insurance; that individual should not be dismissed for lack of funds, instead should be treated then discuss the modalities of payment through payment plan. Each health institution/facility should source for funds from State government and other organizations to subsidize or defray the cost of medical treatment. This special sourcing for funds should be designated as medical attention for indigent patients.

- c. The health professional should be advocates promoting the extension of God's healing mission to the poor masses who have nobody to support them in their time of need. More so, money is not everything, as a health professional the attitudes, manner of approach, and the way of expression can bring long lasting healing to the individual faster than drugs.

In conclusion health Professionals plays an integral part in an individual's health outcome. Therefore, to whom more is given more is expected. Health Professionals should look up to the Master Jesus who went about doing good curing every individual (whether Jew or Gentile) of their ailments without a dime in payment, only request that they show themselves up to the Priest. When the Health professional sees their work as God's work, and not to their own, it will be claimed that health Professional are truly continuing God's healing mission on earth.

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TEACHING WITH LOVE

SR. MARIA IFECHIDERE UZONNA DDL



Introduction

The poor performance of students in both internal and external examinations today has raised a lot of concerns within the educational circles and society at large. These concerns have come because education is believed to be the bedrock of development today. Many factors have been blamed for students' poor performance in examinations. Among these factors, the teacher factor seems to stand tall because of the important place teachers occupy in the learning process. The reason for this is not far-fetched because the work of the teacher involves the grooming of a future generation. It implies that the fall or rise of any civilization depends on the quality of teachers who are

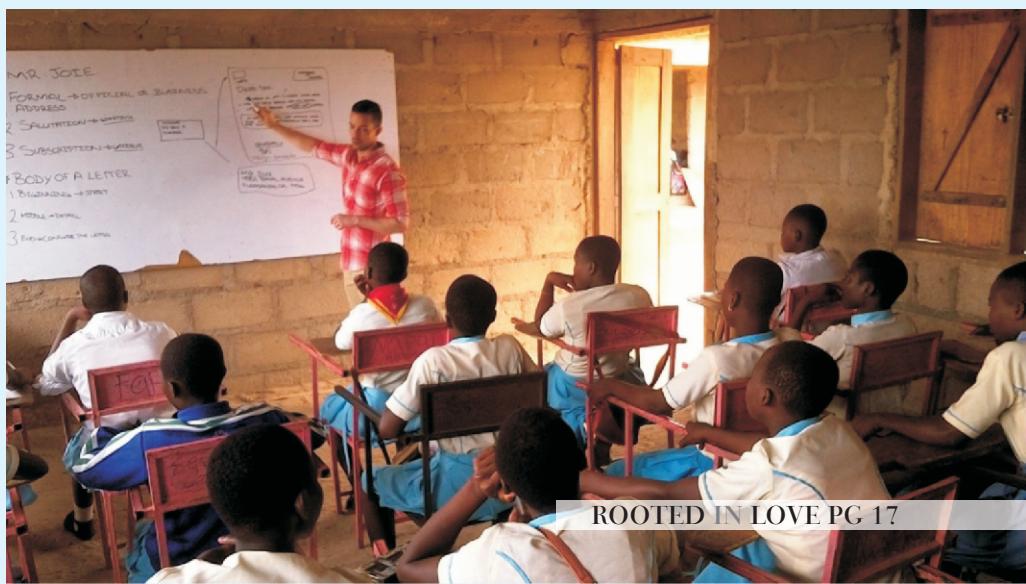
involved in the teaching process, even though different societies may have varying attitudes towards those who are involved in the art.

Teaching is an activity that goes beyond a profession; it is a vocation, a calling. This is what Butisingh (2007) means when he writes: "Teaching is more than a noble profession. It is a vocation, a calling. The teacher is the most important person in any civilization, as on him depends the mold of the nation." Since teaching is a vocation/calling, it needs to be carried out with love. Teaching with love expresses one's level of commitment and dedication

to achieving the aims that are attached to the vocation. Experience has shown that poor learning outcomes have always come as a result of failure of those teaching to employ the element of love in their work. It is for this reason that this write-up intends to explain what it means to teach with love.

The Concept of Teaching

There is no unanimous definition of teaching because scholars differ in their perception of the concept. According to Sequeira (2012:3), teaching is a set of events, outside the learners which are designed to support



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internal process of learning; it is outside the learner. For Smith, teaching is the process of carrying out those activities that experience has shown to be effective in getting students to learn. It could also mean undertaking certain ethical tasks or activities, the intention of which is to induce learning. Teaching is the process of attending to people's needs, experiences and feelings, and intervening so that they learn particular things, and go beyond the given (Smith, 2018). The various definitions highlighted above suggest a number of elements: firstly, teaching is an activity that is meant to induce learning; secondly, teaching is something moral; and thirdly, it is aimed at meeting the needs of the students. It could be said that teaching is an ethical activity meant to meet the needs of learners. In teaching, there is a transfer of knowledge in all its forms to ensure that learning takes place.

Who is a Teacher?

The question: Who is a teacher? is not as easy to answer as it seems. It is for this reason that Okpe and Onuoha (2017:8) point out that "the word, TEACHER, is defined and explained in different ways by different people depending on culture and experience." Citing Soni to buttress their view, they continue that the Indian culture calls a teacher GURU, GU meaning darkness and RU meaning light. When put together, it means a teacher is one who brings you out of darkness in order to see light. A teacher is an expert who is capable of imparting knowledge that will help

learners to build, identify and to acquire skills that will be used to face the challenges in life. The teacher also provides to the learners knowledge, skills and values that enhance development (Sengen 2000:26). In other words, a teacher is someone who impacts knowledge on the learner. There are many qualities of a good teacher, namely, being knowledgeable in his/her subject, being a role model, love of students/pupils, being flexible and ready to learn, having a positive attitude and having high expectations from students, among others.

What it means to Teach with Love

Every teaching activity is expected to evolve a change in the individual that is a beneficiary. Teaching would not have yielded its results if students do not show forth positive results. As a vocation or calling, getting positive results demands that teaching be done with love. To teach with love implies the following traits on the part of the teacher, among others:

Ability to Communicate Knowledge: A good teacher is supposed to be informed in his or her area of specialization. He/she should know self and the students under his/her care. This knowledge also implies that the teacher is aware of the needs of his/her subjects. Beyond knowing the needs of the students, the teacher should also know how to satisfy these needs. The teacher needs to be knowledgeable in his/her subject because no one can give what he/she does not

have. It is true as Mart (2013: 440) rightly noted that "a great teacher is informed about new developments in his field and tries to keep abreast of them to advance his skills and knowledge base.... Teacher's primary goal is to cultivate students' curiosity for efficiency in learning. One of the most significant requirements to teach effectively is good knowledge of the subject matter." In addition to this knowledge is the need to be capable of passing it in a way that students can assimilate and understand. This is where the teacher's capacity to share is needed. In view of this, Ferguson and Womackl (1993) write: "Effective communication of content knowledge is a hallmark of good teachers". A teacher can be aware, knowledgeable, but if he/she is incapable of communicating this knowledge to the students in a way they will appreciate and understand, then the teacher is a failure.

Empathy: To empathize means to put oneself in another's shoe or condition. It implies treating the other in a way one will want to be treated. This teaching quality saves the teacher from being selfish to being selfless and caring. The teacher should imagine the difficulties the students are passing through and imagine them as his or hers. Empathy guarantees students with learning difficulties the hope of measuring up with their colleagues who are way ahead of them because the teacher will always consider them and give them a sense of belonging. Empathy will also

require the teacher to adjust his/her teaching methods to accommodate the weak ones.

Compassion: Teaching is a very humanistic vocation, and compassion is the utmost feeling of understanding, and showing others that you are concerned about them. A compassionate teacher models that characteristic to the students with her/his actions, and as a result students will be more open to understanding the world around them (Alrubail 2015). It is the virtue of compassion that will make the teacher to be tolerant of the misgivings of his or her students. Students are not perfect products; they are products in a making. Consequently, they will make mistakes. It is only important that the teacher handles their mistakes with a touch that makes them to want to become better.

Patience: Patience is a virtue that every good teacher must imbibe. A great teacher is very patient with their students and their parents to deal with the same questions and problems over and over again. A teacher never gives up on the students and would try out new ways to help them to succeed in school and in life (Eva 2014).

Respect for Students: A good teacher shows respect for his /her students. To build a better relationship, respect for students as individuals and learners is essential in teaching. If students see the teacher as caring, their willingness to learn enhances (Mart, 2013:440).

Discipline: Given that teaching involves the molding

of a future generation, it is only pertinent that the teacher be disciplined and be a lover of discipline. The teacher should know how to enforce discipline in the students. It is not love if a teacher allows students to misbehave and to act irresponsibly. Indiscipline is not a path to success; it leads to doom. The teacher needs to chisel the students so that they can come out as refined products in all aspects of their lives. Different means of enforcing discipline should be employed by the teacher to ensure that the desired results are achieved. A teacher that enforces discipline does not hate students but rather loves them.

Kindness: To teach with love, the teacher needs to be kind to the students. Kindness to the students serves as a motivational tool to make the students responsive to what the teacher offers the students. When students realize that they are loved and cared for by the teacher, they try to pay back by impressing the teacher with their performance. This kindness too evokes openness to the teacher on the part of the students.

CONCLUSION

Teaching could be said to be the mother of all professions because there is no endeavour in life that does not require a teacher. Building a formidable teacher-base is the secret to building a healthy society. The art of teaching goes beyond a mere activity aimed at making money. It is actually a calling, a vocation which has the tendency to change society. Teaching needs to be carried out with

love to ensure that the desired results are achieved. All the qualities that have been mentioned above must be employed in the teaching exercise in order to ensure that it is given a meaning which moves it beyond a career activity to a duty that has the common good at heart.

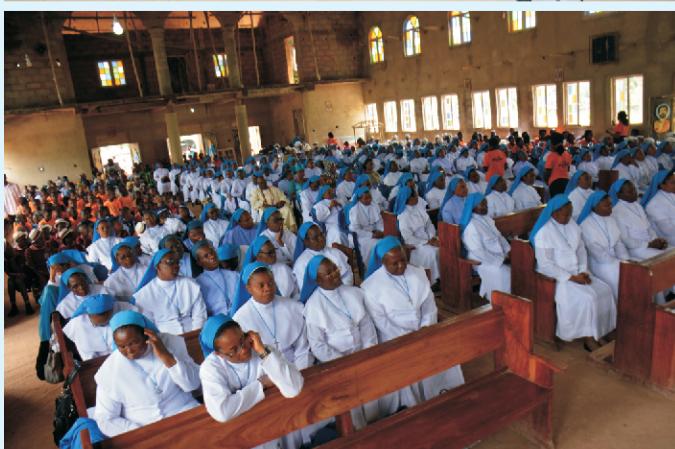
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JANUARY-OWL

You choose your words carefully and you lead conversations wisely. Despite your calm nature, your eloquence in creative writing surprises others, especially your ability to express yourself and leave others speechless. You communicate on your own terms and you have deep and meaningful thoughts.

FEBRUARY-PARROT

You are a free spirit and a person who is never predictable or boring. You have a one-of-a-kind ability to think outside the box. Art, music, and creative writing are part of who you are. Those around you are often inspired by your unique personality and passion for life. You dislike being in the center of attention; however, you are a person who turns heads!

MARCH-ROBIN

These are the birds of endurance which means that you have an unbelievable capacity to survive in the most difficult of situations. Your family and friends respect your strength and beliefs, regardless of whether they recognize this or not. From time to time, you can get tired, but you rarely show it. Instead, you focus all of your efforts on the reward that is

waiting for you. Without doubt, you are a strong and stable individual.

APRIL-CANARY

You love to laugh and you are always cheerful. Sometimes, you are the 'clown', sometimes; you are the 'wise person'. You like making others laugh and keeping them entertained. Others enjoy your interesting jokes and sense of humor.

May-Nightingale

Like the song of the nightingale, you make others' days more beautiful. Your positivity and 'infectious' mood is the main reason why many people envy you. Your kind smile does not leave anyone immune and it is your trademark.

JUNE-PIGEON

These people are born leaders because they are the best when it comes to delegation and organization. When you take over things in your hands, you bring order, whether this is an important and big event or a smaller, private gathering. You always have a list of chores that you need to get done.

JULY-EAGLE

You are a confident person who is a great listener and even complete strangers are attracted to reveal you their life story. You are a reliable individual who knows how to keep secrets. You are always capable of giving a sincere advice to help the person in need.

AUGUST-KINGFISHER

You are a people's person who enjoys making new friends who also enjoy being with you. You have a big heart and you are ready to offer a helping hand.

SEPTEMBER-GOSHAWK

You are the hero of your story and besides the numerous challenges you face, you always face them bravely. Your humbleness and heroic personality is why you are liked at work. You will never betray other people's trust!

OCTOBER-SWAN

You are the fixer and the one with the answers. You like helping people and you are able to find a viable solution quickly. You like being right and you usually are. This is why others come to you when they are in need for a good advice. You are their healer!

NOVEMBER-ROOSTER

You are one of the best friends one could ask for. You are supporting your friends in good and bad and you are there to guide them and make sure they have fun along the way.

DECEMBER-CROW

You are a mysterious wanderer and an adventurist who is also confident and curious. You rely on yourself and you are satisfied with who you are. You may not be in the center of attention, but your life is always full of new experiences.

LOVE AS THE PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY OF HUSBANDS IN A HOME

EZECHI, KINGSLEY C.

INTRODUCTION

Everywhere you turn or go to in our modern day Christian society, you hear pastors, counsellors, friends, foes, and anyone who feels like contributing to the issues of marital relationship often hammers on several things that wives must do. But we don't get to hear much about what the husband's responsibilities are. Well, before someone crucifies me, I must admit that we do hear of this in particular: "the man must provide for the home", because the bible says that anyone (man/woman) who cannot provide for his home is worse than an infidel. (1 Timothy 5:8). This scripture has been overtime arrogated to men, as though the bible verse was specifically referring to them. This verse of scripture has been used to support the motion that men have the primary responsibility to provide for their families.

In spite of the foregoing, our present world has carved out so much responsibility for wives; hence we hear things like: wives must submit to their husbands, wives must respect their husbands, wives must support their husbands financially, wives must be home builders, wives must nurture their children, wives must pray for the

home, wives this, wives that, wives everywhere, and so on. With this litany of responsibilities for the wives which the society has conceived and created, where then does this leave husbands? What specifically does 1 Tim 5:8 mean when it gives husbands the duty to provide for their homes? These and more is what this article will address and wish to contribute to the extant literature on the subject of marriage and spousal relationship. To take us further on this discourse, let us look at some key words on this subject (Love, Responsibility and Husband) and make a conceptual clarification on them and a working definition too.

EXPLANATION OF KEY CONCEPTS

WHAT IS LOVE?

I must begin by saying that this is a billion dollar question. A question that I must not answer through intellectual ratiocination or else, I would in the end be intellectually bored and frustrated. This is so, because, secular definitions, perception and conjectures of love are somewhat irreconcilable and at variance with so many others; hence lacking unanimity. But of all the cacophony of definitions of

love, I would love to pick one striking definition that is analogous to the biblical perception and conception. The Merriam Webster's Dictionary defined the term as: "unselfish loyal and benevolent concern for the good of another". Paul's first letter to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 13:4-5) says: "Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs". Thus, it is a selfless adventure of care, nurture and devotion towards another. Finally, from the above, it is safe to say that love is not a quid pro quo relationship.

WHO IS A HUSBAND?

The word 'husband' is derived from the Old English term husbonda, meaning the male head of the household. This word is in turn most likely from the Old Norse word (the Norwegian language spoken from about 100 to 1500 AD) husbondi, meaning "master of the house." This is taken from two basic words: hus, meaning "house," and bondi, meaning "householder." From secular perspective, the word husband would have extreme meaning and interpretation of domination, masterly disposition, superiority, lord, finality towards



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decision in the home, and so on. But from biblical stand, God made the husband the head because he demands accountability of the home solely from him first before considering the wife's involvement. When God completed the creation process, he made man first and thereafter gave him unfettered access and control over all of his creatures. He commanded man to have dominion over all things created by Him. This does not in any way imply high-handedness on the part of the man in exercising control and maintaining order. But it means that man must invoke both spiritual and intellectual wisdom in the management of the affairs of his home and the society at large. We shall discuss this in more detail in subsequent sections of this article.

RESPONSIBILITY

Business historian, Vincent E. Barry, has defined the term responsibility, when used in business affairs, as referring to "a sphere of duty or obligation assigned to a person by virtue of that person's position, function, or work." This duty and obligation by certain individuals demand that they be held accountable in the event that they are unable to perform. Thus, when we talk of husband's responsibility to love their wives, we refer to a marital obligation to which they cannot derelict or neglect irrespective of perceived challenges and inadequacies. God, in His creative blueprint, has given the husband the obligation and duty to manage his home and give account thereof when demanded of him. In Gen 3, when human beings disobeyed God, God did not demand an explanation from Eve first before Adam. Rather, he demanded an account of the disobedience from Adam first. After Adam's account, He then asked Eve for hers. So, in essence, God has placed the ultimate responsibility of the home in the hands of the husband from whom he would demand accountability at any time. Any shortcoming on the part of the wife and children is expected to be mitigated by the husband through divine grace and spiritual guidance which he enjoys more than the wife

and children. Therefore, a man should not relinquish his responsibility to his wife or any other member of his family or he is likely to have lots of irreconcilable problems in the home.

A HUSBAND'S LOVE FOR THE WIFE: A Heavenly Injunction

The heavenly injunction given by the bible for husbands to love their wives is contained in Ephesians 5:25-27 which states:

Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.

Most husbands seem not to know about this injunction, let alone practice it. In many distressed homes in Nigeria and elsewhere across the world, we hear certain comments from husbands which are laden with frustration, agony, pain, trauma, just to mention but a few. Comments such as "my wife cannot cook and that is why I eat out every day before returning home", "my wife is dirty; she snores like a pig, disorganized and has no grooming", "I think my wife is seeing someone else, I can't take this anymore", "she is very lazy; she eats too much without considering the much weight she is putting on...", and you know I like them slim with figure 8/hourglass shape", "she comes home very late at night, the children would have to eat junks before going to bed". These and many more are the things that so many men complain about and some are even on the verge of divorcing their wives. But would it ever solve the litany of problems outlined? The answer is absolutely no. The only thing that can sustain this man in this perceived debilitating marital situation is contained in the love-of-wife command which God issued to

husbands. Again, Proverbs 10:12 reads: "Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all offenses". So if you are a husband who have made up his mind to kick that woman out of the house because of all the faults identified and outlined above, please pause and ponder on the verse of the scripture stated already in Proverbs. Another scripture worth considering is Colossians 3:19 which says "husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them."

Somebody might say I don't even love her because I was forced to marry her. I want to assure you that God knows that it would happen in that way and so, sanctioned it. How do I know this? The book of Jeremiah 1:5 says "Before I formed thee in thy mother's womb, I knew thee...". Similarly, Isaiah 43:1-3

But now thus says the Lord that created you, O Jacob, and he that formed you, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed you, I have called you by your name; you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow you: when you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon you. For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Saviour: I gave Egypt for your ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for you.

So dear husbands, your unconditional and unrequited love is what God demands from you for your wives; because husbands are the ones he would hold accountable should anything go wrong in the home. In a nutshell, whether she is a cheating wife, a nagging, dirty, lazy, fat or plump, slim or short, educated or uneducated, worst cook ever, etc; your most primary duty as a husband is to love her with all your

heart, mind and soul. Why, because "love is patient and kind, it is not arrogant, it is not irritable and resentful, it bears all things, hopes all things, endures all things and it does not rejoice in wrongdoings"- 1Corinthians 13:4-7.

The Biblical Imposed Responsibility of the Husband to Love the Wife: An Analyses of Ephesians 5: 23-33

For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body.

Before I proceed into the analyses of the above scriptures, we must understand that the Love of Christ for the church is the template all christian husbands must follow to loving their wives. Let us now see how that should be.

THE HUSBAND AS HEAD

We have established earlier that being the head does not in any way mean to be bossy, domineering, Mr. know it all or the full stop to all things, and so on. It means a position of service to the wife. This is so because, if the husband is the

head of the wife as Jesus is the head of the church, then he must serve the wife as Jesus served and ministered to the church while He was here. If we recall in the book of Matthew 18, when the disciples asked Jesus who is the greatest in the Kingdom of heaven, He replied and said in verse 4 after he brought forth a child and set him in the midst of them saying: "... Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven." Jesus' love for the church includes service to the disciples by even washing their feet (v. 5) after they worshipped him, called him Lord and master in verse 13. Thus, when the wives submit to their husbands in all things, calling them Lord and master just like Sarah calls Abraham, the husband in return ought to serve their wives.

Similarly, in both public and private organizations/sectors of the society, the bulk stops on the table of the head of such organization. It is singularly the responsibility of the head of a unit, department, sector, and even an overall boss to monitor and direct the affairs of their deputies/subordinates; as accountability would only be demanded from these heads and not the subordinates. This scenario is also similar to what obtains in the home. God would always demand of the husband the report and account of the behavior of the wife and children (weaker vessels/subordinates), be they good or evil.

The love of a husband according to the scripture is a sacrificial love. It is a love that he must be prepared to die for, just as Jesus died for the church out of love. Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.(v. 25). Just as Jesus carried the cross for the sake of salvaging the church, so also must the husbands love their wives in that regard. So you see, from what we said earlier that even when wives engage in some emotionally traumatizing behavior, husbands must carry the cross of loving her regardless. How? By praying for her to turn back to

the Lord, a prayer of salvation it is called.

So, if you think as a husband that your wife is crucifying you with all those nasty and exasperating behaviour, then in the words of a certain author, "you have the perfect opportunity to look like Jesus". This is correct because, the wife was never told to love the husband, but the husband was told to do so. Even in her weaknesses of all sorts, the husband must still love gracefully. Consequently, we were loved first of God before we could be able to love Him back. Love and loving is the primary responsibility of husbands and not of the wives. If wives must love, it would be as a response to the love showered on her by the husband.

Finally, I will love to end this here because of the space given for this article. But in the next volume of this magazine, I shall continue from here. So, husbands, the commandment to love is your sole responsibility, whether you were loved in return by your wives or not.

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THE SUCCESS OF DEMOCRACY IN NIGERIA

INTRODUCTION

I owe the title of this article to Prof. Gloria Njoku. Nigeria has suffered a lot from failures of democratic governance. Elections have been a mirage in democratic government in Nigeria. Prior to 1990s, Nigeria have been ruled by military juntas. As a result, Nigeria democracy had suffered a major setback in any election (Cheeseman, 2015). Democracy in Nigeria began in 1999. The 2007 election was described by observers as the worst in Africa (Cheeseman, 2015). During these elections, there were accusations of electoral manipulations. Voters were frequently harassed. Election boxes were snatched. Violence erupted almost in all the polling stations across the country. As a result, many people lost their lives.

Nigeria is considered as an expert in rigging elections. Most often, election results are written in government houses across the country. Election winners are known even before elections take place. Luckily, there was a change of the way elections are conducted during the Jonathan Goodluck's administration. Jonathan even accepted defeat in the 2015 election from President Mohammed Buhari. The Jonathan administration conducted one of the freest elections in Nigeria. This

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at least shows that there is hope in democracy in Nigeria.

There is poverty in Nigeria. Literacy rate is still very low in some parts of the states in Nigeria. Ethnic tensions are common. Religious crises have contributed to the woes of the people. Infrastructure developments are lacking. Some skeptics argue that these factors militate against building a successful democracy across the nation. In spite of these difficulties, the researcher believes that democratization has resulted in some positive outcomes. Democracy is not totally hopeless in Nigeria. At least, the Jonathan administration organized free and safe elections in 2015. Future administrations can build and improve on elections in Nigeria. Rome is not built in a year. There is no doubt that we are still young in democracy.

Nigeria is considered as the hope of Africa. When the researcher was in elementary school in the 1970s, Nigeria used to answer the "Giant" of Africa. Unfortunately for Nigeria and fortunately for others, some African countries have overtaken Nigeria in economic developments. Nigeria helped

South Africa to transit from apartheid to majority rule, but South Africa's economy is growing faster than Nigeria's. Ghana was in dark democracy during her military rules. During the military rule of Jerry Rawlings, the country witnessed a total overhauling. Some prominent politicians were eliminated. Today, Ghana is one of Africa's best economy and democracy. Nigeria has witnessed some improvements in organizing elections. Prior to Jonathan Goodluck's administration, elections were won by those already in power. However, Jonathan was the first president to lose and concede defeat in Nigeria. This was a good sign of progress in Nigerian democracy.

DEMOCRACY

Democracy began in the city of Athens in the middle of the 5th century BCE. It denotes the type of political system that was practiced by the people of Athens. It later spread to other parts of the world. In the traditional perspective, democracy begins with the voters (Achen and Bartels, 2016). Each nation or country have an idea of what they want to achieve. They need some people to pilot the affairs of the country. This is where the idea of electing those who will carry out these things comes into play. The people then elect their

leaders to lead them in the running of the day to day activities of the state. In this case, what the majority of the people want becomes government policy. In actual fact, democracy makes the elected officials the rulers. According to Abraham Lincoln, the fifth president of America, "Democracy is of the people, by the people, and for the people" (Achen and Bartels, 20116). The elected officials must put the interest of the people who elected them into consideration.

Condoleezza Rice, the former American Secretary of State under the Bush administration approached the idea of democracy differently. Human beings have inalienable rights that are non-negotiable. These Human Rights were enshrined into and adopted by the United Nations General Assembly of the 1948. According to Condoleezza Rice (2017), everyone has the right to freedom of thoughts, conscience, and religion. Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression, to freedom of peaceful assembly and association, and to take part in their government, directly or through freely chosen representatives. For Condoleezza Rice, even though the word democracy was not used, but that was precisely what it implied.

Rules are important. In her book, Susan Bright Moore (2013) asked what would happen if a country had no rules? Of course, any country without any rules is calling for anarchy. Rules help people to live an organized life. Rules help citizens to get along with one another. Nigeria is such a diverse country with different ethnic groups and languages. Rules are glues that bind and unite the people together. In a democracy, people elect their leaders. These leaders

represent the people, their interests, and ideas. Power belongs to the people. The people will decide the type of governments they would operate on. Everyone has a voice in democracy.

The Nigerian democracy is organized with three arms of government. The three branches of government are the executive, the legislative and judiciary. The legislative arms make the laws. The executives execute the laws. The judiciary branch of government interprets and makes sure that the laws are followed. Each of the arms of government is independent. The main aims of having the three arms of government is to separate the powers. Each branch of government acts as a watchdog. In this case, no group will be too powerful.

DEMOCRACY IN NIGERIA

After World War II, the Nigerian nationalists agitated for self-government. Nigeria gained independence from Britain on October 1, 1960 after series of agitations. The first sets of nationalists opted to operate the unitary system of government. "Zik of Africa" became the first ceremonial president of Nigeria. The first Federal Republic was created in 1963. There were three regions and each region was autonomous and also controlled its own mineral resources. Each region developed at its own pace. There were healthy competitions among the regions. The helm of affairs are now in the hands of the Nigerian government officials with time. There were plans to organize the first post-independence elections. The first electoral elections in Nigeria were organized in 1964 and 1965. Unfortunately, the Nigerian electoral history has not been a

satisfying one. When the first election was held in Nigeria, there were only very few voters who were eligible to vote. There were some criteria which voters had to meet before they could vote. For example, it was required that only people with annual income of 100 pound sterling would qualify to vote. The population of adults by this time was estimated at 5,000. As time went on, there were modifications that would enable voters to qualify for voting. To qualify to vote, voters must attain the age of 18 years. However, the first elections of 1964 and 1965 were marred with electoral violence, electoral manipulations, electoral malpractices, thuggery, fear, and instability. Ever since then, this trend has been the norm of elections in Nigeria. The electoral results were contested. Some political parties would be uncomfortable with the election results and this would bring a lot of unrest, instability, and chaos in the polity. Politicians were accused of massive corruptions. Instability in the country ushered in the military rules.

The military intervened to resolve the instability that has taken up the polity as a result of dissatisfaction of the results of the electoral process. Some military officials organized a coup in 1966. There was also a counter coup in the same year which was mainly organized by the Northern military officials. In these coups and counter coups, military personalities from the Eastern, Western and Northern parts of the country lost their lives. There was anarchy in the polity as a result, and this led to the unfortunate war of 1967-1970. It was estimated that about one to three million Easterners (mainly Igbos) lost their lives through diseases, starvation and battle fields. The war eventually ended

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in January 1970. The war ended with a slogan of “No victor, No vanquished” attributed to Gowon, head of the victorious side.

After the end of the Nigerian-Biafran war in 1970, the military juntas took over the affairs of the country. They ruled by decrees. There was a lot of human rights abuses under the military rule. They ruled for nine years (1970 - 1979). An election was organized in 1979. According to the international observers, the 1979 elections were massively rigged. There was chaos and instability as a result. However, the elections of 1979 ushered in the civilian rule of Shehu Shagari with Dr. Alex Ekwueme as his running mate. The administration of Shehu Shagari experienced the “Oil Boom”. There was a lot of money in the polity. Unfortunately, the Shagari administration did not invest with the proceeds of the oil boom. There was rather massive corruption among the politicians. There were no infrastructural developments. The electorates were disillusioned and unsatisfied with the dividends of democracy under the Shagari administration.

Mohammed Buhari led a coup which ousted the Shagari administration in 1984. In his speech, Buhari made lots of promises to reform the polity. The people welcomed his idea of reforms. Unfortunately, the Buhari's administration was viewed as being corrupt more than the Shagari's government. There was human rights abuses. The military officials were corrupt. Mohammed Buhari was a religious bigot. In the process, a group of soldiers were dissatisfied with the Buhari's rule and toppled his government in 1985. Ibrahim Babangida became the next military dictator in Nigeria. His administration did not fare better

either. He led Nigeria into the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC). During his military regime, Babangida organized a free election in 1993. The election was won by Abiola. The elections of June 12, 1993 which was organized by Professor Humphrey Nwosu were however cancelled with unspecified reasons. This eventually led to public unrests. The winner of the 1993 election was arrested. He was put into prison where he was allegedly poisoned. In the process, Abacha took the government by force and became the next military junta. Abacha was also allegedly poisoned with the aid of the international conspiracy. General Abdulsalami Abubakar became the military head of State. In 1999, he drafted a new constitution with military face. The new constitution was adopted on May 5, 1999. It was under the Abdulsalami administration that the 1999 elections were organized which ushered in the Olusegun Obasanjo administration.

INEC conducts elections in Nigeria. INEC must guarantee the rights of every eligible voter. Every vote is important and must count. Voters must exercise their rights to determine who rules. The voting environment must be conducive to allow voters to vote without any victimization. The political parties must also follow strictly the rules and regulations of INEC. It is important to note that no one is above the law in any democratic elections. After all preparations for the elections were made, it took INEC three months to conduct the 1999 elections. The first elections to be conducted was the Local Government elections which took place on December 5, 1998. The States House of Assembly and Gubernatorial elections took place on January 9, 1999. The National

Assembly elections took place on February 20, 1999 while the presidential elections took place on February 27, 1999. There were three major parties that took part in the presidential elections. The People's Democratic Party (PDP), the All people's party, (APP) which latter metamorphosed into All Nigerian People's party (ANPP), and the Alliance for Democracy (AD). Olusegun Obasanjo was the nominee of the PDP who was declared the winner of the 1999 presidential elections over Olu Falae who ran under the alliance of ANPP/AD. Obasanjo won the total votes of 18, 738,154 (62.78 %) over Olu Falae who had 11,110,287 (37.22%). Olu Falae rejected the results of the presidential elections and contested it in the courts. Olu Falae argued that the elections were marred with frauds, irregularities, and electoral malpractices. No one took Olu Falae's elections challenge very serious. The political parties, the candidates, and civil rights movements were pleased for disengaging the military from politics.

SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION

This section presents an evaluation of the study. The purpose of the study is to initiate a discussion on how to develop a democratic process in Nigeria. Elections are important avenues to achieve this democratic process. Democracy is the only means for voters to be heard. It is through elections that leaders are elected to run the affairs of government. The previous elections conducted have shown that Nigeria has many obstacles to surmount. We are still in a learning process. After all, Rome was not built in a day. There is great optimism among the electorates that Nigeria will get it right one day.

THE APPOINTMENT OF INEC CHAIRMAN

The electoral body that organizes elections in Nigeria has undergone many changes in recent years. In 1983, we had Federal Electoral Commission (FEDECO). FEDECO later transition to National Electoral Commission (NEC). NEC also transition to Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). Changes in this body only occur in name, but its primary functions remain the same. INEC is the electoral body that is used today, and is saddled with the conduct of elections in Nigeria.

Nigerian is still in the experimental stage of democracy. Even with the most advanced democracy in the world is still learning. Learning is a process. With the optimism of our people, we believe that our democratic process will grow from strength to strength. In the previous elections, the president has the right to appoint the INEC chairman. This has its downsides effects on strengthening our democratic process. It is clear that the president would appoint someone who would listen to him and obey him. This method has to change if we are serious to strengthen our democratic process. The president would cease to appoint the INEC chairman.

This study suggests that a law would be initiated to empower the Senate to appoint the INEC chairman whose function would be neutral. The INEC would remain independent and no one would be able to interfere with the functions of INEC. If INEC is independent in carrying out of its duties, it will help to strengthen the democratic process in Nigeria. The INEC chairman and his other officials would be tasked to conduct free and fair elections. The INEC

chairman would not be influenced by any one since his appointment was based through the law of the land. No one, not even the president will intermediate him or her. He would not take any order and directives from any one. He will be able to obey the law of the land in carrying out his electoral duties.

INEC FUNDING

Funding is crucial to the free and fair conduct of elections in Nigeria. There must be a law to establish how much would be allotted to INEC to carry out its duties. The president would not have any power to starve the INEC chairman of any electoral funding. This study found out that in the previous elections, the past presidents have interfered with INEC work through starving it with funds. The presidents expect the INEC chairman to obey them and to comply with their demands. Nigeria would be able to build a sustainable democracy when the funding of INEC is removed from the hands of any president.

There are stipulated times for campaigns in Nigeria. The constitution would be clear on the allotted time to campaign for offices. No politician would have the right to disobey this rule; otherwise the politician may be looking for trouble. But, once the time for campaigns is declared open by INEC, all the political parties would begin their campaigns. Most often, the missing pie is how elections are funded. Campaigns take a lot of challenges from political parties. The former Finance minister during the Jonathan administration, Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala revealed the dirty secret behind the funding of political parties in Nigeria (Daily Post, 2018). Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala

revealed that some government funds are diverted by politicians during political campaigns. She maintained that the type of democracy Nigeria adopted is too expensive. Political parties have to campaign. Money is needed by the political parties to campaign. As a result, the governments in power loot the federal treasury to campaign. According to Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala (2018), part of the monies for treasury is diverted to finance political parties. This study wants INEC to establish guidelines for political parties to follow. If any political party over steps the funding guideline, the INEC would be able to sanction the erring political party. The policy guiding the political parties would help to strengthen our electoral system.

CONCLUSION

This study inspires hope in Nigerian elections. We should not loss hope. All have not gone so wrong. We are still in experimental stage in our democracy. Even the developed countries were once like us at one time in history. Election is a process and we learn as we conduct more elections. We have history of successful elections in Nigeria. Professor Humphrey Nwosu conducted free and fair elections in 1993. President Jonathan Goodluck also conducted free and fair elections in 2015 in which he lost to president Buhari. The former president Jonathan Goodluck improved the conducts of elections in Nigeria. He set a high standard in the Nigerian electoral process. This was a credit to Jonathan Goodluck. He has created a good electoral process which other elections could build upon. Rome is not built in a day. We are crawling now, but there will come a time when we shall run in our electoral process.

The researcher is optimistic that

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the subsequent elections in Nigeria will be improved. We have the will to deepen our democratic process. This is a plus to democracy in Nigeria. Our biggest problems in deepening our democracy are illiteracy, youth unemployment, corruptions, nepotism, tribalism, thuggery, election malpractices, and carrying of election ballot boxes. We should have a pragmatic law that will prosecute election defaulters. Part of our problem is that some people are above the law in Nigeria. Presently, the executive arms of government controls all other arms of government in Nigeria. There must be separation of powers to allow each arm to focus on its own function. Once this is done, the judicial arm of government would be able to prosecute the election defaulters without bias. This will discourage subsequent election crimes from happening. In the process, our democratic process will be deepened to the admiration of everyone in Nigeria.

INEC has a big role to play in deepening our democratic process in Nigeria. Presently, there are many political parties in Nigeria. Unfortunately, some of the

political parties cannot even win a ward election. The researcher is opting for the pruning of the number of current political parties. Let us have about six political parties in the country. We have six regions or zones. If any zone or region wants to build a strong party from this number, that region will be able to form a strong party that has the same principle with its region. This is not to encourage tribal politics but there is an advantage of building a party that aligns itself with the tribe's principles and aspirations. If this suggestion is accepted, it will help to deepen our democratic process.

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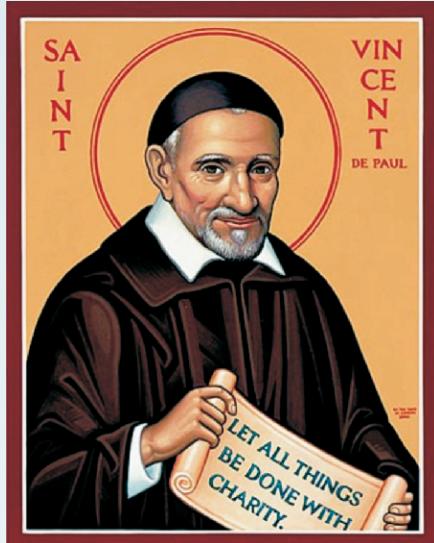
JOKES

Collected by: Sr CynthiaMaris OKOYE
(odinakacyndy@gmail.com)

A man goes to the doctor and says, "Doctor, wherever I touch, it hurts." The doctor asks, "What do you mean?" The man says, "When I touch my shoulder, it really hurts. If I touch my knee - OUCH! When I touch my forehead, it really, really hurts." The doctor says, "I know what's wrong with you - you've broken your finger!"

Patient: Doctor, I have a pain in my eye whenever I drink tea. **Doctor:** Take the spoon out of the mug before you drink.

Son: Dad, what is an idiot?
Dad: An idiot is a person who tries to explain his ideas in such a strange and long way that another person who is listening to him can't understand him. Do you understand me?
Son: No.



**Susan Wiland, President
Society of St. Vincent de Paul,
Rockford Council, Illinois**

The Catholic Church proclaims that all human life is sacred, and that the dignity of the human person is the foundation of a moral vision for society. As Catholics and Vincentians, we are guided by our Catholic social teachings which is a central and essential element of our faith. These are teachings founded on the life and words of Jesus. Its roots are in the Hebrew prophets who announced God's special love for the poor and called God's people to a covenant of love and justice. It is a teaching founded on the life and words of Jesus Christ, who identified himself with "the least of these," the hungry and the stranger (cf. Mt 25:45). Catholic social teaching is built on a commitment to the poor. According to the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops, "Every human being is created in the image of God and redeemed by Jesus Christ, and therefore is invaluable and worthy of respect as a member of the human family."

SOCIETY OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL

A 20 year old college student, Frederic Ozanam and a group of five other students, founded the Society of St. Vincent de Paul in 1833 to serve the poor in Paris, France. Frederic chose St. Vincent de Paul as the society's patron, who served the poor some 250 years earlier. Frederic shared St. Vincent's commitment to the poor and admired the initiatives he showed in seeking and finding the spirituality and materially poor, the way he organized others to help him accomplish his service to the poor, and his deep spiritual vision that allowed him to see the face of Jesus in the poor.

Frederic established the first local group, which we now refer to as a "Conference", to show that their faith inspired them to love and care for others; and to learn about, deepen and be strengthened in their faith, to grow closer to God. This basic insight continues to guide over 800,000 members and 47,000 conferences of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul worldwide, whose vision is described by Frederic, "embrace the world in a network of charity". Our mission is clear: Vincentian ministry is a means for acquiring holiness. The

ministry of a Vincentian to those and with those who stand in need is the powerful means that affects holiness of life for the individual Vincentian. Vatican II states that the principal means of holiness for bishops and priests is their ministry. This applies to the laity also, because, in attending to the needy and suffering, a Vincentian is ministering to Jesus Christ himself.

This brings to mind a sculpture, created by Timothy P. Schmalz, named "Homeless Jesus". The artist was inspired by Matthew 25: 31 - 46, the "Judgement of the Nations". This sculpture is a representation that suggests Christ is with the most marginalized in our society sleeping on a park bench. The Christ figure is shrouded in a blanket the only indication that it is Jesus is the visible wounds on the feet. What a powerful image! And, I recalled this image one very cold evening. I was at the gas station filling up my car. A man approached me and asked if I would help him out with five dollars so he could have enough gas to get to his family home. My first reaction was to turn him away. Then, I recalled his eyes. I said to myself, "this could be Jesus"! I asked him to

STORIES OF ACTION INSPIRED BY LOVE

pull his car up behind mine, and I filled it up.

Our traditional Vincentian role, which continues today, is to serve the poor through home visits. We are there to assist the marginalized financially and emotionally, maybe just as simple as listening to their story. Home visits is the clearest symbol of our Vincentian charism, which dictates the highest respect for the dignity of the poor. It represents our Vincentian commitment to reach out to the needy in their home, rather than require them to report to an outside service site. In the home, needy persons feel more comfortable

to confide their stories of struggle. In that family setting, Vincentians are asked to listen, offer humble advice, and provide assistance. Connecting with a client is a powerful experience for a Vincentian – it is through those we are blessed to serve that we witness the Face of Christ.

In addition to addressing an individual or family immediate need in a home visit, the Society also has a vision to overcome poverty one person, one family, one community at a time. St. Vincent de Paul national programs have been developed to provide a deeper understanding of poverty. Finding the remedies to

poverty's root causes will force us to reach out into the community to challenge and advocate for change. We need to make sure that we understand what it means to live in poverty. We are being asked to make changes in our attitudes, competencies, behaviors, processes, and programs that will affect a difference. It doesn't mean we stop what we are doing. Frederic took a position that we need to go beyond just ideas. It is about actions inspired by love. Just like Frederic, we need to be ever at the "service of God's poor" (Vincentian Life: Member 2016).



"Faith is our great means of approaching Christ. By faith we touch Christ. And we know that by touching Christ like the woman with the issue of blood, we are cured of our spiritual infirmities and our soul blossoms with the life of Christ"
(Founder's Talk, vol. 2:52)

**BISHOP GODFREY
MARYPAUL OKOYE**

JOKES

A man receives a phone call from his doctor. The doctor says, "I have some good news and some bad news."

The man says, "OK, give me the good news first." The doctor says, "The good news is, you have 24 hours to live."

The man replies, "Oh no! If that's the good news, then what's the bad news?" The doctor says, "The bad news is, I forgot to call you yesterday"

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GOLDEN JUBILEE FLAG OFF EVENTS/ FIRST RELIGIOUS PROFESSION



GOLDEN JUBILEE FLAG OFF EVENTS/ FIRST RELIGIOUS PROFESSION



MY MISSION OF LOVE

THE STORY OF SEAT OF WISDOM LIBRARY,
ABATETE, NIGERIA

Rev. Fr. Sylvester A. Nnaso,
Founder of SOWL

St. John reminds us in the holy Scripture that "God is love" and anyone who loves, lives in God and God in him (John 4:11-21). God reveals his love in all his creation, and at the appointed time, he decided to reveal himself more fully through the second person of the blessed trinity, Jesus Christ. That, we may continue to live in love as his new family on earth, he promised the gift of the Holy Spirit, and on the day of Pentecost, he sent the fullness of his love, the Holy Spirit through his Son to us. By creating us in his image and likeness, he demonstrates that

everyone can receive and give love; Christians and non-Christians, alike.

Throughout salvation history, there is no doubt that God trusts us more than we trust ourselves, and to prove his trust for us among other things, he did not place angels in charge of his newly formed Church; rather, he appointed men who have proven to be weak, timid and sometimes, slow to understanding to continue his mission in the world that is broken by sin and hate. God knows that with the help of the Holy Spirit, nothing

will be impossible for us to accomplish in this passing world (Matthew 19:26).

Also, St. Paul reminds us that the Holy Spirit will lead us to experience a personal Pentecost in our soul, which he says, will eventually kick us into action in the name of God without fear or favor; for the Holy Spirit is not a spirit of cowardice, but rather; it's a spirit of courage and it's given to us for a special purpose. I discovered my special purpose in life in 1998, when I received a nudge from the Holy Spirit in my soul to go and build a library.

The birth of Seat of Wisdom Library, Abatete was the combination of a sacrificial love, faith, determination and passion. These virtues are necessary to make a difference in the world. I strongly believe that no one does any good thing without the promptings of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, it doesn't have to involve very many people. It could be just two or three persons with God's loving presence to lead and to guide the mission. In the end, all things are done for the glory of God.



STORIES OF ACTION INSPIRED BY LOVE

The spark to build a library to serve the people of Abatete and its surrounding area began in the summer of 1998, when I was a graduate student at Fordham University, New York, U.S.A. I had a life-changing experience upon entering the university library. It was the first time I could honestly say that I met a well-equipped library. That experience left an indelible good impression on me. I couldn't stop thinking about how a single school could enjoy such a great library while my town in Nigeria has none. So, I made a promise to myself saying, "Whenever I have an opportunity in life, I will build a modern library in Abatete."

So, in the winter of 2007, at the end of one of my Sunday Masses, the good Lord sent an older gentleman to me by the name of Frank Polizzi, Jr. of Crystal Lake, Illinois to help

me fulfill my library dream. I was just having a loving conversation with Frank over a cup of coffee about my dream to build a library; and after our long coffee talk, Frank gave me \$20 (twenty dollars). He said to me, "Take this (twenty dollars), father!" He continued, "Why don't we begin now to save for your dream library?" I accepted the gift, but I had no idea what to do with the gift at that point. I was both confused and frightened. However, I was very determined not to misuse the gift!

Little did Frank and I know that he was sowing a seed that will make a difference in the world! Frank's \$20 donation changed everything for me! It transformed my passive desire for a modern library from just a mere dream to a reality. By the way, Frank Polizzi, Jr. turned 97 years old

in January of 2018, and has since 2007 contributed substantially to the success of SOW library. It always seems impossible until it is done. The power of love can change the world!

To continue this super highway of knowledge, I traveled to Abatete in the summer of 2007, with Doug McDougall to meet with the leaders of Abatete community. Abatete Development Organization (ADO) in partnership with Igwe Engr. Emeka C. Efobi and his cabinet, and some other prominent individuals got together to provide a free site for the library at Eke Abatete.

Returning to the United States after my visit to Abatete, I formed the library board of directors and appointed Mr. McDougall its chairman. I initiated its capital campaign in Atlanta, Georgia, during the 2007 National Convention of Abatete USA to raise funds towards the construction of the new library. Then, in the spring of 2008, a new chairman was appointed by the name, Mark J. Serpe of McHenry, Illinois. The first chairman, Mr. Doug McDougall was sick with cancer and eventually died on May 25, 2011. May his gentle soul rest in the peace of Christ, Amen.

Seat of Wisdom library was registered in the United States in the fall of 2008. Foundation for the new Seat of Wisdom library followed in the summer of 2010; and I completed its registration in Nigeria in the fall of 2014. Hence, Seat of Wisdom library is the mother of Abatete library. The official opening ceremony of the library took place on December 31st, 2015; on the feast day of Pope St. Sylvester I, my patron saint; and Mark J.



STORIES OF ACTION INSPIRED BY LOVE

Serpe performed the inaugural ceremony.

There is a common saying that "Nothing good comes easy" because it's good! SOW library was not an easy project; and of course, running its day-to-day operation is not easy, either; but, the Holy Spirit is fully in control; for God's compassion rewards and embraces all who willingly bear his gentle yoke. The library is measured at about 13,500 square feet with conference rooms, computer labs and anything one could imagine in a modern digital library. We have lots of programs for the youth; like Computer literacy training program, Spelling Bee competitions, Read Club group, Back-to-School party, and so on. Everyone who enters Seat of Wisdom Library, Abatete is always in awe, and cannot believe that such a facility is in Anambra State. It

usually takes the "world" to convince visitors that the library was built by an individual.

To get to your desired destination in life, someone must construct the road to get you there. I strongly believe that we all possess the capability to construct the road to the future we desire to see in our various areas of endeavor. I discovered my mission in this world in the summer of 1998. My mission is to help develop young people through promoting love for learning and access to higher education so that they will continue to find a pathway to their desired destinations. I am already watching people exclaim in wonder like I did in 1998, saying "This is an awesome library!" My love, prayers and priestly blessings go to all people of goodwill that have spent themselves for the

good of others. I commend all of you to God through our Blessed Mother. Jesus says, "The words I have spoken to you are spirit and life." In all things, always remember that "God is love." Mary, Seat of Wisdom, Pray for us!

"Generosity is the extended favor, doing things more than one was asked, more than one is expected. Your offering of yourself must be generous, whole and entire"
(Founder's Talk, vol 1:20)

**BISHOP GODFREY
MARYPAUL OKOYE**

GOOD WILL MESSAGE

With prayers and gratitude to God for our uncommon and fruitful witnessing of Divine Love to the entire creation these 50yrs. The Regional Council and the Daughters in Gabon Region FELICITATES our beloved Rev. Mother M.Anastatia Dike in Council on our historic Golden Jubilee celebration of our foundation. May the lord continue to grant us good health of mind and body for the glory of His name. Seigneur Jésus Maître de la mission. Nous sommes très reconnaissantes de votre présences parmi nous durant cette année de témoignages de votre amour parmi ton peuple.

Long live the Roman Catholic Church
Long live the Church of Nigeria
Long live the Daughters of Divine love.

Sr. M. Evangeline Aliwo
Regional Superior



BEING AWARE OF GOD'S EVER-PRESENT LOVE

(A Reflection with the Existence of Gabon Region)

Sr Maria Oluifunaya Agu
Gabon Region

Gabon Region came into existence since 10th October 1980, shortly after the transition into glory of our beloved Father Founder Most Rev Dr Godfrey Mary Paul Okoye CSsp of happy memory. It came into being through grace and through grace it shall continue her mission of sharing God's love. History tells that Gabon Region is the mother of all our foreign missions. Our story explores God's faithfulness. In spite of our challenges, signs of God's love for us abounds; it is uncountable as we understood and draw strength from the very words of the Master of the vineyard, 'I am with you always until the end of time' (Matt 28: 20).

It is interesting to note that the mission that took off in Gabon at that time sprout and grew into a big tree that stretched its shoots to many more countries. Kudos to our first set of **MISSIONARIES** to Gabon: Srs Kelechukwu Ibole, Clementina Ifeaneme (still working hard in the Region), Chidulue Oraegbu and Anayochuwkwu Azuka. The Missionary encouraging words of the Lord that says: "I am with you always until the end of time" (Matt:28.20), was well

understood by these gallant soldiers of Christ who transcend both geographical and cultural barriers in sharing Divine love and the presence of God with his people.

The initial challenge for every new sister is that of language (French and the native language), and adaptation to the climate and custom. We strived to offer up to God all inconveniences in order to gain His graces, in learning the languages and customs, in adapting to the weather, especially the very harsh ones. We appreciate the good seed our pioneer missionaries sewed. As we continued to courageously adapt to diverse geographical and cultural condition in the mist of insecurity, we remember Moses and the Israelites when Moses made this declaration before the Lord, "if you do not come yourself do not make us move from here, for how can it be known that I and my people enjoy your favour, if not by your coming with us" (Ex 33.15.16). Yes, the Lord came with our pioneer missionaries.

The Gabon mission that started with four sisters became a region of four brother nations which are: Gabon, Cameroon, Mali and

Tchad. They are of similar cultures, mentality and values. Cameroon which is closest to Nigeria is a bilingual country. We could see the very words of Christ in experimentation when He said, "I am the vine, you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing" (Jn:15.5).

We thank God for the gift of vocation in these mission lands. To the glory of God, young girls from Gabon, Cameroon and Mali have joined the Daughters of Divine Love congregation. We admire the steadfastness of these our lovely sisters in the persons of Srs Jane France Natti, Lovette Nsegue Mba and Jeanne Konate. These sisters courageously said yes to God's call amidst humiliations, insults, mockeries and trials of different kinds. They are fruits of our labour in the mission. Their response to God through our congregation is another sign of God's ever present love. Chères Soeurs, Felicitation et Beaucoup du Courage car Dieu est avec Nous. (Dear Sisters, Congratulations and Courage! God is with us)

Presently, together we set a pace for an instant and a positive change in our communities and places of apostolate. We vision to expand the more with love deeply rooted, ameliorating and in continuing God's service in the church.

Finally, we are really aware of His ever-present love in season and out of season as we face insecurity and drastic climate change. In His love, he plans good for us, our confidence is totally in Him. Gabon region is moving on the track of God's love. With the psalmist we boldly say, "Those who Trust in the lord are like Mont Zion That can never be shaken".

MERCI BEAUCOUP!

VOICES FROM THE REGIONS



What a Joy! Our Congregation is 50 Years!!

Founded during the agonising Nigerian civil war, Divine Love prevailed till date! To God be the glory for the wonderful gift of our Father Founder: Bishop G.M.P Okoye of happy memory.

We remain ever grateful to God for His unflinching Love, protection and Benevolence upon us since the inception of our Congregation.

We cannot be where we are today without the help and sweat of our past Mother Generals: We remain ever grateful to our Families, Friends of Divine Love and all who helped us to be what and where we are today. We cannot have reached our present stage without the sweat, perseverance and endurance of our Foundation members, we remain grateful to them.. According to our Father Founder's talk: 'if a building will stand, it depends on the foundation, and the higher the building, the stronger the foundation`` Nevertheless, let us remember that the journey has just started. We encourage ourselves to continue steadfastly where they stopped, that their labours and sweat will not be in vain.

As God has given us this golden opportunity to celebrate our 50th Birthday, may the spirit of our Father Founder imbibe in each of us as the light of God sustains us amidst the trials and persecutions of our life.

We heartily felicitate with our Congregation as we wish ourselves: Courage in proclaiming the gospel of Love, Joy of religious Life and above all, according to our Founder's injunction: 'Cling to Jesus all your life as faithful and loving Spouses, let Him teach you and work in you.'

May this Divine Love keep us united!

Congratulations to us!
Long live Daughters of Divine Love!
Ad multos Annos
Herzlichen Glückwunsch!!!

Sr. Rosemary Ude
Regional Superior.
German Region.

PUZZLE

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| 2. Unconditional | 9. Friendship | 16. Modesty |
| 3. Ever Present | 10. Community | 17. Forgiveness |
| 4. Care | 11. Patience | 18. Family |
| 5. Comfort | 12. Gentleness | 19. Courageous |
| 6. Deeply Rooted | 13. Kindness | 20. Peace |
| 7. Self Sacrifice | 14. Goodness | |