

# *Seek and Find* *-Achoba Afu*

A Book on Living as God's Child-  
Akwukwo maka ibi ndu ka nwa Chukwu

*Spirituality for all*

**CHILOTA ELOCHUKWU, MAAMA,**  
DDL

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DDL

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## DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to all God's children

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## FOREWORD

SEEK AND FIND - Achoba Atu  
BY CHILOJA ELOCHUKWU

The book "Seek And Find - Achoba Atu" by Mother Chiloja Elochukwu, 'Mama', DDL, is a collection of simple teachings/discussions on various practical Christian everyday living for people of different ages, vocations, professions and works of life. We usually say that experience is the best teacher but often opportunity to make experience is not always there. Knowledge consists in learning from the experiences of others. There are also different methodologies of imparting knowledge and different ways of receiving knowledge. What may be a good methodology for some people may not be suitable for others. What is most important is that knowledge is acquired.

This collection employed the method of allowing different professionals and experienced persons to tell the story of how best to live out some Christian virtues. Others tell the story of how best to be ordinary citizens according to the will of God. What we find here are very short passages written in the simplest correct grammar and this makes for easy reading and comprehension.

As would be expected, the major target groups are students and religious persons because the author is a Religious and a committed teacher/lecturer. She teaches often in the third person so that the reader will universalize the lessons contained therein. The usual Biblical stories like Joseph's Leadership in Egypt begins this way "A teacher of Religion," and the story is told in easy language to understand. This is the dominant methodology throughout the book.

I recommend this book to all committed teachers of moral instruction, to all school counselors, to every Consecrated person (Religious), to all parents etc. Actually, anybody who is interested in experiential knowledge should get this book. I commend the Author, Mother Chiloja Elochukwu, 'Mama', DDL, for painstakingly writing such a book for the good of all. She is a rare gift to this generation.

Most Rev. Callistus C. Onoga  
Catholic Bishop of Enugu

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## INTRODUCTION

“Father, ...this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent,” (Jn. 17: 3).

This book Seek and Find- Achoba Afu is out to act like the Prophets of Israel, whose one of their great functions was to call the Israelites back to the original reason for their existence as a nation.

In the same way, this book recalls God's art of creation and His intent on creating. The book of Genesis begins with the creation of the world by God. God created heaven and earth; and every other thing that followed. It is good to note the order in which God created the world. Light is the primary thing in the world, for human person cannot do anything if everything were to be in darkness. After the Light, every other thing God created fell in its proper place. And there is a great order in all that God created. The two seasons, Rainy season for planting, and Dry season for harvesting. The Sun to shine by day and Moon by night. There is order in the arrangement of the work of creation. And a great statement which followed each day of creation is: “**God saw that it was good**” This means that everything God created is beautiful. God created the world all by Himself, out of

A Book on Living as God's Child- Akwukwo maka ibi ndu ka nwa Chukwu  
nothing, **ex nihilo**.

Genesis Chapters one and two show that the universe and all it contains are created by God. God's love for humanity moves Him to create human beings, and He expects a response of total love and appreciation from what He made. There are, however, some people living in the world who are making a lot of effort to respond to God's love shown to human person. But it is sad that most people just move about in the world; without any regard to the only God who has the explanation for their whole being.

This attitude of God's creatures brings me to my own three reasons why **Corona-Virus** is inflicting the whole world today: The three reasons are: 1) The people in the world engaged in research and development without involving God, the Creator. 2) The people of the earth are ashamed of God; they do not want to associate themselves with anything concerning God. 3) The people created by God want to eliminate God in the World.

Basing on those points mentioned above, this book reminds the most intelligent dwellers of the earth, the human person, that it is compulsory for us to recognise that we are all created by God; and that we must all return to our Creator, God. This

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book reminds everybody, that God has His intentions for the beautiful works of art He showed in creating human beings.

The book calls the attention of all persons created by God to the reason why they are created, because it becomes clearer daily that most of God's children do not remember any more that there is a Supreme Being, God, who is the Cause of their being and existence. The book Seek and Find-Achoba Afu asserts that God expects a whole-hearted response to Him by human person He created. The book affirms that God is love; therefore, He created human person, and wants the human person to love Him in return. But no one has ever seen God except the One He sent (Jn. 3:13-14). This means that the knowledge of God, the love of Him, and the service of Him, are to be accomplished among His children here on earth, among Christians and non-Christians because "**whatever you do to the least of mine, you did to me**" (Mt 25: 31-46). This book discovers and affirms that God's demands from His creatures are fulfilled in the context of everyday quality life among all God's people.

### **Explanation of Terms**

Before I move into discussing each theme in the content, I will first of all explain the two terms employed in the topic: **Spirituality and Seek and Find-Achoba Afu.**

#### **1. Spirituality: brief history of the use of the term**

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Many spiritual writers like Walter Principe, Charles Andre Bernard, Sandra Schneiders, Mark McIntosh, and many others have published works describing the history of developing a definition of what Spirituality means. All these scholars seek to clarify what it meant when one uses the word Spirituality.

The term Spirituality comes from the Latin word "**Spiritualitas**" which means the nature of being spiritual. Principe (2000), said that some years ago, the Italian historian, Gustavo Vinay, expressed uneasiness felt by his fellow historians and to some extent by himself as well over the term "Spirituality." Gustavo and his fellow historians then asked: "**Che cosa e dunque questa spiritualita?**" Meaning: "**What then is this spirituality?**" Gustavo's contribution was to create awareness; to pin-point some problems for historians using the term in their research, and invite others to discuss the problem.

In Latin translations of Pauline letters, one finds **spiritus** and **spiritualis** as translations of **pneuma** and **pneumatikos** respectively. In Pauline theology **pneuma** or **spiritus** are set over against **sarx** or **caro**; Meaning "flesh." For St Paul, the "spirit" within the human person is all that is ordered, led or influenced by **Pneuma Theou** or **Spiritus Dei**; Meaning:

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**The Spirit of God**, whereas **sarx** or **Caro** or **“Flesh”** is everything in a person that is opposed to this influence of the **Spirit of God**. In Pauline intent, the opposition is not between the incorporeal or non-material, but between two ways of life. The “spiritual” person (**pneumatikos**, **spiritualis**) is one whose life is guided by the Spirit of God; the “carnal” person (**sarkikos**, **carnalis**) is one whose life is opposed to the working and guidance of the Spirit of God.

Also Aumann (1980) in his work sees Spirituality as an attitude or spirit from which one's actions flow. This concept of Spirituality is not restricted to any particular religion: it applies to any person who has a belief in the divine or transcendence. Christian Spirituality can then, be defined as the manner of living a totally religious existence, under the influence of the Spirit of God, in which the life of the Spirit of Christ in a person shows itself in a concrete daily life.

## **2. Seek And Find-Achoba Afu:**

Seek and Find-Achoba Afu, means that one must find in this book all he or she needs to live an organised life, to live as God's child. Seek and Find-Achoba Afu contains almost all different essential and significant themes and topics that a human person needs to live a quality daily life. The title of this book evokes that the book contains many different routes and means that can assist a person in his or her diligent search

A Book on Living as God's Child- Akwukwo maka ibi ndu ka nwa Chukwu for living a meaningful life.

Seek and Find-Achoba Afu: Akwukwo maka ibi ndu ka nwa Chukwu-Seek and Find: A book that inspires a person to live as God's child. The author seeks to present in this Seek and Find-Achoba Afu, the spirituality of daily strivings of human community as a whole. This means that Seek and Find-Achoba Afu is a book for all persons, individuals, communities and peoples. This book is also a book for students at all levels, primary, secondary, and university. Seek and Find-Achoba Afu, exposes students at all levels, to the variety of ideas, stories and information that will help to shape their ways of life in the areas of spiritual and moral growth. The author also planned this book to build morally sound and upright citizens of Nigeria and beyond.

To assist a human person in his or her search to achieve God's demands, I selected from so many available routes, some significant topics, ideas, information, themes, stories, and write-ups that will be helpful to someone searching for a quality daily human and spiritual living among God's people. In other words, I chose the means that will help you to understand who you are, help you to recognise your Maker, God, help you to appreciate and love those living with you and around you, help to direct you to know how to treat human person with dignity and respect, help you to help yourself and others, expose you to the knowledge of those

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things that will lead you to greater service to the society, Church, and above all, help you to live always as God's child- Na ebi ka nwa Chukwu. We will be discussing these themes as we move on.

## **LIVING AS GOD'S CHILD-IBI NDU KA NWA CHUKWU**

In discussing the contents of this book, I will not follow a regular pattern in the discussion. This means that the pattern of the presentation of each theme will vary accordingly.

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## **THEME 1: Why did God create human beings?**



The simple and fundamental questions the instructors and examiners often ask at catechism classes are: who created human beings? Answer: God created human beings. Why did God create human beings? God created human beings to know Him, to love Him, to serve Him in this world, and to be with Him eternally. This means that God has expectations from those He created. In other words, God created every human person and expects each person to

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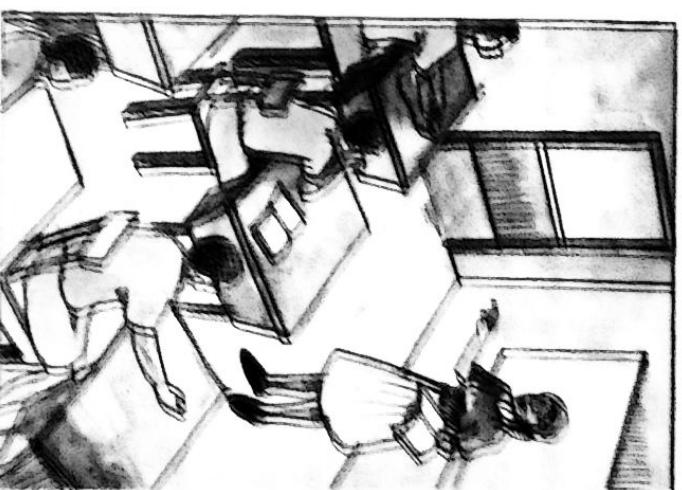
give an account.

The love of Jesus Christ, in its fullness, its length, its breadth, its height, and depth, demonstrates to God's people how they are called to respond to the gift of God's love which has been poured into their hearts (Eph. 3: 18). The external example of Jesus Christ, the Word Incarnate, can be seen and imitated. The ultimate sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross is the sacrament which, in turn, provides the way for that example to be realised in the lives of God's faithful people. In other words, the sacrifice of Jesus' life is the sacrament of love –sacramentum caritatis- which offers salvation for the world (Jn.3:16). That love is what the people of God are called to imitate in their lives and is ultimately what will count on the Day of Judgment, the day when all people will be called to render an account to God (Heb. 4: 13).

As a response to the desire for the happy life, the people of God are called to live in unity and love so as to achieve the salvation which Christ's sacrifice gained. Of utmost importance is, that the members of Christ's body on earth are called to perform these good works not for their own salvation, but rather for the salvation of the other (1 Cor. 10: 33). The first Jerusalem community of believers sought to live this in the way they strove to live one in mind and heart by sharing all things in common (Acts 4: 32). They

A Book on Living as God's Child- *Akwukwu maka ibu ndu ka nwa Chukwu* directed themselves this way as their response to the double commandment to love God and neighbour (Mt. 22:37, 39; Mk. 12: 30-33).

## THEME 2: A CRS Teacher explains the influence of Christian Religion in Nigeria today



Students of Christian Religious Studies (CRS) asked their teacher to clarify for them the influence of Christian

Religion in Nigeria society today. The teacher began the explanation by recalling that Christian Religion used to have influence when it was valued by Nigerian nation. At the time when it was important, Christian Religion was widely regarded as one of the most important subjects in Nigeria. It was evidenced that the study of Christian Religion plays a significant role in the moral development of individuals, children, and students in most of Nigeria's society. In those days, Christian Religion was considered the most influential religion in Nigeria. At that time, Christian Religion was studied in Nigeria's secondary schools together with Islamic and Traditional religions as these are the three major religions in Nigeria.

**Spiritual Dwarfism:** A Result of over emphasis on science and technological subjects

Christian Religion has always been part and parcel of most Nigerians' pattern of living. Religion has at all times dealt with the questions that most people all over the world consider to be most important aspect of their lives. People in Nigeria conceive God as the Author of life which includes all that is found in the world. God is recognised as the Author, the Giver, and the Protector of the living. Of all these attributes of God, that of Creator is most prominent. The result of over emphasis on sciences and technological subjects begins to display its scores: Following the shift in

the study of Christian Religion, motivation towards its study started dwindling, and interest in the subjects dropped drastically. Arinze (1982) noted that with review in Curriculum the study of Christian Religion was no longer taken seriously as was in the time of the missionaries. In support of the above assertion, Ndarwa (2007) and Elochukwu (2019) said that students nowadays are groomed to be intellectual giants in science and technology with little or no interest in God, no interest in moral and spiritual growth, no interest in living in good relationship with peoples and neighbours, and we call this "Spiritual Dwarfism". This means that every interest is focused only on sciences and technological subjects. Sad News!

The most worrying part of the problem of over emphasis on science and technology is that Nigeria's society has begun a gradual process of De-Christianising Nigeria. I mean that most people of Nigeria have entered a gradual process of removing the idea of God and Christian Religion in Nigeria's society. For example, in the year 2015, I was at a particular part of Nigeria where ten parents refused to pay their children's term school fees and the fees for registration of WAEC. These parents refused the payments of the fees because they wanted their children to register only science subjects. But the ten students preferred to

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include Christian Religious Studies (CRS) among the science subjects they were to register. This insistence of the ten parents is a very bold way of saying no to the Christian Religion in Nigeria.

All I am saying is that any country, any society, any state, or any organisation that plays down on the supremacy of God by playing down on the Christian religion, will pay the price with immorality of every kind and with all sorts of social ills. If we open our eyes wide, we will see that some countries of the world are already paying the price.

### THEME 3: Teacher explains Student's Correct Attitude to Studies



A Junior Secondary School student at a Revision class, asks the teacher to explain further to them (students) all she

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meant by Correct Attitude to studies. Teacher begins by explaining the term Attitude. Teacher teaches that Attitude is a manner of thinking or behaving that reflects someone's state of mind or disposition. It is a person's way of thinking and feeling about someone. It is somebody's behaviour which encompasses his or her beliefs, values and dispositions in life. Attitude is important because it determines how people see someone and how far a person will eventually go in life.

#### A student's Correct Attitude to Studies

Teacher explains that student's Correct Attitude to studies means student's actions, mood, and feelings towards his or her studies. It is clear that students have dreams about the choice of a career. A student may have the dream of becoming a Scripture scholar, a philosopher, a theologian, a nurse, a banker, a doctor, a scientist, a lecturer, a lawyer, a pharmacist, a teacher, an accountant, a secretary, a physicist, a mathematician, a cook, a certify cleaner, etc., in future. But it is the student's attitude that determines what he or she can or cannot achieve.

Qualities that accompany Student's Correct attitude to Studies

There are some qualities that accompany student's correct attitude to studies, and they include:

**Prayer:** Teacher teaches that a student with correct

attitude to studies must be a prayerful student. He or she has to relate well with God in prayer, thanking God and asking Him to bless him and give him success in his studies and in his good future plans.

**Punctuality:** This means the quality of doing something at the correct or at appointed time. A punctual student, who has the correct attitude to studies, goes to classes or to lectures at the scheduled time. He or she should show that punctuality is the soul of business by bringing to classes or to lectures all materials he or she needs for learning.

**Regularity:** This means the quality of ensuring that something happens as the rules require. A regular student goes to school often. He or she must do all his assignments as instructed, and submit them accordingly. Regularity must characterise any student with correct attitude to studies.

**Consistency:** This means the quality of being the same in one's thoughts and actions. A consistent student follows laid down plans without changing them unnecessarily. A student with correct attitude to studies will follow his or her private study timetable the way he or she has planned it.

**Diligence:** This means the quality of putting enough effort and care into one's studies. A diligent student achieves excellence in his or her studies. Diligence portrays a student's correct attitude to studies.

**Respect:** Teacher teaches that a student's correct attitude to studies requires a lot of respect on the part of the student. He or she must respect his teachers or lecturers at all levels. He or she takes instructions from them. Teacher affirms that student who has the correct attitude to studies must respect his or her classmates and relates well with them. Teacher ends her explanations by motivating the student who asked the question by a loud clap by all students in the class.

#### **THEME 4: Correct use of Power within Leadership**

At a conference on leadership, one of the resource persons gave a short reflection on the correct use of Power within leadership. The speaker says that where ever there is, a large number of people or group of people, it will become necessary that there will be somebody or a few people to direct the affairs of the group according to the group's laid down rules. If this is not done, then there will be chaos.

Leadership according to him is not about the use of power on those one leads. It is not about the show of power on those the leader leads. Leadership does not always succeed with the use of power. Power is good when it is used for service. Power in leadership means gathering together those one leads, showing them love and mercy. It is important to assert that a leader's show of love,

consideration, kindness, and compassion on those he or she leads does not depict weakness; instead, it is an outstanding strength on the part of the leader because it is only a convinced leader that will stand his or her ground and give a positive consideration on a situation without being afraid of criticism or being called a weak leader. We join the speaker to conclude that a leader that listens and considers a situation knows where he or she is going.

#### **THEME 5: Cordial Relationships at Work Place.**

At a Workshop on cordial Relationship, Annira one of the participant shared her rough experience at her work place which has been bothering her for months. Annira shared that her Boss at her work place has a nasty attitude towards her. According to Annira, there has not been a day she greets her boss and he will look up to respond to her, at least to see who is greeting. Worst still, he formed the habit of walking away from her while she delivers a message to him or ask him a question concerning their work. This is an every working day occurrence because their office requires that Annira delivers message daily to him and asks him some explanation about their work in the office.

As Annira does her work, her Boss will pick on her most of the time. He tends to belittle Annira contribution to the

office and the office environment. He never even believes that Annira can contribute anything meaningful to the office. If anything goes wrong in the office, he will shift the blame on Annira.

Annira's Boss does this every working day; and it is becoming terribly hard for Annira. She even tried to dialogue with herself, looking for the cause of her Boss' behaviour; could it be that she is not polite enough to her Boss, but she feels she is. These worry Annira, and she has had sleepless nights because of these; and she feels that her patience is over. She is dying to let her Boss know about her feelings. She is just ready to confront him. But before this, she asks the workshop conveners and participants if there is anything else they would suggest to her.

One of the participants called Paski affirmed Annira for the steps she has already taken; but that she might try dialoging with him and see what happens. However, Paski suggested that Annira has to finish twenty-five litres of water before engaging in the dialogue with her Boss.

Annira acknowledged that it is a difficult exercise to finish twenty-five litres of water in a day; and that it will take days to do that, moreover, she is not a greedy drinker. Annira admitted that the exercise is like asking to do the impossible. She said that she needs days to finish such a

task.

One of the participants asked Paskki his reasons for making such a suggestion. Paskki said that he made the suggestion because he noticed from Annira's tone of voice that she was very angry. So, it was obvious that it was going to take a number of days to finish twenty-five litres of water. By the time she finishes the litres, she must have calmed down, and had time to reflect. Then, like an adult, she could invite her Boss for a dialogue in which she would be able to disclose to him her feelings about his behaviours to her.

Paskki feels that the approach he suggested would dispose the Boss to listen to Annira. Many participants agreed with Paskki when he explained his intentions for proposing such exercise.

It does not pay when a person is rude to people. It is always better to be constructive in one's use of emotions and feelings. If Annira had talked to the Boss with the amount of anger, Paskki observed in her, she might have regretted having taken the step at all.

When a person feels angered or hurt, it is always better to calm down, reflect well, before one invites or approaches a person who hurts him or her for dialogue. In some cases, it is even better not to seek any dialogue. From experience, it is better sometimes not to express the feelings. In some

cases, the quest for dialogue and expressions of feelings of anger and hurt can cause more harm than the good desired. It is better sometimes to keep calm. It is always better to keep quiet and try to contain the hurt or whatever feelings. Sometimes you actually feel better when you do not say anything.

If you choose dialogue approach, however, it is better to come from an adult. This means that you dialogue with the person, instead of talking to him or her like a parent, or a grown-up scolding a child. Any dialogue with this approach may not bear any lasting fruit, if it does bear at all. To approach anybody for a dialogue when you are in a rage is a fruitless effort. It is better to reflect, give yourself enough time, before you enter into dialogue with any person.

#### **THEME 6: Identity, its misconstruction and what it is**

The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English Eighth Edition defines identity as who or what somebody or something is.

Identity has its own problem of misconstruction. For many people the word identity triggers different understandings and feelings. People struggle to know their identity, but not many arrive at it. This is because identity is a world away

from what people think it is.

There is a story told of Okuba, a beautiful young woman of thirty years old. Okuba used to sit at the Jana Field almost all day staring at people as they drove and walked past. She would talk to no one, and her face would be beaming with worries.

Because Okuba sat almost all day at this square, neighbours felt that it had past being just a leisurely holiday, and began to question why a young woman like Okuba would spend long hours in Jana Field.

One day two women in the neighbourhood, Kakura and Obota, plucked up courage and approached Okuba:

Kabura Obota: "Hello, young woman! We've seen you for almost two weeks now in this Jana Field, at this particular corner, are you all right?"

Okuba: "Oh! Thanks for your observation and interest. Oh, yes, you see, I have a worry. I feel I've lost my identity in life and in society. I lost my high-paid job, and since I lost it, I haven't got a meaningful job. I'm fed up with life, and worse still, my husband is due for promotion, but there is no sign of that, and life is passing me by. It's hard on me. It's like I'm ashamed of myself as a person, worthless."

Okuba was in tears as she told her story. For Okuba, identity means getting a well-paid job in society. Her identity is just having a meaningful job, and having

promotion and other things she feels make her who she is. Because these things are no longer available, she feels that she has failed in life.

Some people feel like Okuba. For such people identity is found in just physical advantages, a good job, good education, professions, good everything. When these things are no longer there, they collapse. They feel that their identity is no more, that they are worthless.

Identity means growth towards becoming what one is called to be. But for such a growth to take place in anyone the person needs what psychologists and counsellors call the process of individuation Corey (1996). Process of individuation is an inner movement towards the development of the mind. It is a highly complex and articulated inner journey with a definite goal, and that definite goal is God. Human person discovers his or her person only by re-uniting himself or herself with God, because it is impossible to deny the inner loneliness' that only God can take away. St. Augustine of Hippo experienced this inner loneliness when he echoed that a human soul is restless until it finds its rest in God: "thou hast made us for thyself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it finds its rest in thee" (Augustine, Confessions, 1, 1-2-2.5, 5, CSEL33, 1-5).

The quest for identity is to enter into the journey of the

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meaning of one's life. To talk about identity is to talk about maturing. Identity is a process of "becoming." A person lives in becoming until he or she becomes what God has destined for him or her.

St. Paul in his letter to the Philippians, proudly talked about his identity. Paul talked about his disposition towards externals, about physical qualifications, how he regarded them as nothing- "all as filth"-since his attachment to them, might rob him of his personal identity, which was his decision for Christ: "For him I have accepted the loss of all other things, and look on them all as filth if only I can gain Christ...that I may come to know him and the power of his resurrection" (Philippians 3: 3-12).

#### **THEME 7: Charism and Meaning**

The word Charism, from the Greek Word Charisma is a verbal noun from the verb Charidzomia which means to "bestow a gift of favour". In its technical meaning Charism is a gift or talent granted by God to a person not primarily for his or her own sake but for the benefit of others. St. Paul defines it in the New Testament, as a manifestation of the spirit for the benefit of others. Charism also indicates the total gift of salvation received by all believers (Rm 5: 15-16; 6:23).

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Charism are various (Rm. 12:5-11). We have teaching Charism like those of the apostles or itinerant missionaries, evangelists, preachers of the gospel, Prophets who spoke in God's name under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and teachers who instructed. Services Charism, which include gift of governing, discerning and guiding, ministering among people of God, giving Mercy, Service of help and extra-ordinary Charism like healing etc.

Theology defined Charism as a gratuitous gift from God, given to the individual for the good of others, for the benefit of the Church (LG 19 n. 43). Charism involves rediscovering of a root inspiration of founders of religious Communities (congregations). It involves the appreciation of the distinctiveness in every good person's life. It is a "free" gift, a spiritual capacity resulting from God's grace.

#### **THEME 8: Patrimony and Religious Communities e.g DDL Community**

The word Patrimony is very much connected to the word inheritance. The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English defines patrimony as property that is given to somebody when their father dies. With regards to religious Congregations, patrimony means more than physical property. We cite DDL Congregation as example

of patrimony.

Patrimony and Daughters of Divine Love Congregation: Earlier, we have seen that the word Patrimony is connected to the word inheritance. I recall that in remote preparation for the DDL fourth General Chapter in 1992, a question was posed to the members at one of the Annual Get-togethers: "why do we hold a General Chapter?"

An answer to this question came naturally, that "we hold General Chapter in order to elect Mother General and Councillors, and probably to attend to other secondary agenda." From this and other answers that were given, it became clear that the issue of Patrimony did not appear to most of the members as an important matter for Chapter discussion. This prompted those mandated to lead the Congregation at that time, to work toward the creation of the meaning and importance of patrimony for a religious Congregation. Those in administration did this through various means, such as seminars, write-ups, explanation of the term in DDL Communities, its choice as a theme for two consecutive annual get-togethers. So I am certain that by now, every DDL sister is aware and convinced of the Patrimony of the Daughters of Divine Love Congregation. By writing on the term Patrimony, I am only trying to lay emphasis; to remind ourselves and to make Bishop Okoye's words and life alive and vivid in our minds and

hearts. Bishop himself insisting on the inspiration of the Congregation said: "IFE INSPIRELU this Congregation BU KA E WEE NYE adequate response to the Divine Love... What inspired this Congregation is the urge to return adequate response to the Divine Love, for men and women are deriding God in his love. This response we give by loving one another as Christ has loved us. Therefore, you should examine yourself: is your love like that, kind, generous, compassionate, condescending, forgiving, etc? This is the type of love you are to have,..."

Bishop Okoye was very articulate in his words. The content of his words in the above quotations is the only thing he was begging the Daughters to do. To join him in returning love, in response to God's great to humanity, to join him in living the love and mercy of God.

Patrimony, from Bishop Okoye, the founder of DDL Congregation has nothing to do with any inheritance of physical properties. Patrimony of a religious Congregation means inheriting from the founder the spirit that inspired him towards founding the Congregation (*Perfectae Caritatis* (1965 n. 2).

Patrimony is not a list of laws and practices, but a life. Bishop Okoye said to the members: "The image you are to display to the world is one of the motherly solitude like Mary for all God's Children". (Founder's Tlaks, (1973)

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vol 1, p 20-21). By display, Bishop Okoye did not mean showing off, but a disposition of a Divine Love sister that will make anyone she meets at home, at work or at any place to feel that he or she has met Divine Love. It is amazing to discover that even if we do not live our Patrimony, that people expect us to live it. This empowered Eduardo. Cardinal Martinez Somalo to write in his Silver Jubilee Good Will message to the DDL Congregation "Dear Sister Chilola the growth and spread of your Congregation since its foundation by the Late. Bishop MaryPaul Okoye. CSSP is surely a sign of fidelity of God's love. You in turn mindful of your motto: "Caritas Christi Urgent Nos" seek to make Divine Love known wherever you go and in whatever apostolate you serve."

When I talk about the patrimony of the DDL Congregation, it does not mean the four-wall of the DDL Generalate, four-wall of DRACC, etc, but life the "members have to live. When each member is living the Patrimony then it will be collectively identified, marked, and named as the life of the Congregation.

**THEME 9: The Founder, Bishop Godfrey MaryPaul Okoye expressed his Charism in Spirituality.** Here I would like to pin-point briefly how Bishop MaryPaul

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Okoye expressed his Charism in his spirituality. I have already exposed simply the meaning of Charism and Spirituality. But our interest here is in calling to mind how Bishop Godfrey Okoye lived his Charism in his spirituality.

How does anyone recognise Charism in a person? From what we have already seen, it is obvious that the purpose of Charism is for the good of others and for the building of the Church. So, whoever receives it needs to manifest it, using it for its purpose otherwise it ceases to be meaningful and useful. In other words, when we talk about the Charism of a person we must either seem and interacted with the person, lived with him or her, or you must have heard people talk about the Charism of that person or read it in a book, all these means mentioned are valid means of knowing a person and what is peculiar to that person, but they can never be as effective as being an insider. Closeness to the person gives better opportunity of personal experiences.

The charism of Bishop Godfrey MaryPaul Okoye was the Charism of Divine Love. He received the gift of love from God. He was inspired by Divine love, that is, that love that so moved God that He sent His Son Jesus Christ into the world to make this great love known to His people in the

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world, to show us the way to lead us in the path of love. This action of God expressed itself in love, mercy, forgiveness, salvation, generosity, sympathy, kindness, goodness, etc.

His efforts to live Divine Love and make it known

This great love of God captivated Bishop Okoye and he committed himself to it by resolving that he would help to make this love of God known to all God's people in the world, to anyone who comes in contact with him. Godfrey MaryPaul Okoye, repeated during his life time that God's love was not known, that God's children knew little about God's love for humanity. So Bishop Okoye tried with his whole being to respond and radiate this love of God, by living the great love and mercy of God.

MaryPaul Okoye was not satisfied doing it all alone in his person, he felt he needed another inner circle people to help him disseminate his intention of making God's love known and his desire was fulfilled with the foundation of DDL Congregation. Bishop Okoye Summarised his Precious Charism in the Article 2 of DDL Constitution where he wrote: "The Charism of our Congregation is a generous loving response to Divine love incarnate" The compelling motive force of DDL Congregation and of the sisters who come to it must be on ardent response to God's call to love Himself and our fellow men and women. The motto of the

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DDL Congregation, therefore, is "caritas Christ urget Nos" (The love of Christ urges us on) it is clear that the Charism of every Congregation is normally born of it's founder.

Expression of his Charism in his Spirituality

Bishop Okoye was a man of great wisdom who found time amidst the usual heavy schedule of a Bishop, to write many pastoral letters that continued till date to be resource materials for schools and for pastors of souls (Bishop A.K. Obiefuna, DDL Silver Jubilee, (1994) 13). Bishop Okoye was adviser to both religious and civil authorities. Bishop Godfrey MaryPaul Okoye had a fascinating character that drew people to him. He had a character that was homely.

Bishop Okoye was a generous man, who allowed himself to be inspired and guided by the generosity of God. He had a capacity for tenderness, a broad-minded father, who had a great concern for others; he brought compassion and mercy in his life. He lived these virtues. The gift of friendship and qualities of divine love he had drew people to him. This prompted His Eminence, Francis Cardinal Arinze to write: "Man of the people. Bishop Okoye had a fascinating character. He knew how to make friends and influence people. Many people trusted him. He went out of his way to help people with advice and money. And people loaded him with money. Bishop Okoye was also generous with his time. His listened to people. He kept long office

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hours. He slept little. If he was not able to obtain anything from government or people, then it is presumed that no other Bishops or Priests would be able to obtain it.

Bishop Okoye was Magnanimous, he was never vindictive or mean. All his life, Bishop Okoye had a disposition and conviction that everything belongs to God. He even told us, the DDL sisters not to be niggardly, that we are to cook food and give people to eat. That food is not our personal thing, but God's (na esi nu nni, n' enye ndi mmadu). Bishop Okoye told us to be generous and kind-hearted to people. Religious or priestly vocation is God's things, because He is the one who calls. So one is not the person to decide who should be in or who should be out. If you have anything to do at all to help in the discernment of religious or priestly vocation, Bishop warned, "it must be done with fear and trembling".

Recognizing Bishop Okoye's generosity, kindness and attitude to vocation, cardinal Arinze said: "When Bishop Okoye became rector of all Hallow's Seminary Onitsha, he built the Chapel and the Father's house. More importantly, he raised the number of seminarians to an all-time high. I heard later that some Irish Spiritans Priests reported to Archbishop Charles Heeey C.S.S.P: "Father Godfrey takes anybody in shots." Questioned by the Archbishop, he is said to have replied: "your Grace, I thought you said

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we need priests. These boys are good priestly vocations. How can I have the heart to refuse them?" and the good Archbishop encouraged him to go ahead!"

Bishop MaryPaul Okoye was bold in his faith, and his boldness in speech and expression portrayed a man who was imbued with the freedom and conviction that emanated from his contact with the living God. From the disposition and active role of Bishop Okoye, it is clear that the Church is not to play the role of a dumb-shepherd. Godfrey MaryPaul Okoye displayed with his life and action that the function of the Church is to teach, care, and protect her sheep.

Bishop Okoye was a Thomas Merton of his time. Like the Trappist monk Thomas Merton, Bishop Okoye had a spirituality that embraced all. He was not just a quiet father, performing his function quickly, but he was a national figure whose voice was heard clearly among the people of his country. Although very active in his function as a Diocesan Bishop, yet he took active part in discussing the social issues of his time.

**THEME 10: The use of Psychology in accessing human behaviour.**

Sometimes beginnings are not remembered because they

did not seem important at the time. However, certain events in our lives become important because we can see later that it was at that time that something started. Then, we might begin to say things like: it was when I visited this place and met this person that something significant started to happen and develop in my life and so on, whenever that time or event comes to mind, we attach a significance that was not there before.

### **Sabbatical Leave:**

I had some months of Sabbatical. I spent nine months of that Sabbatical leave - having more time for spiritual reflection, taking a little longer sleep sometimes, visiting some of our sisters in the country of their mission apostolate. I took the advantage of the leave also to visit places interest of my choice.

Moreover, I had the opportunity to look back and review the journey already made. I wrote my experience down in a small book entitled: *Freedom in Gods' arrival Elochukwu (2006)*. All these gave me joy. Taking more courses and studies were part of my Sabbatical programme. For some years I have heard about a growth facilitation course that is a formation course going on in Kent, England, at the institute of St. Anselm. Having an opportunity of a Sabbatical, on my request, I was allowed by my Superior

General at the time, Mother Ifechukwu Udora to go to Kent for the formation course. Personally, I have my reservations about psychology, when the use of it is exaggerated. That is, when it fails to be only a tool for work, that is when it claims to determine and know all the answers to human behaviour. But, I like to work with psychology when it is seen and used as a tool to improve human daily personal life and interactions. The Institute of St. Anselm has helped me to see psychology in its right perspective. It is simply a tool. It does not have all the answers to all human problems and behaviours.

My experience of intensive course in St. Anselm, coupled with my many years of personal experience and interest in researching human growth, have exposed me and enriched me with greater awareness and insights about psychology and spirituality. I thank God and the authority of DDL Congregation for the opportunity.

### **THEME 11: Every Day Transactions.**

Everyday Transactions means behaviour expressed in daily communication, conversation, and interaction between persons, friends, couples, people, community, family and groups, and so on.

### **THEME 12: Community**

By community, I mean a system where more than two persons live, interact, share, work and inter-relate with one another: aiming at common interest. A Community has a leader or a facilitator whose function is to stimulate growth and change in the members of the community, and to motivate the members to feel they belong.

### **THEME 13: Religious Community.**

A Religious Community is a group whose common call is to live and share the Gospel and Gospel values. Membership consists of individuals who believe they have been called to live with others with a similar call. Community living is a life-style to support, nourish, and to challenge the members to live the Gospel more fully. Community, therefore, is both witnessing and apostolate. The primary bond of every religion community is friendship and mutual love of the members. The friendship and love the members of a religious community share, speak much more than words and actions.

In a recent vocation discernment workshop, a young female religious of thirty called Jennia, made an observation about community living: Jennia said that she loves Religious life, but community life scares her.

Jennia's observation could be regarded as an exaggerated observation. A Religious Community consists of persons who come from different parts of the countries of the World, and from most diverse cultures to answer a call. It is obvious that every person comes seeking to give a response to a call, and each one of them comes with their maturity, with their strength and weakness and of course, with the intention of following Christ more freely and imitate Him more closely (Vatican II, *Perfectae Caritatis*, (1965) n.1). We all know that words are powerful, and that soft and kind words have the capacity of creating thousand years of happiness. I feel and suggest that the function of a religious leader is to lead the members to the meaningful desired daily choices of life.

The function of a Religious Community leader is to admonish, and, to exhort. The Church is very conscious of this when she says: that superiors are to devote themselves to their office with diligence that together with members entrusted to them, they are to strive to build in Christ a fraternal community, in which God is sought and loved above all. They are therefore frequently to nourish their members with the focus of God's word and lead them to the celebration of the liturgy. (Canon law 619 (1983) 619). In the Jewish history, Joshua, in his old age called a meeting of all the tribes of Israel in Shechem. Then he

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called out the elders, Judges, and officials; they gathered to listen to their distinguished leader and the bravest invasion commander in their history. When Joshua began to speak, he did not recall his military conquest of Canaanites which he led, nor did he stir the peoples to appreciate all he did for them, but he led the people to chose and recommit themselves to God of Israel.

Joshua was not itching to be remembered by the people of Israel for his great victory. He did not plan to be remembered as the great man who led the people of Israel to the Promised Land. Joshua was rather pre-occupied more with the battle of fidelity to the God of Israel than singing his glories and victories on all he had done for Israel. Joshua won the last and important battle when he led the people of Israel to the victory of fidelity to the living God (Joshua 24: 1-24). In the same manner, the primary function of a Religious leader is above all to lead the members to the original language of Jesus in the Gospel. And to lead them to the original or the primitive inspiration of their founder or foundress in founding the Congregation (cf. Vatican II, *Perfectae Caritatis*, (1965) n.2)

**THEME 14: Result of wants of progress and development without God**

You know that Samuel was the Last of the Judges of Israel.

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When Samuel become old, he appointed his sons as judges in Israel. His eldest son called Joel and his second son called Abijah. They were judges in Beersheba. But they prevented justice. They did not follow the example of their father, Samuel; they were seduced by money, they took bribes, you know bribe blinds the mind and heart of the bribe taker and he or she will be unable to pass a correct judgement, because bribe will blind him or her.

Moreover, Samuel alone led the Israelites into the battle, and he also judges their disputes. Samuel was in effect the leader of Israel. But Samuel was not however Israel's King because Israel was a kingdom with God as their King (Theocracy).

This means that time, Israel had no real capital, no standing army, and no court. The government in these days was nothing more than a loose federation of tribes. No strong bond. Eventually, Israelites grew tired of that type of arrangement. Staying without a standing army, and concentration of power was around one individual such as king. They could not defend themselves against their enemies.

For all these reasons, the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramoth and said to him: "Behold, you are old and your sons do not walk your ways, now appoint for us a king to govern us like all the nations (1 Sam

8:4-5). At first Samuel opposed the request for it seemed to him that this is an insult against God, their king. Samuel complained to God (Yahweh). God ordered Samuel to give the people what they desired: "Obey the voice of the people, in all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but they rejected me from being King over them" (1 Sam 8:7).

Samuel however, enumerated for the people of Israel what the king would demand from them, just as the kings of Ancient Near East do (1 Sam 8: 10-22). In spite of all that Samuel listed out, the people insisted on Samuel appointing a king to rule them: "No! But we will have a king over us, that we also may be like other nations, and that our king may govern us and go out before us and fight our battles (1 Sam 8: 20). Eventually a king was given to the Israelites.

Israel forgot how many battles they had won even over those nations that had kings over them. Israel, therefore, suffered terribly from some of their kings, as a result of wanting to be like other nations (cf. 1Kg 12:4) A big lesson!

# **THEME 15: A teacher of Religious explains reason for the flood (Gen 6:5-8:1-22)**

In the contrast to God's observation of all that He created as "good" in the first chapter of Genesis, God sees only wickedness in the world and He feels sorry that He had created Human Being. The Bible presents God in the anthropomorphic manner, that is, that God had feelings of frustration over his own actions! Adam and Eve have sinned; things became rapidly worse. Humankind degenerated until people became unbearable. God, who had created human beings to be good, was bitterly disappointed at the turn of event. God then decided that the only way to deal with the problem was to annihilate all living beings from the face of the earth. The only exception that he allowed was the righteous human person, Noah.

God chose Noah, the good man and told him to build an Ark, and furnish it suitably to escape from the flood. Detailed was given to Noah regarding the size and shape of the Ark that Noah has to build; Noah was also asked to bring into the Ark a pair of all living things. Yahweh asked him to store enough food in the Ark for the family members and for all other creatures inside as well. Noah and his family members entered the Ark. Representatives of all living beings also were entered inside.

Once they were safely inside the Ark, God opened the

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flood gates of heaven. It rained for a hundred and fifty days. The waters of the flood rose to such a height that all the living beings that God had created began to drown. Only Noah and those with him were saved from death. It was God's remembrance of Noah that caused the reversal of the flood. The waters receded and in the seventh month the Ark came to rest on the Mountains of Ararat.

### **THEME 16: A Religion Teacher explains Biblical Ethics.**

A teacher of Religion, at a One-Day seminar on Moral Conduct explains Biblical Ethics and its beginnings: Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, Eighth Edition, defines Ethics as the moral principles that control or influence a person's behaviour: it is a system of moral principles or rules of behaviour. It is a branch of philosophy that deals with moral principles.

Biblical Ethics is a system or theories produced by study, interpretation and evaluation of biblical morals, including the moral codes standard principles, behaviours, conscience, values, rules of conduct or beliefs concerned with good and evil, right and wrong, that are found in the Hebrew and Christian Bibles.

Biblical Ethics is the rule of life because it originates from

A Book on Living as God's Child- Akwukwo maka ibi ndu ka nwa Chukwu the Decalogue, the written documents of the people of Israel which were gradually handed on to humanity (Ex 20 2-17). Biblical Ethics is the rule of life because it is a system produced by interpretation and evaluation of biblical morals behaviours, conscience, values, rules of conduct or beliefs concerned with good and moral, right and wrong.

### **THEME 17: A Teacher of Religion explains covenant.**

Students of Christian Religious Studies ask Teacher to explain to them the full meaning of the covenant between God and Israelites. Teacher starts the explanation by affirming that Covenant is an agreement or contract made between two or more parties (persons), each agrees to do something for the other. For example, your relationship with a Window-Curtin Sewer is a type of covenant. In this relationship the Curtin sewer agrees to sew your Window-Curtin's for you, and you agree to pay for the service. This was exactly the same type of relationship that God established with the people of Israel. The Israelites agree to obey God and be His people and God agrees to be their God.

**THEME 18: A Teacher of Religion explains Fundamental Theology.**

Fundamental theology is classified within theology that examines the foundations of faith itself. Because of this, it is sometimes called fundamental theology. Fundamental theology treats the revelation of God and the meaning of that disclosure and its consequences for individuals and humanity. The main topics examined by fundamental theology include: faith, revelation, God, grace, and human nature.

Fundamental theology interacts with and uses the advancements of scientific, philosophical, linguistic, historical, and cultural data in its and exploration explanations. (cf. Mueller, J.J.).

It is good to reflect and live like God's child.

**THEME 19: Teacher of Religion explains the term forerunner.**

The forerunner of Jesus (Mk 1:1-8; Lk 3:1-20).

Forerunner means a person or thing that came before and influence somebody or something. It is a sign of what is going to happen. The Prophet Isaiah prophesied about the coming of a messenger ahead of Christ (Isaiah 40: 3-5). The Jesus' forerunner was John the Baptist, the John of Zachariah and Elizabeth. John was foretold by the Angel

Gabriel and was sent as a messenger ahead to prepare the way for Jesus' coming (Mathew 1:1-3). He lived in the desert region and carried out his ministry there. He wore clothes made from Carmel's hair and feed only on locusts and honey.

As a forerunner, John the Baptist had to make a lot of preparations for Jesus coming: John the Baptist went into all the country around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. He also preached about bearing fruit of repentance and people flocked to him to be baptised. John the Baptist told the people that he baptised with water, but after him would come One mightier than him (he meant Jesus) who would baptised them with the Holy Spirit and fire, the crowd that came to John was made up of different groups of people e.g. the tax collectors, the soldiers, the Pharisees and the Sadducees.

This means that John the Baptist spent his life preparing the way for the Messiah, Jesus. He preached conversion from sinful ways. He baptised those who listened with a baptism of conversion. By doing this, he removed the obstacles that would keep them from recognizing Jesus when he came. Like Jesus, John the Baptist preached to sinners, to those who had been rejected by the Jewish authorities. John's greatest success were among tax collector and public sinners. The Climax of John's mission came the day that

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Jesus approached him to be baptised. Although John tried to refuse for he realised that he was unworthy to baptize Jesus, yet Jesus insisted. From that moment of Jesus' baptism, it was Jesus who was the centre of attention while John the Baptist having completed his mission, faded into the back-ground.

### **THEME 20: A Teacher of Religion explains Liturgy to Students and people.**

At a school seminar on Christian celebrations, a religion teacher explains the term liturgy to students and people: The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (Sacrosanctum Concilium, 1963)

**Liturgy:** The second Vatican gave the following definition of Liturgy:

Liturgy as an exercise of the priestly office of Jesus Christ. Christ is present in His Church, especially in her liturgical celebrations. Christ is present in the Sacrifice of the Mass not only in the person of His minister, but especially in the Eucharistic species. Christ by His power, He is present in the sacraments so that when anybody baptises, it is Christ Himself who baptises. Christ is present in His word since it is He Himself who speaks when the holy scriptures are read in the Church. Christ is present when the Church prays and sings, for he has promised that where two or three are

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gather together in His name that He is there in their midst (Mt 18:20).

Liturgy therefore, is the public worship performed by Christ and His Mystical body, where God is glorified and people are sanctified. This means that every liturgical celebration, because it is an action of Christ, the Priest and of His Body, which is the Church, is a sacred action surpassing all others. And no other action of the Church can equal its efficacy by the same title and to the same degree. (cf. SC n.7).

### **Singing of Divine Office:**

The instruction on music in the liturgy affirms that the sung celebration of the Divine Office is the best form that brings out the nature of this prayer, the Divine Office. The sung celebration of Divine Office expresses its solemnity in a fuller ways and expresses a deeper union of hearts in performing the praises of God. This means that in accordance with the wish of the Constitution on the liturgy, this sung form is strongly recommended to those who celebrate the Divine Office in Choir or in common. It is a wish and a desire that at least some part of the Divine office, especially the Principal Hours, namely Lauds and Vespers, should be performed in sung form by those people, at least on Sundays and feast days. (Msn n.37)

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(Instruction on Music in the liturgy Musician Sacram).

Present-day lively sung Divine Office;

Religious Congregations and major Seminaries, especially those in the South East, owe a lot to the AWHUM Monastery, Nigeria, for the present Day lively sung of the Divine Office. Before this development of sung Divine Office, all we knew as postulants, and at the earliest part of our novitiate, was chanting tune of the Divine Office: La-La-La-La-La-La73

It is worth noting that the Religious Congregations and the major Seminaries of the South East also owe a lot to the DDL novices of 1974 to 1975, and the professed sisters of 1976, for the promotion and spread of the sung of Divine Office. God is great!

Nota-Bane: As novices, we used to go to AWHUM Monastery every month for recollection. While we were there for the recollection, we joined the monks in their office readings and Lauds. As we joined them in these hours, we learnt the Psalm tunes and on our return to the novitiate, we practiced the tunes during our own prayers; and this was how it developed and spread around and beyond. Thanks be to God and to AWHUM Monastery!

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## **THEME 21: Informal Helpers**

At a workshop on growth facilitation Paully, a participant shared his concern about the new development in his life; Paully said that he is a teacher by profession. He came to the workshop with great expectations. He is hoping to get help to enable him to meet the new development in his life experience. Paully said that he noticed that a number of people confide in him, and many share deeply with their personal life experience. But he trusts and he wondered what would be the best attitude towards anyone who comes to share with him. There are various approaches to this concern expressed by Paully.

From experience it is clear that at certain moments of life, we tend to clamour to be with another, other than ourselves, someone to tell our story to; someone to share intimately our story. Over the years, there has been a conviction that apart from those who are directly involved in a variety of formal helping professions, like counselors, psychologists, ministers of religions, spiritual theologians, social workers and psychologists, there are other informal helpers who often help people through troubled times of crisis and distress.

According to (Gerald Egan, 1996) the world is filled with informal helpers (Egan, G.) People have various reasons why they look for help. Some look for help when they are

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in crisis, have troubles, difficulties, frustrations, worries, doubts, have important decisions to make about themselves, about their relationship with God and people. When anyone is welled-up in these needs and looking for help, she or he has some expectations. He or She expects to be listened to. So, the basic attitude of the helper is to listen. Although you may not be aware that your problem may not have any clear cut solution, you would want to be listened to, as you tell your story from experience, we know that listening is not an easy act to struggle with. It is hard to listen. Listening is a very powerful communication skill. Those who have it have a great virtue, and those who have it are not too many.

Sometimes people seeking help experience a kind of reluctance in behaviour on the part of helper who might, non-verbally, be saying to the person seeking help: "I am not ready for you, I have no time for you now, I am terribly busy". These expressions may not be said verbally, but they be implied. These could be acted out further in different non-verbal gestures that will depict inattentiveness and lack of disposition on the part of the helper.

The quality of attention and involvement in any listening situation is normally conspicuous even the blind know when the attention is paid to them. In other words, you will

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know when your story is being listened to. An effective listener, listens with patient understanding and empathy. She or he is there with complete presence. Patient listening carries with it the real sense of understanding and being with the person, without any abuse of trust or expectation, which may exist by forcing information out of the person seeking help.

The person seeking to be listened to sometimes notice that his or her helper is not fully present, and if she or he enquires, an answer might come "oh yes, I am listening to you, I heard all you said. I can repeat it". Nobody goes to another to share his or story in order to get the story wholesale, back to him or her. What I feel people need is not someone who will repeat their story, but someone to listen to them and be with them. From every day, experience we know how comforting it is when you visit a friend who is in an awkward situation, you may notice that your presence makes a difference. Anyone seeking help is looking for someone to listen to him or her. There may be some suggestions from the helper, but that is secondary. The seeking help wants first of all to be listened to. So, the basic attitude towards someone who comes to you seeking help is to listen to that person.

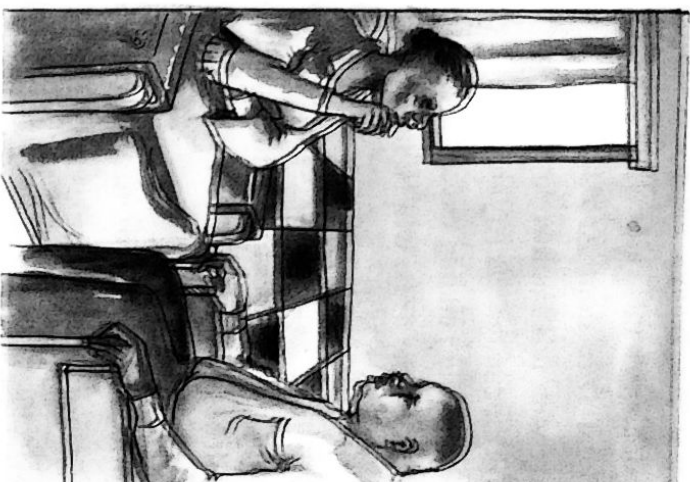
**THEME 22: A Religion Teacher explains Theology to the people.**

A Religion teacher explains theology to the people. Etymologically, the Greek word  $\theta\epsilon\omicron\lambda\omicron\gamma\iota\alpha$  (Theology) meaning "talk" or "discourse" about God. This word was first used by the Greeks centuries before Christianity began, and because the Greeks used it to speak about "pagan" gods, Christians neither adopted the word nor agree on its meaning when they did use it. By the eleventh century St. Anselm of Canterbury helped the term to become university acceptable by providing a definition that was considered classics. He define theology as "faith seeking understanding" ("Fides Quaerens Intellectum") Fides Quaerens intellectum for St. Anselm, signified the endeavor of one who has the faith to understand what he or she believes. Christian theology, therefore, is the study of Christian belief and practice.

The nature of Christian theology is reflection on faith. It is faith that seeks understanding. The nature of Christian theology is found in the fact that it is a research of the mind, an examination into the mystery already welcomed in the act of faith by a person.

Belief: You reflect on what you have already believed in, and practice all that it contains.

**THEME 23: Spiritual Direction and basic attitude associated with it.**



At a growth course workshop, Janny, one of the participants, who belonged to a religious community expressed her concerns. Janny said that she is at this growth facilitation Workshop in preparation for spiritual direction work. And that she would want to know if there are basic attitudes and focuses associated with Spiritual Direction.

The coordinator of the growth workshop invited

contributions from the participants. Participants take turn at presenting their insights. At my own turn, I acknowledged that Jamy's inquiry is correct, because there is no doubt that there are certain attitudes associated with Spiritual Direction. And I would like to reply immediately with this familiar saying: "The taste of the pudding is in the eating." I am trying to say that nobody can accurately taste the pudding except the person who has actually eaten it. She or he will be in a better position to describe the actual taste. Similarly, Spiritual Direction is better judged by persons from experience. This means that when a person experiences the spiritual direction himself, he or she will be in a better position to pass a judgement on the worth of it.

Spiritual director himself or herself is to know that effective spiritual directors are usually discovered by the people, and by the Christian Community. Directors do not put themselves forward without the people seeking them. In my culture, a woman does not tell a man to marry her. It is always a man that seeks out a woman he likes and asks for her hand in marriage. So, it is always better for the spiritual director to be discovered by people rather than by self-presentation.

Spiritual director is to recognise that the primary basis for the trust people repose on him or her is in his or her

membership in the faith, community, so that the director is communicating with another member of the faith community, something of his or her relationship with God. If Spiritual Direction is to be understood, as it is proposed, it is clear that the personality of the director is central. That is, that the spiritual director must be someone who is in conscious relationship with God and also someone who is able to relate well with people. As someone who facilitates the development of a relationship of another with God, the spiritual director needs to be an outstanding sign of God's loving care.

For the spiritual direction to produce the desired result, the spiritual director has to enter into a kind of agreement or working alliance with the directee provided that there is a foundation for this, which is, that the directee wants to relate more personally with God. Spiritual director is to be a person who is able to keep confidentiality. Spiritual Director is to ensure that privacy is maintained by making sure that the deep sharing of the directee and director is not overheard by others. We all know how difficult it is to disclose oneself to another. So, it can be devastating to know later on that the story was overheard by another. In other words, the environment for sharing is to be appropriate. The Spiritual Director is to make sure, through prior arrangements, that the session is not to be

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interrupted by someone walking in, or knocking on the door, or even telephone calls.

There is a general understanding about Spiritual Direction, that Spiritual Direction is all God's work. The spiritual director is only offering help. Spiritual Direction does not mean that a person gives the responsibility for his or her life to someone else. That is to say, that the director is to be aware that she or he remains a facilitator of the relationship. In other words, she or he is only giving help. He or she is in no way going to take the responsibility for the person's life. The person who receives the spiritual direction retains the responsibility for his or her life.

When a person seeks Spiritual Direction, he or she has an aim. It implies that the person is going somewhere, and would want to talk to someone on the way, in an on one-on-one atmosphere about his or her aim. The talk will aim at helping the person to find his or her way. Spiritual Direction does not suggest a forum where the director gives a person a detailed programme on how to live. As I said earlier, the person seeking spiritual direction is already going somewhere. So, the director is only a helper towards focusing. Spiritual Direction focuses on the process of a relationship with God. It involves helping another person to relate consciously with God, and to grow in that relationship.

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#### **THEME 24: Unhappy Character Scrambles for enemy.**

Unhappy person always hunts for an enemy. Unsteady character always sings: "let us join to hate!" Some persons in the world have the character of let us join to hate a person. This is a situation where a person who hates someone gathers his or her group of friends to join him or her in hating another person he or she regards as an enemy. There is a story of Nja who called his group of friends and told them all sorts of lie against Ojiokoo whom he has labeled an enemy. Unfortunately, the members of the group of friends joined Nja in hating this person, Ijiokoo, regarding him as a common enemy. But one member from the group, called Ikiti continued to relate well with Ojiokoo; insisting that he did not notice in the person of Ijiokoo, any of those alligations Nja has enumerated against him. It is only a steady character that can act as Ikiti did. It is only Good to love persons rather than hate.

#### **THEME 25: Example of an Elder Novice Director of DDL Novices 1976 set.**

I would like to borrow the method of proceeding from the Jesuit Canadian, Bernard Lonergan. Lonergan in his Monster, "Method in theology" suggested steps

theologians need to take in order to produce results. He mentioned among others, reference to those who have gone before them in the field of theology, to see how they went about it. In the same way as professor Lonergan suggested, it is appropriate for the people of this age to make reference to those who had served earlier as novice directors to see how they went about it.

There were two significant persons who shouldered most of the weight of training the members of the new DDL. Congregation's foundation from aspirancy to postulancy, to novitiate, and to first profession. These two persons were Mother Mary Charles Anyanwu, and Mother Mary Patty Alufuo. Mother Mary Charles Anyanwu, now Mother Abbess of Paschal Monastery Amoji Nike, Enugu, Nigeria, a Benedictine Nun Whose Monastery, at the request of the DDL founder permitted her to direct the new foundation. Mother Charles at that time was in charge of both the aspirants and novices and her positive impact on them was understanding.

Sr. Mary Patricia Alufuo, when Mother Charles Anyanwu left to establish her new Monastic Community at Amoji Nike, Enugu, Sr. Mary Patricia, now Mother Abbess Mary Patricia Alufuo of St. Scholastica Monastery Umuoji, took over. Sr. Patricia was also a Benedictine Nun, whose monastery at the request of the DDL founder permitted her

to direct the new foundation.

Sr. Patricia Alufuo, the novice director, was fondly known and called by the novices of 1974-1976 by the name "Sr. Patty." Sr. Patty was wonderful and a knowledgeable woman, from whom, we the novices, learnt that novitiate life and religious community life are lived in joy, happiness, and in a neat environment. Sr. Patty had a principle, and that was the principle of leading people to be responsible. The novices learnt from their novice director, Sr. Patty, the need to be time conscious, but not driven by time. With Sr. Patty, the life in the Novitiate was so organised and so tension-free that we, the novices, were ourselves, and we had enough time for our daily tasks, our community prayers and personal prayers. This made her function as novice director easy for her because she was able to assess us, knew where we needed help, and helped us accordingly. She was our dictionary in the school of sanctity.

I recall that when Sr. Patty arrived in the novitiate, and had lived with us for about one month, she called all the novices and gave instruction that she would not want any novice to tell her "anything about another novice." She went on to say that the grace of office she received from God would enable her discover things herself. This principle worked for her. Her instruction must have been from her

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experience of some novices who must have started to look for some victims for her.

Sr. Patty did not talk much in the novitiate, because her daily life was a living example. Sr. Patty was more than a novice director, just directing the novices, she had interest in the wellbeing of all of us, and she was sensitive to our needs. She loved the novices, and she took care of us. She would discover when a novice was tired or ill and would give her an opportunity for rest. She knew what tiredness could cause to prayer life and community living, and she made sure that this did not happen in the novitiate at her time. In other words, she seemed to discover when the whole community needed rest, and time would be adjusted, and an opportunity provided for such a rest. This rest helped to promote punctuality in prayer, meals, community exercises, personal prayers and so on.

Sr. Patty was a generous person, caring but did not compromise. She would call attention to what was not done well, and one would be encouraged to recognise it, and take the appropriate correction. She kept reminding us, the novices of the eventual "Capital M", that is, a cantankerous miserable state in which any of us who would be irresponsible in her formation would found herself. Sr. Patty was also kind to our neighbors around and all those who visited the novitiate. The sensitivity and self-

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possession with which Sr. Patty did her work as novice director and beyond remain engraved in our minds.

**Appreciation:** The Great, Kind, and Generous Novice Director, Sr. Patty, thank you for your teachings and the life we shared together. Rest in Peace. Amen!

## **THEME 26: The care-takers of Jesus, Mary and Joseph, kept the law of the Land.**

The care-takers of Jesus, Mary and Joseph, demonstrated obedience to the law of the land by presenting the Baby Jesus in the temple as the Law required and with Appropriate offering where the great hymn of thanksgiving NUNC DIMITTIS was delivered by Simeon the upright and devout man in thanksgiving to God for witnessing the Birth of Jesus Christ the saviour.

## **THEME 27: A Teacher of National Values gives meaning of Integrity.**

At a National Values class, students ask the teacher to teach them the general meaning of the word Integrity.

Teacher begins by defining the Term integrity. The teacher teaches that the Oxford Advanced Learner's defines integrity as an adherence to strong moral and ethical

principles. It means soundness of moral character, honesty. It is a state of being whole and entire. It is the quality of being honest and having strong moral principles. It is a state of being undivided in character. Integrity is the quality of being upright in character. A person of integrity is guided by moral principles in the way he or she behaves. Integrity is the practice of being honest and showing a consistent and uncompromising adherence to strong moral and ethical principles. Integrity is regarded as the honest and accuracy of one's actions.

#### **THEME 28: Functions of a Project Manager.**

Manager is a person who is in charge of running a project. The manager whether the person has a managerial experience or learning on the job, must have had some preparation for the job. He or she is selected by the authorities of an institution or an organisation to plan, organise, lead staff, develop and control the project.

The diverse nature of the roles of the manager of a project:  
Imparting knowledge and skill;

A manager of a project is seen as an embodiment of knowledge and skill. He or she knows the values, attitudes and expectations of the institution or the organization that chose him or her, and even the expectations of the society

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where the project is located.

**Creativity:**

As a manager, a lot depends on him or her to make the growth of the project possible. This means that out of creativity, the manager is expected to promote effective management, holding the main staff of the project and other workers in view; and keeping cordial relationships with them all.

The manager also is to maintain and renovate the project. In other words, an up and doing manager should have in view the project under him or her, providing constant maintenance and to know when there is need for renovation. Any institution or an organisation which entrusts its project to a manager expects good news about the Project. We know that projects abound: it may be a Hospitality Centre, School, Hospital, Companies, Bank, ICT Center, etc.

All I am trying to say or communicate is that a lively and committed manager will not allow the project entrusted to him or her to degenerate into cracking walls and pot-hole floors, blown up roof, window without shutters, worn-out paints on the walls, inadequate seats and desks, unwelcome receptions, unkempt environment, etc. an up-to-date manager in his foresight, anticipates problems of the project and continuously takes the necessary actions to

solving them; developing the project and giving it a new look.

**THEME 29: Persons of Integrity are still available.**

In a big company, located not too far away, the Chief Executive officer of that company acknowledged that he had stayed long in that company as the Chief Executive officer, and that he is now old. So, he said that as things stand, he will hand over his function as the Chief Executive officer to one of the senior officers in the company. He then called a meeting of the twenty senior officers, and his own son was among the twenty. He told them his decision to hand over his function as the CEO of the company, and repeated to them his reasons for his decision.

One day he called a meeting of the twenty senior officers and told them that he will give to each of them a seed-plant to plant, and that the person who his seed-plant will be the most flourishing will replace him as the new Chief Executive officer of the company and he gave each of them a seed-plant to go and plant. As time goes by one of the officers, called Ukuua, noticed that his own seed-plant did not germinate, but he waited in patience. After some more days Mr. Ukuua, still observed that his seed-plant did not germinate. He then went to one of the officers to complain

that his own seed-plant did not germinate, the officer responded with joy, telling Ukuua that his own seed-plant germinated well and it is flourishing. Ukuua made the same complaint to all the selected officers, and each of them confirmed that his seed-plant germinated. Mr. Ukuua also complained to his wife that his own seed-plant did not germinate. His wife suggested to him to buy another seed-plant. But Ukuua refused.

On the appointed day, all the twenty senior officers gathered each carrying his blooming plant. The Chief Executive Officer called them one by one and each came in presenting his own flourishing plants. But there was one officer, Ukuua who his seed-plant did not germinate and the CEO asked him why he did not bring his own flourishing plant. He said that his own seed-plant did not germinate.

The Chief Executive Officer called the twenty officers together and told them that he has seen his replacement and the person is the officer that his seed-plant did not germinate. The Chief Executive Officer told the twenty officers that the twenty seed-plants given to them where kept in a condition that none of them will never ever germinate. All were dumb-founded! A big disappointment! A big surprise! A big shame! This means that each of the nineteen officers bought another seed-plant

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other than the one they were given.

It is only Ukuaa who proved his quality of being upright in character. He is a person of integrity. It takes integrity to behave the way he did. The Chief Executive Officer also displayed his worth. He proved his moral principles. We remember that his son was among the contestants, but he by-passed every type of corruption, and chose to live the life of integrity.

### **THEME 30: The results of living in relationship with God in prayer.**

Prayer is most of the time associated with rote recitation of prayer, performance of duty. Here, when I talk about prayer experience, I am talking about a relationship that exists between the individual and God. Here, I am talking about when a person is ready and willingly decides to look at God who is already looking at him or her. Prayer is like a lubricating oil which soaks and loosens. It has the capacity of helping people to look deep and identify his or her impression of Jesus.

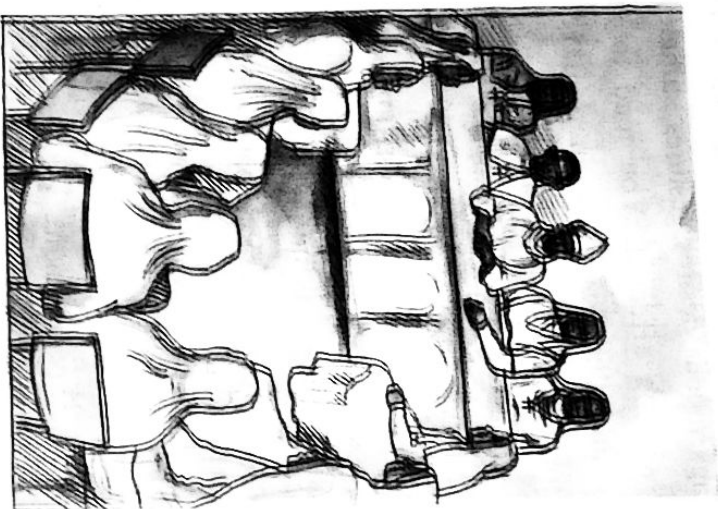
Our relationship with God in prayers and our effort to respond to Him involves all of ourselves and all of our being. Prayer does not take place in isolation from the rest of our interests and concerns. You will notice that the more

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experience of prayer you have, the more you will find yourself seeking a way of expressing yourself more fully. Your feelings, moods, desires, gestures, attitudes, and your life-style will be affected. You tend to see things differently and things will begin to have different meanings for you. For example, your interests, concerns, worries are affected by what happens to you in, your communicative prayer with the Lord. In this communicative prayer, your vision broadens, and you have a greater openness to change; you will find out that you will be more considerate and more compassionate. You tend to be more patient, more tolerant to other people's feelings.

Those who are in a communicative relationship with God in prayer, tend to be more kind to people. They also tend to love and appreciate people more.

## **THEME 31: A Teacher of Religion explains a General Chapter.**



General Chapter Latin: Capitulum (a Chapter)

A religion Teacher inputs on the meaning of a General Chapter.

The term Chapter is derived from the habit of convening monks or Canons for the reading of a chapter of the Bible or a heading of the Order's rule.

The 6<sup>th</sup> Century St. Benedict directed that his Monks begin their daily assemblies with such readings and over time

A Book on Living as God's Child- Akwukwo maka ibi ndu ka nwa Chukwu expressions such as "coming together for the Chapter" (Convenire ad Capitulum) found their meaning transferred from the text to the meeting itself and then to the body gathering for the Chapter. The place of such meetings became known as the "chapter house" or "room". General Chapter for Monks: this means a general assembly of monks, typically composed of representatives from all the monasteries of an Order.

### **General Chapter for a Religious Congregation**

The highest authority of the Congregation is the General Chapter which is an assemble representing all its members (cf. Can. 631). For a Religious Congregation, a General Chapter is an assembly (meeting) of all the members of a Congregations composed of representatives elected from all the provinces or regions of the Congregation.

To narrow it down to a Religious Congregation Female

For a female Congregation, a General Chapter means a General Assembly of all the members of the Congregation, composed of elected representatives, that is, elected sisters (delegates) from the Provinces or Regions of the Congregation.

Those who were elected into the leadership of the Congregation before the New General Chapter, example the Superior General or Mother General and her

Councillors, the Provincials and their Councillors, the Regional Superiors, and in some congregation, the immediate proceeding Superior General, Bursar General, Novice Director, Scholasticate Director are (ex office members). (ex office members) means those who go to the General Chapter by right of their office.

Every professed sister in the congregation may vote for a Chapter delegate, however, only the finally professed sisters can be elected as Chapter delegates. In some Congregations, some definitively professed sisters are invited as observers. The General Chapter is convoked by the Mother General (Superior General) every Six Years as Constitution stipulates.

#### **Purpose for a General Chapter:**

Once a General Chapter is mentioned, the minds of most religious, including lay faithful, move to elections, especially the election of Superior General or Mother General. Unfortunately, General Chapter is more than elections.

#### **Purpose for a General Chapter includes:**

1. The major purpose for a General Chapter is to protect and promote the Patrimony of the Congregation that is to protect and promote the Spiritual Heritage that the

Congregation received from the founder, and to plan appropriate renewal that is in accord with its Spiritual Heritage.

2. To promote the unity of the Congregation and its mission.
3. The General Chapter meets to ensure that the Congregation is being faithful to its mission.
4. Chapter meets to give direction to the life and mission of the Congregation for the future.
5. To review the content of the acts of previous General Chapters, to confirm, review and take appropriate actions.
6. To elect the Mother General or Superior General and Councillors.
7. To approve the Chapter agenda and proposed procedures. Agenda: Agenda consists of proposals by the delegates or individuals' suggestions submitted by other sisters, relating to the religious and apostolic life of the Congregation.
8. To review and, if necessary, change the Constitutions and General Directory.
9. To seek the approval of the Apostolic See for any Constitution amendment that is approved and accepted by the General Chapter.

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### **General Chapter, a moment of Prayer**

General Chapter is a moment and time for intensive prayer and of dialogue. The members of the General Chapter pray and search together for the will of God for the Congregation.

Nota Bane: The General Chapter Preparatory Commission will also do their all-important preparatory work for the smooth running of General Chapter.

### **Theme 32: Insight Sharing.**

At a workshop on hints for wholeness, Jota a participant who was preparing herself for her new assignment as the director of formation, expressed her anxieties to workshop facilitators. Jota said that from her letter of appointment she is sure that she will be moving in to the function of the director of formation. She has followed many formation courses, and has attended and participated in many workshops on formation for her own personal growth and in preparation for this her new assignment.

As the present workshop is coming to an end, and the date for her mandate is just next door, she is still confused as to what would be her fundamental attitude and focus as formator to formation work and to famatees. The Workshop facilitators threw back Jota's concerns to the

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participants. Each participant shared some insights. Looking back at Jota's concerns, I would suggest that we look at some working explanations and suggestions towards formation:

Formation viewed from a human development perspective and from a religious dimension involves growth, conversion and wholeness. Formation is a call to holiness and wholeness, a call to conversion. Formation is not something one person or several people do to others. It is not a process that forces or imposes on others. Formation is not just conformity, it involves discernment. Formation involves experiences, values, choosing direction for life. It involves sharing with others. Formation leads to transcendence. It means a journey towards God and it is an on-going process.

From the working explanation, I suggest that the basic attitude of a formation director towards formation work is to view herself or himself as a facilitator, a co-discerner, because the formatee is there to discern. Moreover, he or she is to bear in mind that the Holy spirit of God is always at work within the Church, formation is best seen in the context of person-oriented rather than rule-oriented. This means that a formation is to pay attention to persons rather than focusing on the rule, but this does not in any way mean advocating lawlessness.

Person-oriented formation enables the formatee to get into the human process which will facilitate his or her getting in touch with the core of our being, where the encounter with the source of our life is possible, moreover, the formator is to make sure that she or he does not form the formatees in his or her own image and likeness, instead of directing them towards the formation of what God wants them to be. Respect for individual history is essential in the formation process. It will be very liberating if formation is not done in uniformation manner; that is, that formation is to be done in such a way that individual history is followed and respected, instead of viewing every formatee from the same angle. This means that the formator is to recognise that every person has his or her own personal history, and each is to be treated as such

Formation should give the formatees a "breathing space" "Breathing space" means that the formation director does not probe for information from the formatee, that the director does not force information from the formatee. A "breathing space" allowed to a formatee will help him or her to blossom. A kind and relaxing atmosphere will help a formatee more to be himself or herself, ready to share deeply. It is always better to allow information to come willingly from the formatee than forcing it out of him or her, out of curiosity.

A formator is not to be a threat to herself or to himself or to threaten the formatees. Any sincere candidate in formation is moving towards a success. In other words, any sincere formatee wants to succeed, this means that he or she wants to reach a stage either for religious life, priesthood or outside of these for another vocation. So any type of threat by the formation directors fills the atmosphere with tension and fear. For such a threat, an immediate reaction by the formatees is to withdraw into themselves. They will begin to live in fear, and tend to do all they are told without allowing any development or growth for maturity. Some formatees will begin to look for "victims" for the formation director from among themselves. They will begin to carry false information and reports against other formatees, because they are looking for survival. They want to survive by talking ill of another formatee. Many formatee will be dying so many deaths before their natural death comes. Threatening formatees will have an enormously devastating effect on the process of formation. It will block the process of formation except wearing of masks and living in fear.

### **THEME 33: Foundation and beginnings of Religious life**

The Religious falls into Chapter VI of the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium*. The Holy Church in its Dogmatic constitution on the *Lumen Gentium*, affirms that the teaching and example of Christ provided the foundation for the evangelical counsels of Chastity, Poverty and Obedience (*Lumen Gentium* (1964) 43).

We recall the young man in the Gospel who asked Jesus what good deed he must do to possess eternal life and Jesus told him to "keep the commandments". The young man affirmed that he has kept all the commandments. But when the young man pressed further, Jesus told him: "If you wish to be perfect, go and sell your possession and give the money to the poor". It is from this passage that the term counsel of perfection comes. (Mt. Ch. 19: 16-22).

Again in the Gospel, Jesus speaks of "eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven", and he added "let anyone accept this who can" (Mt Ch. 19: 10-12).

The Apostles and Fathers of the Church commended these counsels, and the Doctors and Pastors of the Church commended the counsels as well. The Vatican II Fathers therefore explained that the evangelical counsels constitute a gift of God which the Church has received

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from the Lord which by His grace she always safeguards. Directed by the Holy spirit, Church authority gives a right interpretation of the counsels, regulate their practice and sets up stable forms of living embodying them. From this God-given seed of the counsels a great and wide-spreading tree has grown up in the field, of God branching out into various forms of religious life lived in solitude or in community. This means that different religious families have come into existence in which spiritual resources are multiplied for the progress in holiness of their members and for the good of the entire body of Christ (cf. Pius XI, Apostolic Constitution *Umbratilem* (1924) AAS 16 pp 386-307) *Vitae Patrum* (1628).

The Christian who pledges himself or herself to this kind of life binds himself or herself to the practice of the three evangelical counsels. Members of religious institutes confirm their intention to observe the evangelical counsels by making a "public" vow, that is, a vow that the superior of the institute accepts in the name of the Church. It is true that as a baptised Christian he or she is dead to sin and dedicated to God; but he or she desires to derive still more abundant fruit from the grace of his baptism. For this reason he makes profession in the Church of the evangelical counsels. He or she does this for two reasons: First, in order to be free from hindrances that could hold

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him or her back from fervent charity and perfect worship of God, and Secondly, in order to consecrate himself or herself in a more thorough going manner to the service of God (Paul VI, *Allocutio Magno Gaudio*, (1964), AAS 56, p. 566).

These means that these evangelical counsels have been analysed as a way to keep the world from distracting the soul, on the grounds that the principal good things of this world easily divide themselves into three classes: the riches which make life easy and pleasant, the pleasures of the flesh which appeal to the appetites, and lastly the honours and positions of authority which delight the self-love of the individual.

These three matters in themselves hold back the soul from its true aim and vocation, delay it from becoming entirely conformed to the will of God. It is therefore, the object of the three evangelical counsels of perfection to free the soul from these hindrances. The love of riches is opposed by the counsel of poverty, the pleasures of the flesh are excluded by the counsel to chastity, while the desire for worldly power and honour is met by the counsel of holy Obedience.

**THEME 34: Present-day Leaders are called to make the weak strong and bring back the strayed.**

The text of the Prophet Ezekiel on the Shepherds that feed

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themselves; and the text on the inaugural programme of Jesus' Public Ministry will help to bring out clearly my intent on the theme of the functions of the present-day leaders. God's message to the Prophet Ezekiel for the leaders of Israel who feed themselves reads:

... "You have failed to make weak sheep strong ... " You have failed to bring back strays or look for the lost... My flock has been scattered all over the world, no one bothers about them and no one looks for them." (Ezek 34: 4-6). The Public Ministry of Jesus began in the Synagogue of Nazareth. Jesus came to Nazareth, where He was brought up and went into the Synagogue on the Sabbath day; when he stood up to read, they handed Him the scroll of the Prophet Isaiah, and it reads: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour." (Lk. 4:16-19)

Jesus took good care of God's people that the Prophet Ezekiel was lamenting about. Jesus brings back God's people that the leaders allowed and still allow to scatter all over the world with no leader bordering about them. In the text of the Prophet Isaiah quoted by St. Luke, Jesus refers to the lowly as the "poor" he must proclaim the good news to (cf. Lk 4:18-19). God's poor falls into a variety of

categories and it is not the job of anyone to discriminate. The world can choose which category of the poor to pity and which to look down on, but leaders must be interested in the good of all. For Jesus, the "Poor" are not limited to people who have financial problems, or those lacking material necessities. They also include the sick of every kind, the poorly educated, those who for any reason are deprived of peace of heart and mind, the spiritually bankrupt. But most of all the poor are all those subjected to injustice of any kind, those being smashed by the slavery of sin.

Jesus showed His ever constant concern for every form of human poverty and affliction. He shared this concern with His soothing statements like: "come to me, all who are weary and find life burdensome, and I will refresh you"; "if anyone thirsts, let him come to me"; "I come that they might have life, and have it in full"; "I have come to call sinners!" (Mt 11:28; Jn 7:37; 10:10; Mt 9:13).

These Jesus' soothing statements which are implied in His public ministry provide the reasons why we see Jesus healing all the sick that are brought to Him, casting out demons, and even raising the dead. This is the reason why Jesus welcomes those shunned by others: the tax collectors, the lepers and the public sinners. It is the reason why we see Jesus freeing and forgiving the woman caught

in adultery, the prostitute, the soldiers crucifying Him, the repentant thief, and so on. Indeed, Jesus did everything that the Prophet Isaiah prophesied by giving sight not only to physically blind but also to the intellectually and spiritually blind as well.

Jesus spoke gently to a persecutor of the Church. Paul and transformed him into apostle and eventually martyr. The leaders of the present day are called to follow the example set by Jesus Christ. The present-day, leaders are called to bring good news to the people of God that they are leading. These leaders of today are called to be committed to the poor, alleviating their spiritual and emotional sufferings as well as those that are physical and emotional. The present-day leaders must practice and teach mercy. The Prophet Ezekiel gives the description of leaders that feed themselves instead of feeding those that they are called to lead. The lamentations of the Prophet Ezekiel about the leaders that lack caring are opposite of a good leader.

Looking at the example of Jesus, good leaders seek the lost member or members and bring them back to the fold. They rescue them from wherever they have been scattered, and bring them home to normal communion and restful environment. The present-day leaders are called to engage in binding up the injured, healing the sick. Leaders of today must reach out to every category of God's poor. There must

be a warm and personal relationship between the leaders and those they lead. Leader's love is proved to be genuine when it becomes nothing less than divine in character. Leader's love is not tied by merely human ideologies. It is a leader's love unable to count the cost; it is a love going beyond the limits of hurt, a love that seeks no reward. It is the love described by Paul as patient and kind, never self-seeking or prone to anger or brooding over injuries, unimpaired in its forbearance and ability to trust and hope and endure (cf. 1 Cor 13:4-7).

### **THEME 35: A Teacher of Religion explains Soteriology to people.**

A Religion teacher explains the term Soteriology to people. The term Soteriology is derived from the Greek word *soteria* meaning (Deliverance, salvation) and *logos* meaning (word, thought). This term designates in a general sense the study of salvation. The Christian faith proclaims the fact of human being's salvation, which is accomplished by the merciful act of God's love in Christ; who by means of His life, Death and Resurrection, delivers human person from the evil of sin and reunites him in grace with God. In Christian theology, soteriology concerns Jesus' accomplishment of God's saving plan for humanity.

Soteriology means the doctrine of salvation.

Insight: Human person is to imitate God in His merciful love, and merciful actions.

### **THEME 36: A Teacher of Religion explains Spiritual Direction to students and people.**

Students of Religion and all who seek relationship with God observed that there is much emphasis today on the term Spiritual Direction, and they would want to know what it is all about. And they ask their teacher to help them.

Spiritual Direction is one of the affective ways for individuals to experience the truth about themselves before God and others. It is practiced in various religious traditions: For example, the guru in the Hindu tradition helps the person grow into self-abandonment. Within the Christian tradition, spiritual Direction has a history stretching back to the earliest Christian communities. The Churches of the East have a long and rich tradition of the Spiritual Direction. While the form and accent have changed in various generations, the purpose remains basically the same: To help the person put on the mind and heart of Jesus Christ, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit (cf. Phil 2:5). To put on the mind of Christ involves a deepening of one's personal relationship with God, lived

out in faith, hope and charity in everyday life. Hence spiritual Direction is concerned with all relationships in an individual's life, prayer, and way of loving.

There are many dimension to what is called spiritual direction, but it is about living the Christian life in faith, hope and love to the depth and fullness of the which the person is capable. In the past thirty years, more has probably been written about spiritual Direction than in all the previous centuries. Numerous centers for preparing people for this ministry have opened: the number of people seeking spiritual directions has multiplied especially in Europe and American.

All of this seems to reflect a felt need on the part of many individuals. As has happened throughout the centuries, people are searching. St. Augustine, in the fourth century wrote in his confessions "my heart is restless until it finds rest in you" (Conf. 1.1). Deep within each person, there is a profound longing for the "Absolute Other" (God).

When someone asks another for accompany on the inner journey, it is within this context of faith, hope and love, which means that the whole of one's life and being is involved. Prayer, recognition of one's own strengths and weaknesses, trust in God, and relationships with others are all part of the story, all part of the journey inward. Before all else though, it is important to remember that the first

and most important director in the life of each person in the Holy Spirit, who brings each one "into the truth" (John 14: 17); and recalls all that Jesus has said teaches all things (Jn 14:26), witnesses to Christ (Jn 15:26), shows the world about sin and the truth (Jn 16:8-11), and leads all Christians to the complete truth (Jn 16:13). In Spiritual Direction one person asks another for help in listening and responding in the inner promptings of the Holy Spirit.

We receive spiritual direction through the Holy Spirit in different ways. Above all we are instructed in the liturgy, by the word of God, by people we encounter, by secular events, by the insights we obtain in solitary or communitarian prayer. Everybody needs Spiritual Direction, even if no director is involved.

Spiritual director is a form of prayer based in scripture, the word which makes us Christ's disciples, brings us into the truth and sets us free (Jn 8:31-32). Because the Holy Spirit is the first director, the purpose of spiritual direction is to help one become more attuned to the spirit at work in all circumstances of one's life so that one may grow closer to Christ. Scripture itself offers models of spiritual direction. The Gospel of Mathew reflected a tradition among the Jewish rabbis who taught that God was present when two met to discuss the Torah: "for where two or three meet in my name, am there among them" (Mt 18:20).

In the Old Testament, the author of Ecclesiasticus writes of false friends and advisers and he concludes: "have constant resort to some devout person, whom you know to be a keeper of the commandments, whose sew matches your own, and who, if you go wrong, will be sympathetic" (Eccl 37: 12-15). The idea of approaching someone who will be sympathetic is present also in St. Paul's writing. He likens supporting and helping others spiritually, to the act of giving birth (Gal 4:19). It is also helpful when considering the question of spiritual direction, to reflect John the Baptist. The whole purpose of his life was to point out Christ to his disciples. "As John stood there with two of his disciples, Jesus went past and John looked towards Him and said: 'look there is the lamb of God' and the two disciples heard what he said and followed Jesus" (Jn 1:35-37). This act of pointing out Christ, of witnessing to His presence is the essential role of the Spiritual Director.

On the part of the one seeking direction there to the encouragement to go to someone who is known to be experienced in living Christian values; while the director should be someone who witnesses to Christ through his or her life. Throughout the centuries, various Christian writers have reflected on the experience of Spiritual Direction. Perhaps one of the best known is Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556). In his Spiritual exercises he offers

clear guidelines to all involved in the out of spiritual direction. Basically Ignatius proposes that as one makes the decision to follow Christ more closely in one's life, one needs to distinguish what is of the Lord and what is not. Because we are each of us blind and find it easy to deceive and delude ourselves, spiritual direction can be of help to us in sifting through experience. The description of the movements of the spirit is important to both the director and directee, in their search together for the way forward on the inner journey, and so Ignatius advises openness on the part of the one being directed.

In the Ignatius tradition the place of Spiritual Direction is central to the experience of making the Spiritual Exercises which is meant to be a turning point experience, a moment of conversion, in the life of the exercitant, which will continue for the remaining part of the retreatant's life. Therefore, the role of director is very important.

For Ignatius of Loyola the director must always be kind and gentle as well as firm (n.7) it must be clearly seen that both the director and directee have an important part to play in this listening to the Spirit. A contemporary of Ignatius, the Dominican novice director, John of the cross, O.P. (1565), describes the director as a person who is known to be a friend of God practiced in the spiritual life, as well as prudent and humble. This is not unlike the advice

found in Ecclesiasticus and also John 3. The director should be someone close to God and experienced in the spiritual life.

William Barry, in his book *Spiritual Direction* and the encounter with God, speaks of the experience of what is called discernment of spirits as that of being "in tune" or "out of tune" with God's action in one's life (n. 76-77). The purpose of Spiritual Direction is to help another "be attuned to the one action of God, to His will" (n. 78).

Teresa of Avila (1515-1582), said that being at one with the will of God is essential in the spiritual life. Because this is so important to her, she writes both in her *Autobiography* and in the *Interior Castle*, of the need for the director to be learned and prudent, experienced and holy. But, she advises, if such a person cannot be found, then approach someone who is virtuous and learned.

St. John of the cross (1543-1591) in his writings on the spiritual life, has important things to say on the topic of spiritual direction. He was influenced in his early years by both Dominicans and Jesuits. He himself was an experienced spiritual director for all types of people. (most of John's writings were intended for enclosed Camillite nuns, but his experience was very broad). He wrote in his book *living flame* of love that for the inner journey, the director needs to be experienced, and discreet, ("discreet"

A Book on Living as God's Child- Akwukwo maka ibi ndu ka nwa Chukwu in this context meaning being able to discern the spirit at work).

John of the cross, more than any other of the great spiritual writers, gives help both to directees and directors. John explains in details the stages through which people journey in their search for God and how the different prayer experiences are part of that inner journey. He has a clear sense of where the directee is heading and at the same time he has a profound understanding of the variety of ways in which the spirit leads each individual, to realised that "God raises each one by different ways" (Flame, p.3,59).

Since Vatican II, there is a growing realisation that spiritual direction depends both on knowledge and the giftedness of the Holy Spirit, and that it is not limited to ordained Priests. Many people are being gift by the spirit with experience, wisdom, and discernment needed to help others on their inner journey, a point made in the New Catechism (2690).

### **Recapitulating:**

First, spiritual direction is concerned with seeking God's will, within the whole context of individual's life. For both the Director and Directee, this is the "aim" of their meeting. Direction explores the circumstances of a person's life only in as much as this helps the directee to

move deeply into the experience of the encounter with God. While in spiritual direction the person may experience personal help and learn much, this is not the main purpose of coming together of the director and directee. Spiritual direction is not predominantly informative.

Secondly: spiritual direction is not primary therapeutic and neither is it a personal counselling session although healing will possibly be experienced by the individual, as the Holy Spirit leads to a discovery of personal truth and subsequent freedom in Church. Counselling centres on helping clients reach wholeness, making full use of their resources, and is focused in the psyche. Spiritual direction looks rather to Christ in search for wholeness and healing, while using the giftedness of the individual, a certain knowledge of counseling and its techniques are very important, but the spiritual director is not normally trained to be a counsellor as such: the goals of the spiritual direction and of the counselor are different and do need to be distinguished (cf. Teresa Clements D.M.J.).

Thirdly: spiritual direction is not essentially advisory, although at times a director might offer helpful suggestions. Spiritual direction is a form of prayer, a particular way in which people witness to and share their faith in Christ.

There are many forms which spiritual direction may take place. The most satisfactory is one –on-one encounter. This may not be often, depending on the directee's needs at a time. Frequent regular direction may be a luxury not available to many. Those who cannot find a spiritual director can trust in the Lord that if they try to remain faithful, He will not allow them to go far astray. There can be times when some contact with a spiritual director is necessary, for instance in some personal vocational or faith crisis. Some people are very good at direction by letter; others quite definitely are not gifted in this form of direction.

The prayer of St. Francis of Assisi expresses so well the attitude of heart with which we make this journey inwards in the company of another: "most high and glorious God, illumine the darkness of my heart. Give me right faith, firm hope, perfect love and profound humility. Give me Lord, wisdom and discernment to understand your truth and holy will".

### **THEME 37: A Religion Teacher explains the meaning of Virtue**

A religion teacher inputs on the meaning of virtue:  
Virtue is a habit of good behaviour which enables a person

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to do what is right with increasing ease, joy, and constancy, in response to Gods offer and invitation to covenant of love. As Gregory of Nysaa says, "the aim of the virtuous life is to become like God" (The Beatitudes, vol. 1, Ancient Christian Writers 18 (1954) 89).

### Theme 38: Open your Eyes to see the Poor and Needy



I mean the Poor in fact!

If you look around the world, and around our society, you will notice that thousands of families and people are living in abject poverty while many live in affluence. When I say the poor "in fact", I mean the real poverty. Poverty is being extremely poor. Poverty is not only

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not having enough material possesses or income. Poverty can mean that the income level from the place of employment is so low that basic human needs cannot be met. People living in poverty do not have enough money for basic necessities such as food and shelter. Poverty also means not having anything meaningful in one's life.

My intent at the moment is to bring to light, to create awareness of the poor and needy around us. Open your eyes to see people who are hungry but have nothing absolutely to eat. Open your eyes to see parents who are not able to provide daily meal, who cannot pay any school fees for their children. Open your eyes to see young people and young adults who are looking for sponsors and sureties. Open your eyes to see the poor and needy people around you and beyond you. Seek them out and help them without waiting for them to seek you out and beg.

Jesus says that His followers are the salt, lamp, and light. This means that this body of followers of Christ is to attack hunger and poverty in the world. The Prophet Isaiah reminds everyone of sharing what one has with those who have not (Isaiah 58:6-7).

**Nota Bane:** I am most grateful to many people who are already engaged in assisting and lifting the poor and the needy; putting permanent smiles on their faces.

**THEME 39: A Religion Teacher explains the function of Judges in Israel (Jg 1:1-2,5; 3:7-16:31)**

A Religion Teacher quickly recalls the meaning of Judges and their functions in Israel. The period of Judges in Israel was a time when there was no central leadership for the Israelites tribes who were struggling to establish themselves, facing opposition from the settled powers of the land. The various tribes had neither clear identity of their own nor a common unity among them, claiming a common descent from Jacob as his twelve sons. The period of the Judges was still a time of evolution for Israel as a people and all tribes had not yet accepted a common origin and history.

In the absence of central leadership, charismatic leaders known as Judges rose from time to time when the various tribes faced a common danger to their existence. There were six major Judges and six minor Judges; and these were recognised in the Book of Judges. The Book of Judges also presents six major Judges whose activities were described in some detail.

These were hero-liberators and they were individually chosen by God for a special mission, examples of such were:

Deborah, the Prophetess and the Judge (Jg 4-5)

Gideon, the liberator (Jg 6:11-8:1-21)

Samson the Judge and Nazirite (Jg 13-16) etc.

These Judges possessed the Charisma required for carrying out their mission. The Judges were mostly worshippers of Yahweh and the shrine at Shiloh was the rallying point for the people of Israel.

**THEME 40: A Teacher lists qualities of a disciplined person**

At a National Values' Class, a student asks teacher to please repeat her teachings on the qualities of a disciplined person.

The teacher teaches that discipline is the quality of a person who is in control of his or her behaviour. A disciplined person is one who shows ability to control his or behaviour. It means a person who is well-behaved. It means a person who has a good training of mind and character.

Teacher lists some signs of a disciplined person:

Consideration: A disciplined person is considerate in all her or she does. A disciplined person does not fight or run for best space and seat at a function. He or she is considerate at eating places. A disciplined person behaves herself or himself in the refectory; he or she does not run to take food first and to get the best parts of food, meat, drinks, etc. In other words, a disciplined person does not

push to get the best part of everything and leave the wretched parts for others. Wanting to be first in order to get the best of part, be it at one's home, be it at eating place during celebrations, and be it anything one has to share with others; it is better to allow others first before you. Rusting to get the best parts of everything are signs of indiscipline and lack of self-control. A disciplined person does not struggle to get the best before others. He or she considers others first. A child of God is considerate.

**THEME 41: A National Values' Teacher explains the negative effects of Greed and Quest for power on a person.**

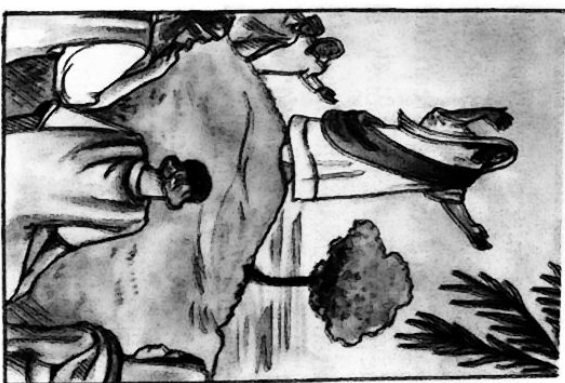
Students and teacher held a discussion on negative effects of greed and quest for power on a person.

After the lively discussion on the negative effects of greed and quest for power, they concluded this way: they say that it is very clear that someone who is greedy is a very selfish person. A person who is hungry for power will be ready to do anything to get that power. He or she is ready to kill, to steal, to calumniate, and to fight etc, in order to get that power.

The practice of virtue is related to ongoing openness to the action of God in a person's life, and openness to conversion

A Book on Living as God's Child- Akwukwo maka Ibi ndu ka nwa Chukwu of heart. Virtue is a gift of the Spirit. From the Spirit comes the "force" (Greek dynamics) or "Power from on high" (Lk 24:49) which makes a person "rich in hope" (Rom. 15:13) and strengthens a person in-wardly, so that "Christ may live in one's heart through faith until planted in love and built on love (cf. Eph 3:16-19). Growth in virtue is an essential aspect of spiritual growth.

**THEME 42: A Teacher of Religion explains the Sermon on the Mount**



Sermon on the Mount  
Matthew Ch 5:1-48

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Matthew Ch 6:1-34

Matthew Ch 7:1-29

At a parish Week-End seminar, a religion teacher, explains the teachings of the Sermon on the mount to women, men, and students of the Parish.

During His public ministry, Jesus taught His disciples many things. The most lengthy teaching of Jesus is called the Sermon on the Mount because it was given on mountain top.

Sermon on the Mount is a kind of summary to Jesus' teachings. The Sermon on the Mount is a collection of Jesus' sayings and teaching taken from several different sources and assembled by the Evangelist Matthew.

The Sermon began with a series of Beatitudes (blessings): "Blessed are the poor in Spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven". "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled". "Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy", and so on (Mt. 5:3-12). These are followed by analogies that declare Jesus' followers to be "the salt of the earth" and the light of the world". This is followed by the contrast or anti-theses "You have heard that it was said... But I say to you" (Mt. 5:3,6,7,13,14,17).

Jesus lays down rules regarding three practices of piety: almsgiving, prayer, and fasting. "Beware of false

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Prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing" (Mt. 8:15) Jesus, Sermon provides guidelines for aspirants to the kingdom of God.

### **THEME 43: A Religion Teacher explains Systematic Theology**

Systematic Theology is one of the branches of theology which examines the various teachings or doctrines of faith community. Systematic theology as a discipline of Christian theology formulates an orderly, rational and coherent account of the Christian faith and beliefs.

The hierarchy on centrality of doctrines, sometimes called dogmatic theology, is included within this area. This includes topics about God as Trine, creation, sin, the meaning of the Jesus' Event with its symbols of Incarnation, Cross and Resurrection, the understanding and dimensions of Church, sacraments, Mary and Saints. Systematic theology is one of the main categories of theology and is integrally related to fundamental and practical theologies (cf. Mueller, J.J)

**THEME 44: A National Values Teacher inputs on social problems**

A teacher of National Values has a short class discussion with her students on social problems. Social problems are problems that affect many citizens within a society. Society today gives rise to many anxieties and stress. For example, people experience social problems like homelessness, hunger, unemployment, poverty, drug abuse, alcohol abuse, anti-social behaviour, bribery, kidnapping, Boko Haram, armed robbery, and recently Corona-Virus. These are social problems and ill that people suffer. These happen because of unemployment, lack of education, superstitious beliefs, etc. Social Ethics is the tool that determine the morality of all these, creating the awareness towards solutions and the way forward.

**THEME 45: A Teacher of Religion recalls the memory of a saintly Pastor, Bishop Michael Ugwuja Eneja**

A Religion Teacher recalls the Memory of a great man of God, Bishop Michael Ugwuja Eneja:

A teacher of Religion would want to remember the person of Bishop Michael Eneja, a great lover of God and neighbour. It is good to remember him because the recalling of his person will always inform very much the

A Book on Living as God's Child- Akwukwo maka ibi ndu ka nwa Chukwu present-day society. At a particular point of this work, I asked whether the persons of integrity are many in the world and in the society today.

I will answer in affirmative, that peoples of integrity are many in the world and society today. And Bishop Michael Ugwuja Eneja was one of them. Bishop Michael Eneja was a great Pastor who has positively and spiritually impacted so many people. He lived a virtuous life. He lived the cardinal and theological virtues. He was a prudent man; He lived justice, he was courageous and bold in his faith, he bore witness to hope because he showed in his everyday life that everything does not end here on earth. He was a self-restraint person, he lived charity.

I knew Bishop Michael Ugwuja Eneja as Monsignor, the Spiritual Director of the Senior Seminary (BIGARDIANS).

I knew him when I was a novice and as a young Professed Sister, 1974-1976. I knew him closely when I had the mandate to lead the DDL Congregation 1986-1998. This was the period I would say that I knew him closely, worked with him closely, and experienced him, and identified with his way of life.

Bishop Eneja, has the habit of good behaviour. He was a Christian. He has a moral excellence: He was a good person. He was just, prudent and humble. He was very

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religious and full of piety. He has a virtue of integrity. He was charitable. He was very austere and mortified. He lived the virtue of perseverance. He was trustworthy. He was reserved. He was very considerate. He considers other people first in all he did. He was always joyful in the success of others. He was kind.

Bishop Eneja gave the DDL Congregation, the signal for survived in Enugu Diocese. The purpose of recalling the memories of Bishop Michael Ugwuja Eneja, is to present a practical picture of a person who has lived as a God's child.

#### **THEME 46: A Teacher of Religion explains the Vows**

Vows are solemn promises made freely to God to do some task or to live according to a certain way of life. Vows can be private, made individually to a confessor or a Bishop, or public such as those made by members of religious communities. By profession of religious Vows an individual dedicates one's life to God and the service of God's people through a public commitment which is liturgically celebrated. The traditional vows of religion are poverty, chastity and obedience.

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#### **THEME 47: Meaning of Prophet Hosea's Symbolic Marriage (Hosea 1-14)**

The Prophet Hosea did not just preach his Prophetic message, he also lived that message by means of symbolic actions.

Israel was continually turning away from following God and choosing to follow the false gods of the Canaanites. No matter how many times God would call her, and forgive her, she would nevertheless forget Him and follow the false gods of the Canaanites. Hosea seeing the similarities between his plight and that of God, wrote about his life so that his story would be a parable for Israel.

#### **THEME 48: A Teacher of Religion Presents Problems preventing the establishment of Jesus' life-on Earth.**

Students of Religion would want to discover from their teacher, the reason why the good life that Jesus lived, is difficult to establish fully on earth, by His followers. Teacher discussing this says that there are actually obstacles preventing the establishment of Jesus' life by His followers: It is true that followers of Jesus (Christians) are expected to live Jesus' own way of life fully on earth. But the followers experience obstacles in the efforts to live this life fully because some followers lack the understanding of who Jesus is and was. Some of the followers lack solid faith

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in living what one believes and agrees to do. Some practice syncretism in worship of God and so on.

### **THEME 49: A Religion Teacher explains Lessons from Joseph's Leadership in Egypt.**

A teacher of Religion explains the leadership of Joseph to students of Religion

When Joseph became governor of Egypt he acted immediately to meet the threat of famine looming Egypt by building store houses and buying and collecting grain all over the country in the time of prosperity with large harvest and good yields from fields. He kept on reserve the grains that he had collected in order to tackle the impending crisis of severe famine.

The famine covered the whole country for seven years. Both Egypt and Canaan suffered horribly. Many people came to Joseph, the governor of Egypt, with silver to buy coin. Joseph paid all the money realised into pharaoh's treasury. When the people had no more silver left, they offered their livestock cows, sheep, and goats in exchange for food. Joseph shifted all the Animals to pharaoh's farm. When all their Animals had finished and famine had still not ended, they gave them land in exchange for food. Joseph bought all the land for Pharaoh, and made the

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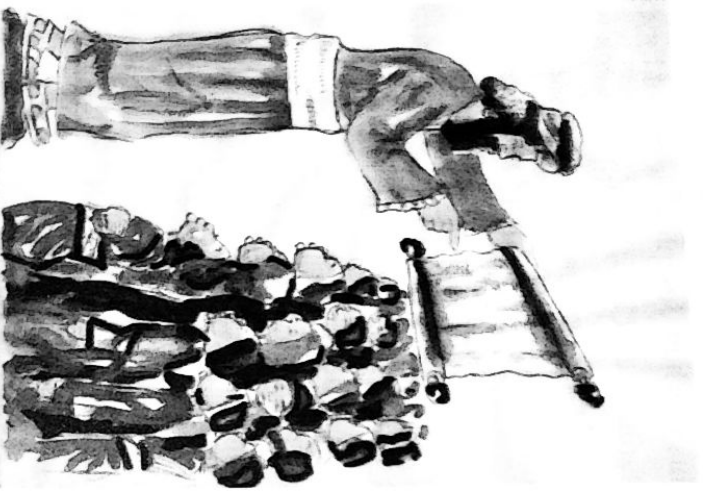
people farm the lands for pharaoh. He gave them seed to plant, and made them give one-fifth of the harvest to pharaoh. This was how Joseph took care of Egypt until the end of the famine (cf. Gen 41: 53-57) Joseph was a good man, a good planner, Joseph did not take advantage of the scarcity situation to raise the price of corn unduly in order to make more money, and oppress the people. Joseph did not use his work and position to enrich himself dishonestly. Joseph was a wise leader who made life easy and comfortable for the people he led by thinking of their convenience. For example, during the year of plenty, he built store house in each city and stored in each of those cities the food from the fields around it (cf. Gen 41:47-48). This made it convenient, cheaper and easier for the people to buy food in the year of scarcity. A considerate leader should make life easier for the people.

### **THEME 50: A Religion Teacher explains the Meaning of Vow**

A Vow is a conscious, free promise made to God, which has as its object a moral good that is both possible and better than its omission. Those entering religious life take vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience.

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## **THEME 51: Prophets of Israel and their functions in Life of the People**



The English word Prophet is derived from the Greek Word **Προφητης** (Prophetess), which defines Prophet as one who speaks for another or one who speaks on behalf of another. The Hebrew word for Prophet is nabi or navi, meaning one who is called by God, or one who announces. It means the speaker for God. But who is a Prophet? On hearing the word Prophet, what

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comes to peoples' mind that Prophet is a fortune-teller, that Prophet is a predictor of future events, that through supernatural power, a Prophet says what will happen tomorrow, and it happens. That Prophet means someone involves in some magical performance, and so on.

The Prophets of Israel were not primarily people who speak about future events. they address themselves to the waywardness of the people. Pointing back to the radical demands of their desert God (Yahweh). Prophets always denotes one who communicates divine revelation. The Prophets of Israel were men who brought God's words to people. The Prophets were important figures in the history of Israel, and the Israelites regarded them as both very holy and way powerful.

### **Functions of Prophet in Israel**

People generally think that Prophets are individuals who foretold the future. Although it is true that Prophets occasionally predict future events, but they had much more important function in Israel.

The function of the Prophets of Israel is to call Israel back to the covenant she made with God. The function of the biblical Prophets was to act as a continual thorn in the side of the established Israel, to remind her continually why she was established. You know how thorn pinches; and when it pinches a person, the person turns to see what is pinching

him or her. In the same way, the Prophets of Israel pinch like thorns in the side of Israelites, as they do this, they remind Israel continually of the covenant that God made with them.

The Prophets remind the Israelites that they were called to live in covenant love with their unique God. And also that they were called to live at peace with one another.

**THEME 52: Mercy of God cannot be reduced to "I cannot be merciful" (Eph 2:4; cf Jn 1:18; Heb 1:1)**

"It is God, who is rich in mercy" whom Jesus Christ has revealed to us as Father: it is His very Son who, in Himself, has manifested Him and made Him known to us". (John Paul II (1980) *Dives in Misericordia*, n. 1)

I still remember that the pontificate of Pope John Paul II carried a distinct air of great concern about mercy. The theme of mercy was important for him, as he lived mercy and repeatedly wrote and spoke about mercy (cf. Elochukwu (2009)).

The reality of mercy was most important for John Paul II. His Pontificate which I describe as the Pontificate of mercy bears witness to this. The importance Pope John Paul II attached to mercy during his petrine ministry was, and is, a Prophetic voice calling people's attention to mercy. Mercy

is the attribute of God in His ad extra action in relation to His people who are afflicted with physical and particularly moral evil, with the desire to offer them assistance which uplifts and liberates them from evil and misery, particularly sin (John Paul II (1980) *DM*, n. 4).

Jesus makes known and brings close to people the attributes of God in a most perfect way. God who is rich in mercy becomes visible in Christ in a special way.

Jesus, the incarnate Word, makes God present as mercy.

The merciful acts of God, taking pity on human weakness, are revealed in the history of salvation and particularly in merciful actions and lifestyle of Jesus. This meant that Christ, by his way of life and actions, personifies mercy and en-fleshes it in the situations of everyday life, thereby becoming a model of mercy for others. Jesus points out to people how they are called to mercy, and the part the Church and humanity are to follow.

From the beginning of the world, God endowed humanity with His mercy. Every act of human mercy has its origin in God and flows from Him. It is on such foundations that Pope John Paul II attitude of mercy was shaped. Therefore, the spirituality of mercy must mark every Christian and every human person's daily life. It is only an enemy of God that will belittle God's mercy.

The mercy which is an attribute of God cannot be reduced

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to: "I cannot be merciful, less people will abuse it". Our God is merciful; and we are all called to live mercy and show mercy daily to God's children.

### **THEME 53: A Religion Teacher explains Pneumatology to People**

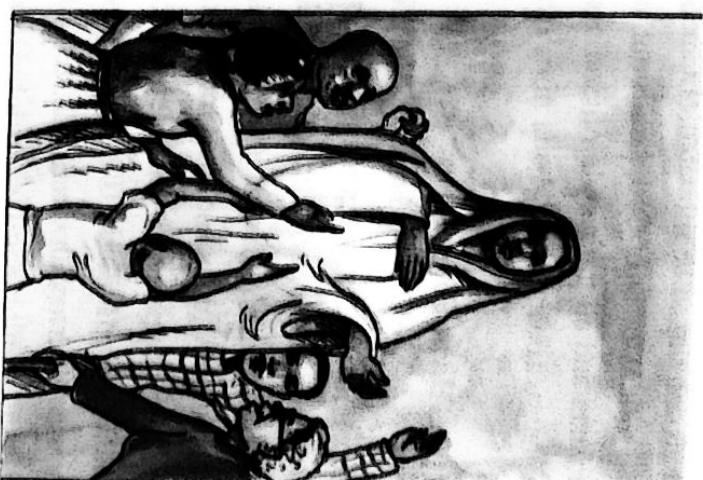
A Religion Teacher explains the term pneumatology to people

**ἵμα** is the Greek Word for "breath".

Pneumatology is the study of the Holy Spirit. In Christian theology Pneumatology refers to the study of the Holy Spirit. In Christianity, the Holy Spirit (or Holy Ghost) is the Spirit of God. In Christian beliefs, the Holy Spirit is the third person of the Holy Trinity. The Spirit of God is what human person needs in all he or she does.

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### **THEME 54: A Teacher of Religion explains to people how Mary, the Mother of God aids Christians**



A Religion teacher gives quick explanations on how the Blessed Mother, Mary, helps the pilgrim people of God in their journey to the Promised Land.

The Holy Church by imitating the Mother of God, the Blessed Virgin, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, keeps intact faith, firm hope and sincere Charity (cf. LG. n. 64 (1964))

The Vatican II Council Fathers has affirmed that the

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Blessed Virgin Mary, in her life has been a model of that motherly love with which all who join in the Church's apostolic mission should be animated. (LG n. 65). In other words, Mary, the Mother of God, stands out as the model every Christian and all the people of God should follow and imitate as a doer of God's will.

### **Result of good Home Foundation**

As we know, St Anne was the Mother of Mary, and she laid good foundation for her daughter. St Anne taught her young daughter, Mary, to be loving and kind, to be attentive to God's will. With such a firm foundation, Mary was so favourably disposed to God that when the Archangel Gabriel appeared to her and said: "You will bear a Son", and with deep faith she trustingly replied, "let it be done to me according to your word" (Lk 1:31-38).

### **How does the Mother of God help Christians?**

Mary, Mother of God, has always been a central figure in Christianity. She is a role model for Mothers. She plays important role throughout Christian history in providing Christians, in her own live, model for Christian living. Mary favours Christians with powerful protection. She preserves peoples' home from fire, flood, lightning, storm, thieves, and from every other danger.

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Mary helps Christians, when she told people to turn away from sin, to pray the Rosary, to pray for sinners, and to pray for peace. She has told Christians that her Son is very much offended by the sins of people. She asks Christians to pray and repent (cf. Fatima message)

The Blessed Virgin is a Mother to be imitated deeply by Christians.

### **THEME 55: A Teacher of Religions explains the prayer Anima Christi**

Anima Christi is a Catholic Prayer to Jesus of Medieval origin. The author is St Ignatius of Loyola.

Anima Christi Latin name, meaning "Soul of Christ" is a popular Eucharistic prayer that is found in the Roman Missal in the section on "Thanksgiving after Mass". It was popularised by St. Ignatius of Loyola and its recitation carries a partial indulgence (Enchiridion of Indulgences, n. 10).

Those who pray the Anima Christi unite themselves with Christ's sacrifice, which is the supreme act of worship and praise of God. Those who pray the Anima Christi are led to see the Eucharist as the source of salvation, redemption, sanctification and joy. For those who pray the Anima Christi, the Eucharistic truly becomes a lasting memorial of Christ's Passion, which brings human beings pardon of

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sins, protection from evil, strength for daily life.

Here is the Latin text of the prayer Anima Christi:

Anima Christi, sanctifica me.

Corpus Christi, salva me.

Sanguis Christi, inebria me.

Aqua lateris Christi, lava me.

Passio Christi, conforta me.

O bone Jesu, exaudi me.

Intra tua vulnera absconde me.

Ne permittas me separari a te.

Ab hoste maligno defende me.

In hora mortis meae voca me.

Et jube me venire ad te,

Ut cum sanctis tuis laudem te,

In Saecula saeculorum.

Amen.

Here is the Latin translation of Anima Christi given in the

Enchiridion of indulgences.

Soul of Christ, sanctify me.

Body of Christ, save me.

Blood of Christ, inebriate me.

Water from the side of Jesus, wash me.

Passion of Christ, strength me.

O good Jesus, hear me.

Within Your wounds, hide me.

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Separated from You let me never be.

From the malignant enemy, defend me.

At the hour of death, call me.

To come to You, bid me.

That I may praise You in the company of Your saints, for all eternity. Amen.

Please Note: Remember that genuine devotion to Jesus Christ can never be in vain.

#### **THEME 56: A National Values Teacher explains correct Attitude to Work**

At students' Week-End Seminar a teacher of national values is invited to give a talk on correct attitude to work.

Teacher explaining the correct attitude to work teaches that the first meaning of work is what a person does to earn a living, to prepare oneself for live in the future. Work also is done to acquire a skill, another name for work in society is job.

Teacher insists that a person's attitude to work, refers to the person's actions, mood, and feelings towards his or her work and the people around him or her. It means a personal decision of a person regarding the values that would guide him or her in his working environment and these values

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could be positive or negative.

A correct attitude to work means the right way of thinking and feeling towards one's work. Having a positive and correct attitude to work is very important for a person's success. It helps a person to develop the outstanding and necessary personal tools to achieve one's goals. When a person has the correct attitude to work, he or she becomes more positive and friendly at work. A friendly disposition enables a person to cultivate right friendships at work place, get along with colleagues, and with peoples in authority; and relate well with those who are his or her subordinates.

## **THEME 57: A Religion Teacher explains what God did to deliver the Hebrews from Slavery**

Students, in class discussion would want to know the process which God used to deliver the people of Israel from slavery in Egypt.

When God noticed the groanings of the Hebrews in their slavery in Egypt, He decided to deliver them. What did God do? God decided to deliver the Israelites through Moses, the son of the Hebrew couple. God sent Moses to rescue the people of Israel from the hands of Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. And Yahweh's message was that Pharaoh

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had to let the Israelites go in order to worship Him and made covenant with Him in the desert.

Moses and Aaron met king Pharaoh and told him to let the Hebrews go in order to keep a feast in Yahweh's honour in the desert. Pharaoh refused the request, and intensified Israel's hard labour. Then the plagues: The first nine plagues failed to impress king Pharaoh, in part because his own magicians were able to duplicate some of them. But the tenth plague had the desired effect; Yahweh struck dead all the first born human beings and Animas in Egypt, except those of the Hebrews.

Israel started their journey and Moses took with him the bones of Joseph. And Yahweh – God preceded them. (cf. Ex. 3:7-12; 5:1-5:7; 8; 12:35-41; 13:17)

## **THEME 58: Moral Lesson from Samuel and his Children**

Students of CRS ask Teacher for Class discussion on Moral Lesson from Samuel and his sons. The moral lesson one can learn from the story of Samuel and his two sons Joel and Abijah: It is clear from the story of Samuel and his two sons that his sons Joel and Abijah had bad character. They had no good reputation as their father. Samuel; this was because Samuel did not start early to direct them

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towards righteous moral life.

This means that it is very important for parents to train their children through correction and direction. It is essential that parents have to help and lead their children to general moral education.

#### **THEME 59: A Religion Teacher explains Significance of the four Cardinal Virtues to Youths**

A Religion Teacher explains the meaning of the four Cardinal virtues to Youths at a Week-End Parish Seminar. The four Cardinal virtues are: Prudence, Justice, Fortitude, Temperance. Cardinal in Latin is "Cardo" meaning "hinge" why are these virtues called cardinal? They are called cardinal virtues because they are regarded as the basic virtues required for a virtuous life. They are the key virtues upon which all the other virtues hinge or depend. Prudence: Prudence is the virtue which disposes a person to discern in every circumstance his or her true good and to choose the right means to accomplish it (Catechism of the Catholic Church n. 1806). Prudence is called the *Auriga Virtutum* ("pilot of the virtues"): It guides a person's judgement and conscience and leads the other virtues in indicating to them rule and measure. It is related to prayerful reflection and discernment and involves bringing

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God's word to bear on a person's life decisions, under the influence of a growing faith, hope, and love.

Justice: Justice is the virtue which indicates the constant and firm will to give to God and others what is their due. Justice faithful love and mercy are closely related biblical concepts. Justice is traditionally considered as having three basic forms: Communitative justice; this means relations of people with one another; Distributive justice; this means relations of society to individuals; legal justice; this means individuals in relation to the common good.

Fortitude: Fortitude is the virtue that strengthens a person's resolution and his or her ability to resist temptation and overcome obstacles in the pursuit of good and in the following of Christ: "In the world you will have hardship, but be courageous": "I have conquered the world" (Jn16:33).

Acts of fortitude, usually described as endurance and risk, must be informed by prudence. Endurance is an active form of witness to Jesus Christ as the many martyrs of the Church testify. The virtue of fortitude is needed as one endeavours to respond with hope and perseverance to the many obstacles we experience from within ourselves and without, on our journey.

Temperance: The Latin meaning "Moderation" Temperance enables a person to moderate his or her

appetites and control his or her passions, to acquire a balance in the use of created goods: "We must be self-restrained and live upright and religious lives in this present world" (Titus 2:12). The New Testament calls it "self-control," "modesty". All the focus is on the development of the whole person, in a holistic manner. Each person is called to discover, through prayer, experience, and ongoing effort, a sense of equilibrium which will ground a healthy spiritual and moral life.

#### **THEME 60: Recalling of the spirit of foundation of a Religious Institute**

The Code of Canon law says:

"The whole patrimony of an institute must be faithfully preserved by all. This patrimony is comprised of the intentions of the founders, of all that the competent ecclesiastical authority has approved concerning the nature, purpose, spirit and character of the institute, and of its sound traditions" Can. 578.

In the Decree on the Up-To-Date Renewal of Religious Life (*Perfectae Caritatis*), the Vatican Council II Fathers decreed the principles for the renewal of religious life:

1. That the Up-To-Date renewal of religious life comprises both a constant return to the sources of Christian life, and a

constant return to the original inspiration of the institutes and their adaptation to the changed conditions of our time. This renewal under the guidance of the Holy Spirit must be promoted in accordance with the following principles:

2. Since the final norms of religious life is the following of Christ as it is put for us in the Gospel, the following of Christ must be taken by all institutes as the supreme rule (P.C. No. 2).

3. The spirit and aims of each founder should be faithfully accepted and retained (P.C. No. 2).

Nota Bane: These important points presented to religious, are important to remember.

#### **THEME 61: Lessons Christians and Non-Christians learn from the Sermon on the Mount**

There are Lessons which Christians and Non-Christians can learn from the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount:

1. The Sermon on the Mount acts as directives for the aspirants to the Kingdom of God.

2. Christians and non-Christians learn that the Sermon on the Mount is Jesus' radical ethical teaching with the Kingdom of God as its goal and horizon.

3. They learn that these specific teachings are intended as directives or guidelines towards reaching the goal.

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4. They learn that the Sermon on the Mount provides a sample of the content of Jesus' radical ethical teachings.

**THEME 62: Parables, Jesus' means of conveying the Message of the Kingdom**

Jesus Teaches with Parables:

One of the methods which Jesus used to convey His message of the reign of God was parable.

The word parable is derived from the Greek Verb (παράβολον) (Paraballo), which means "to place one thing beside another." A parable may be defined as a story taken from everyday life, which pushes the mind of the listeners into active thinking. Jesus used the parable to illustrate the kingdom of God.

Jesus tried to meet His listeners in their own daily lives and to use their ordinary experiences as tools to help them better understand message, for the farmers he used illustrations from farming e.g. (Mt. 13:1-52)

**THEME 63: A Religion Teacher explains Jesus' Teaching on the Kingdom of God**

Students of Religion demanded a concrete teaching of Jesus on the Kingdom of God.

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The coming of God's Kingdom or the reign of God was used by Jesus of Nazareth as the Keynote of His mission. In the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke, the Kingdom of God remained a central discourse and symbol through which major dimensions of Jesus' teaching and ministry are to be understood.

When St Matthew sat down to summarise the preaching of John the Baptist, he wrote: "Repent for the kingdom of heaven has come" (Mt. 3:2). The first word that St Matthew attributed to Jesus as He began His public ministry was exactly the same, "Repeat, for the kingdom of heaven is near" (Mt 4:17).

The kingdom of God was the central theme in the preaching of both John the Baptist and Jesus. The great question of human existence are: who am I? What is my goal in life? How do I get there?

The kingdom of God was the central theme in Jesus' life and teaching. Jesus is described as the Prophet of God's Kingdom. He also insisted that the kingdom of God is among us and in our midst. Jesus was not only the perfect embodiment of His own teachings but he also provided for His followers a sound framework for living in the present so that they, too, might enter that kingdom.

The teaching of Jesus Christ revolves around the kingdom of God. The kingdom in the Bible is where God reigns

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supreme and His will is obeyed.

How to enter the kingdom of Jesus taught His followers. Jesus taught His followers how to enter the kingdom of God. "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of God, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 7:21).

#### **THEME 64: Israel Compared herself with other Nations around**

Consequences of Israel's settling down in the land of Canaan:

When the Israelites arrived in the Promised Land, they were very much occupied with land and area allocation battle. When they secured their own quarters and areas, they looked around and noticed what their neighbours had that they did not have. And some of the consequences of Israel's settling down from battle include:

1. Israel became aware that she had no standing army.
2. She noticed that their neighbours had a physical king that led them to battle and for this reason, Israel also demanded for a physical king and their reasons for requesting for a king was so that they would be like other nations.

Israel abandoned theocracy and demanded for a physical king in order to be like other nations. A lesson!

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#### **THEME 65: A CRS Teacher presents Lessons from Joseph's Story (Gen. 37:2-26; 39:49:1-12)**

A CRS teacher makes his own contribution on lessons people can learn from Joseph's story:

The story of Joseph and his brothers provides an interesting variation. The story revolves around the theme of how one of the brothers was loved in a special way by their father, Jacob, and the difficulties that developed because of it. Joseph was obviously favoured by Jacob (and God), and his brothers were jealous of him.

Joseph, for his part, was not very prudent in the way he flouted his status. His brothers decided to get rid of him and they sold him into slavery.

The story of Joseph is one of the great human growth. Joseph grew from being a conceited child to being a man who could forgive grave injustice. His brothers grew from being jealous to being capable of admitting their guilt and being ready to suffer for each other.

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**THEME 66: Teacher explains the Significance of Mighty Deeds of Jesus**

At a One-Day Parish Community Seminar, a religion teacher discusses the Significance of Mighty Deeds of Jesus.

Mighty Deeds of Jesus referred to all His miraculous cures; His Healings, the Exorcisms, Resuscitations, and Nature miracles; for example, Jesus cured the mother-in-law of Simon Peter, and the whole town crowded around the door, and Jesus cured many who were ill with diseases of different kinds. He drove out many devils (cf. Mk 1:29-34; 3:7-12; 6:55ff) (Mt. 4:23; 9:35; 14: 34; 15:30; 21:14) Jesus, Mighty Deeds were signs of the proximity (nearness) of the reign of God (the kingdom of God).

**THEME 67: A Teacher of Religion answers a Question regarding a just War**

A student asks her teacher whether there is a war that is justified.

Teacher states that nothing justifies war because the message of Jesus Christ is one of peace and love.

The people of the earth are created to live in peace and in harmony. Peace is stress free, state of security and calmness that comes when there is no fight or war and

A Book on Living as God's Child- Akwukwo maka ibi ndu ka nwa Chukwu everything co-exists in a serene manner.

**THEME 68: A Female Teacher from the South-East, Nigeria, gives Teaching on the Correct Preparation of bitter-leaf (Onugbu) Soup**



A delicious bitter-leaf (onugbu) soup brings praise to God and to the cook!

A teacher of Religion, who hears people commenting and lamenting that the present-day bitter-leaf (Onugbu) soup does not in any way taste like the traditional bitter-leaf (Onugbu) soup.

The present-day, families, caterers, hospitality centres, etc, prepare bitter-leaf (Onugbu) soup as a vegetable soup is

prepared. In the preparation of vegetable soup, vegetable is the last and final ingredients to put in the pot. If a cook, a caterer, etc, adds bitter-leaf (Onugbu) soup last in its preparation, it will not cook. The bitter-leaf soup is never bitter, that is, the bitter-leaf (Onugbu) soup must be washed well before using it for soup.

Now here are Steps towards the Preparation of the Traditional Bitter-Leaf (Onugbu) Soup

#### **Process of Cooking Bitter-Leaf (Onugbu) Soup**

Step 1: Season whatever you have like meat, fish, stockfish, crayfish, etc, and keep them aside.

Step 2: Pour water into the pot, the amount of water that will be enough for the soup you are planning. Then boil the water to a boiling point and add bitter-leaf (Onugbu). As the bitter-leaf boil in the pot, add pounded cocoyam (Ede), then add oil, add your seasoned meat, fish, stockfish, crayfish, etc.

Step 3: As the soup continued to boil, add all the species you have, like: Ogili, Maggi, Salt etc. You continue to cook and stir your soup until it is cooked and done.

With this correct process of preparing the bitter-leaf (Onugbu) soup, you give joy to people, by give them a delicious and a rich bitter-leaf (Onugbu) soup.

#### **THEME 69: The Israelites hear the Charges against them**

In chapter four of the Prophet Hosea, his prophecy took the form of a covenant lawsuit. Here the Prophet Hosea acted as God's prosecuting attorney, trying the Israelites for their failure to abide by their agreement with the Lord. Thus, the chapter four of the Prophet Hosea began with summon in which the people of Israel were called to hear the charges against them.

1. Israelites were charged for their lack of faith in God.
2. They were charged for lack of loyalty to God.
3. They were charged for their ignorance of God.
4. Israelites were charged for lying, murder, theft, adultery and violence.
5. They were charged for bloodshed after bloodshed (cf. Hosea 4:1-11).

A big lesson for all!

#### **THEME 70: A Teachers of Religion explains National Ethics**

A Teacher of Religion explains National Ethics to students.

National Ethics is the Ethics which a nation as a whole abides by. National Ethics refers to a systematic general

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science of right and wrong. It is the Ethics which every citizen of a nation has to observe.

We know this fact in order to act!

**THEME 71: A National Values Teacher explains reasons why a Village Community lives in Harmony**

A Village Community, Ijudigidi, in Ogbokwutu Town, receives a special award from the people of Ogbokwutu town for harmoniously living together.

National Values students, ask their teacher to help them discover the secret behind this harmonious living together of Ijudigidi village. Teacher explains that the village community of Ijudigidi, is able to live together because they apply the system of Social Ethics. The social ethics policy helps the village community of Ijudigidi to live together. It shapes the behaviours of the individuals within the village community of Ijudigidi. The policy helps the people in the village community of Ijudigidi to know what is right and wrong.

**THEME 72: A Religion Teacher explains how a true Christian responds to God's Love**

Students ask religion teacher to help them understand how

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a true Christian can respond to God's love.

A true Christian response to God's love begins when the Christian seeks to find out the origin of his or her misconduct or offence against God, and be ready to fight and attack the evil.

Then he or she can start to ask for God's pardon. In other words, the fighting of the evil in a person's life and living a new life, is by a true repentance and conversion.

When a Christian seeking a true response to God's love, finds out the root of his or her evil-life, he or she confesses the evil. When the evil is confessed, he or she tries to leave or forsake that evil or those evils, and put his or her faith in God and not in the idols.

**THEME 73: Evil of bribery**

Bribery is money, favour, or other consideration given in exchange for one's influence against what is true, right or just.

God's law given to Moses for the people of Israel forbade the taking of bribe, "for a bribe blinds the discerning and perverts the words of the righteous" (Ex. 23:8). This rule is repeated in Deuteronomy: "You shall not prevent justice; you shall not show partiality, nor take a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and twists the words of the

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righteous" (Dt. 16:19-20). The negative effects of taking a bribe are clearly outlined in the two passages.

Bribery perverts justice. It is a blinding influence on wisdom and discernment. It clouds the truth, perverts or twists the words of those who would be righteous in the sight of God.

A strong instruction!

**THEME 74: A CRS Teacher explains the common concerns of the Biblical Prophets.**

Common concerns: This means the concerns that all biblical Prophets, who spoke for Yahweh were worried about.

Students of CRS ask teacher whether the biblical Prophets had common concerns in their prophecy. Teacher explains that it is true that different Prophets had different concerns that varied according to the circumstance in which each individual Prophet was working; but there are a few basic themes shared by virtually all the books of the latter Prophets. The biblical Prophets tell the people of Israel what sort of punishment they would expect if they do not change their ways.

The primary goal of most of the writing Prophets was to call erring Israelites back to the covenant obligations. This

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involved reminding the Israelites what those obligations were and warning the Israelites what the consequences would be if they continued to be derelict in their duties to Yahweh.

By emphasising issues of social justice and care of the oppressed, the Prophets of Israel tried to convince their audience that personal morality is just as important to God as proper maintenance of the aspects of worship.

**THEME 75: Why do people Seek Knowledge?**

At a symposium on essence of Education, one of the participants asks the conveners to explain to her why people seek knowledge.

Conveners invited answers from the participants. And various answers emerged; but one of the participants recalls St Bernard of Clairvaux's reflection on knowledge, where St. Bernard reflecting on knowledge says that there are people who seek knowledge for the sake of knowledge, and he calls that curiosity. There are those who seek knowledge to be known by others, and St. Bernard regards this as vanity. There are those who seek knowledge in order to serve; and St. Bernard calls this love; and he says that this is true knowledge.

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**THEME 76: A Teacher of CRS explains Holiness in everyday life of a human person**

A Christian Religious studies' teacher explains holiness in daily life of a human person.

The Prophet Isaiah told the people of Sodom and Gomorrah that their sacrifices were worthless without repentance. God told them through the Prophet Isaiah that their multitude sacrifices meant nothing to Him. That He had had enough of burnt offerings of rams and fat cows, that what He needs from the people is the holiness of life. People should rid themselves of evil deeds; let them seek justice; cease to oppress the poor, the fatherless, the widows, and more importantly to repent. In other words, to be holy involves living a godly life, commitment and dedication to God.

Holiness of life does not go with heart that is full of iniquity, full of hatred for God and for people.

God is holy and nothing unholy can behold His presence. Isaiah confessed his sins and was forgiven and purified. In this way, if a person repents genuinely of his or her evil ways, he or she shall receive God's mercy, and holy life starts for that person. A holy life means a total repentance, a commitment to God, and the love of neighbour and all it entails.

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**THEME 77: Practice of Mercy a demand of Jesus to People**

John Paul II reminds people that Christ, in revealing the mercy of God, demanded from people that they also should be guided in their lives by love and mercy (Dives in Misericordia, (1980), n. 3). St Pope John Paul II used this statement to remind people of what Christ expected and still expects from them in response to His revelation and incarnation of love-mercy in their daily life among people. John Paul II recalled that Jesus demanded from His disciples the imitation of Him in the practice of mercy. He demanded that those who are beneficiaries of divine mercy must make mercy part of their lives.

Emphasising this demand, John Paul II affirms that this requirement from Jesus' disciples forms part of the very essence of the messianic message, and constitutes the heart of the Gospel ethos. Jesus the Teacher, expresses this both through the medium of commandment which He describes as "the greatest," (Mt 22:38) and also in form of blessing, when in the Sermon on the Mount He proclaims: "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy" (Mt 5:7).

**THEME 78: Israel solved the problem of a Running battle between Yahweh and Baal**

During most of Israel's history there was a running battle between Yahweh-God and Baal, to see who Israel would serve.

This battle became critical during the reign of King Ahab of Israel (874-853 BCE).

When Ahab saw Elijah, he exclaimed: "So there you are, you scourge of Israel!" Elijah told Ahab that he and his family were the 'scourge because they have deserted Yahweh and followed Baal. Elijah felt that time has ripped for Israel to choose whom to serve.

Elijah then told Ahab to give orders for all Israel and the four hundred Prophets of Baal to gather around him on Mount Carmel. King Ahab then called all Israel together and assembled the Prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel. Elijah stepped out in front of all the people and asked them how long they would continue to go back and forth looking for which to serve: "If Yahweh is God, follow him; of Baal, follow him".

Elijah then, challenged the Prophets of Baal to a contest. The Prophets of Baal would call on their god, and Elijah will call on Yahweh to send fire to consume their sacrifices. The god who answered would be the god of Israel. The Prophets of Baal called in vain, but when Elijah called

on Yahweh, fire fell immediately and consumed the sacrifice. Yahweh is God (cf: 1 Kgs 18:20-40). Israel Made a Choice!

**THEME 79: A CRS Teacher gives full explanation of CRS to Students**

Teacher of Christian Religious Studies (CRS) gives the full meaning of CRS to students.

Teacher explains that Christian Religious Studies is an academic field devoted to research on Religious beliefs, behaviours, etc. A Christian Religious studies describes, compares, interprets, and explain religion, emphasising systematic, historically basic and cross-cultural perspectives.

Christian Religious Studies is the process where the Christians' learning takes place. It often involves teaching which enables practicing Christians to adopt and deepen their Christian beliefs, values, and dispositions to experience and act in a Christian way.

**THEME 80: A Teacher of Religion explains Indoctrination to Students**

A teacher of Religion explains the term indoctrination to

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students of Religion. Every religion has a method of recruiting, or receiving new members or believers.

Christians have a number of ways or methods by which Religious Truth is being communicated, e.g. Religious Indocrination.

Religious Indocrination refers to a process of imparting doctrine in an authoritative way, as in catechism. Most religious groups among the revealed religion, instruct new members in the principles of the religion.

Indocrination is simply a method of explaining, imparting, and communicating doctrine or the religious truth to the new members. Thus, indocrination is one of the means of Communicating the Religious Truth to the new members.

**THEME 81: A National Values Teacher compares the Situation of Israel before the emergence of Prophecy with our present-day Society.**

A student of National Values wanted to know from the teacher whether the people of Israel experienced social ills and unfavourable situations as people experience in present-day society.

Teacher affirmed that the people of Israel suffered social ills and unfavourable situations before the emergence of

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prophecy in Israel. In fact the situation of Israel before the emergence of the prophecy was just bad.

Israel suffered from social ills. It was a period of moral decadence. The rich built up large plantations, while the poor were left landless, nothing for the poor and the marginalised. People bought justice from those who should have defended the weak and the poor. Prophets, priests, and judges accepted bribes, merchants cheated the people; Canaanites' gods' worship were used alongside Yahwehistic one. This means that Israel was mixing Yahweh's worship with worship of Baal. In others words, there was a total abandonment of the worship of God for Baal.

There was social injustice, with the horrible wickedness of all leaders, political, and spiritual. While princess and merchants rob the poor and humble, especially women and children, Priests and Prophets adapt their words to please their audience. They adjust their words in order to get a huge amount of money. Prophecy was rejected and sacrifices were emptied of their relation to God.

Judges themselves were supposed to be the custodies of justice but they were totally corrupt. As a result of this corruption, the poor could not seek justice in the courts. They were instead robbed of justice, and justice given to highest bidder, the wealthy (cf. MI 2-3).

Israel practiced false religion that is, a pretentious and morally corrupt life of the people of Jerusalem, and sacrifices were emptied of their relation to God. The covenant was ignored: People of Israel's worship was ineffective, shallow, and only amount to lip-service. Although the people of Israel fulfilled their the practical obligations of worship, sacrifices, payments of tithes and others; these were not accepted by God because the land had been polluted by sin, the people were only being hypocritical. Israelites wallowed in ignorance by thinking that those obligations of covenant which they made with God could be fulfilled by mere sacrifices. In fact, Israel reduced worship to mockery. It was all lip-service.

In the same way, people of our present-day society also suffer social ills and unfavourable situations. The people of our present-day society experience injustices some people are deprived of what belonged to them. The school fees at all levels are so expensive that the poor people are not able to have education.

Many people in our present-day society are living in affluence, while the rest are dying of hunger and malnutrition. And those in the society, who should say something, say nothing. They are just dumb.

**THEME 82: A Disappointment when one expects too much from Human Beings**

There was a story of a young lady, Ijika, who was deciding to harm herself because of ill-treatment she experienced from someone she least expected such.

As she was reflecting on harming herself, a thought came to her to share her experience with Mrs. Ujundi. After sharing her experience, Mrs. Ujundi exclaimed:

“What!” Do not expect too much from anybody, from any human being.”

Ijika immediately changed her mind and thanked Mrs. Ujundi.

A big lesson for all!

### **THEME 83: Teacher of Religion explains Lectio Divina**



The teacher of Religion explains Lectio Divina.

Lectio Divina is the reading and meditation of Sacred Scripture oriented towards the deepening of the major themes of Biblical spirituality in relation with liturgical life.

This type of Bible reading started in Monastic settings and was regarded as exclusively religious, but today it has become a vital part of the whole Christian community.

Lectio Divina uses the text of Scripture but it hopes to arrive at a much higher encounter with "Christ according to the Spirit" (Rom 1:4).

### **THEME 84: Teacher of Religion explains Religious Hypocrisy**

Students of Religion ask teacher to explain further the meaning of Religious Hypocrisy.

Teacher begins by referring to Jesus' teachings on Religious Hypocrisy on prayer and fasting.

#### **Prayer (Mt. 6:5-13):**

Jesus warns his followers' against Religious hypocrisy. That is the desire to show off, wanting to be seen at prayer and praised by people. This is a way of pretending to be better than other people. Jesus told His followers that they should not purposely position themselves publicly in order to be seen by people and praise their piety. But Jesus added if public praise is all these people wanted in prayers, then, the praise they got from people was their only reward. Jesus insists that the gate to answered prayer is to do it in secret

**Fasting (Mt. 6:16-18):**

Teacher teaches that fasting is a keeping away from eating, drinking, or doing anything that the body enjoys, in order to spend time in prayer. Fasting is associated with prayer (cf. Mt. 6:17-21). Fasting is always done to please God and not an act to show-off, or in seeking for human praise. The effort to show people that one is fasting is a form of Religious hypocrisy that Jesus condemned. Because hypocrites of His time disfigured their faces to show people that they were fasting; fasting of this kind lacks efficacy. The teacher concludes with Jesus words which say that true believers should fast in secret and God who sees everything will reward accordingly.

**THEME 85: A Poor devout Woman raised in**

**Appreciation**

There is a story of Ujafa a poor devout woman, who lives around a rich village Church. This woman, Ujafa, did not marry, therefore she has no children. In fact she has no close relation; and her house is that of a wretched person. This woman, Ujafa, sweeps the village Church and its environment every day; and she does this for years. And she has not visited anywhere; she does not go on holidays because she has no money to pay for any holiday fare. As

she does the volunteer work of sweeping the village Church, she did not know that the parishioners of the village Church notice her generous action.

One day the parishioners had a meeting and decided that they would pay Ujafa's holiday fare, so that she can go on holiday. When this intention was communicated to Ujafa, she was Jubilant and agreed. She went on eight weeks' holiday.

When Ujafa travelled, the people of the village Parish Church had a meeting where they decided to build a house for Ujafa's. They demolished Ujafa's old wretched house, and build a new brand house for her and equipped it with all round modern equipment.

On the day of her return from her holidays, the parishioners went in numbers to train station to welcome Ujafa. When she saw almost a throng of people waiting to welcome her she was delighted and brightened more.

They accompanied Ujafa to her home and presented her a new brand house equipped with modern facilities. Ujafa fainted in joy and gratitude but quickly regained her consciousness. She was running around praising God and thanking the parishioners. This type of upliftment is what is expected of the children of God; and the child of God.

### **THEME 86: A Religion Teacher explains Spiritual Life to People**

A teacher of religion explains the term spiritual life to youths at a yearly rally.

Spiritual life is a term with which Christians refer to their commitment to religious matters. The term spiritual life is a carryover from times when religious people thought negatively of material things, presuming that they made no contribution to a God-directed life. Spiritual life, therefore, seems to imply material is not good, just as interior life seems to imply material is not good, just as interior life another way of referring to spiritual life seems to imply that exterior life is not good since the teaching of Vatican II on the intrinsic goodness of temporal realities, believers discipline have to integrate every dimension of life as part of one's commitment to God. A person can direct his or her family or professional life to God just as easily as one can direct one's liturgical life to God.

The Vatican council II Fathers moved away from any elitist approach to spiritual life such as we often had seen in history, and insisted that the source of spiritual life is sacramental life. That the true nature of spiritual growth is the daily development of the life of charity. That the centre of all spiritual enrichment is that Christians are called to be holy by participating in the life of a Holy Church. The Council launched a universal call to holiness, making

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growth in spiritual life a part of every Christian's daily responsibility.

### **THEME 87: A Boy Rescued from Embarrassment**

At a school not too far away, a boy was carrying the school surety form looking for someone to surety him for the examination that was already on.

At that moment, there was a group of friends, women, walking down the road within the school compound. This group of friends was going for their monthly meeting, and they saw a boy carrying a form and was crying at the top of his voice. The friends stopped and called him; when he came he narrated his story to them. They told the boy to wait. The women consulted among themselves and after a few minutes they asked the boy his details, and account number.

They transferred the remaining amount of school fees, and he was allowed to continue his exams that day. And more beautiful action followed, this group of friends promised to pay the boy's school fees from the final year of NCE to the final year of the four (4) years of university studies. There by saving the boy from the forever embarrassment.

The Church as the family of God must bear witness to Christ by promoting justice on a nation, and on the nations of the world. Jesus says: "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Mt. 5:9-10).

The Church witnesses to justice by proclaiming it throughout the society; the Church also witnesses to justice by condemning injustice noticed in the daily life-style of the nation.

The Church's witness to justice means that she should be committed herself to the execution of justice by being just in her everyday relationship with the people in the society both rich and poor.

#### **THEME 91: A Human Person must Work**

Work is doing something that involves physical and mental effort. By his work, human person occupies a certain sector of the world. As a co-creator, a human person expresses himself in his work. With the fall of Adam and Eve work becomes burdensome and labour-intensive.

Work is not just a mere productivity. It is a creative activity through which a human person shows his or her ability and creativity. Unemployment is a serious problem, because it robs a human person of his ability to creatively contribute to the good of the whole world. In other words, everyone

needs to work hard to contribute to the family, community, society, and the whole world. One must have right attitude to work, that is, the disposition and desire to work, and to work hard. No one should be dogging work, and no one should be lazy to work.

#### **THEME 92: The Church is to promote the Reign of God**

The Church of God has the function of promoting the reign of God. The Church is to be aware that serious promotion of the reign of God in the nation is of first class importance. A nation that waters down the primacy of God is moving to ruin.

The Church has to create the awareness that God is the Head of nation, by insisting that Religion and Christian Religious Studies, should be studied at all levels of educational institutions in the nation. God must be relevant in the nation.

#### **THEME 93: The Church is to promote teaching and learning in a Nation**

Education is also the mandate of Christ to the holy Church. The Church is to constantly remind the people of a nation of the need for grounding deeply the people of that nation in education, by providing the necessary infrastructure and

facilities that promote education, and teaching and learning.

The Church herself has to be exemplary in the different private schools she manages. She has to do this by providing those things that are needed to make the environment conducive for teaching and learning.

**THEME 94: Accumulation of Wealth, not to be the Central focus of a person's life**

Wealth is an abundance of valuable possessions or money. There are variety of views people have about wealth: At one side of the coin, they say that wealth is good because it helps people to live well, meeting every need. At the other side of the coin, they see wealth as an evil to be avoided.

But there is also the teaching of Jesus Christ, which says that human person cannot serve both God and wealth (Mk 10:23-27). It is sad if wealth triumphs over God. Accumulation of Wealth is not to be the central focus of a person's life. Wealth should not be an obstacle to one's faith. Proverb says: "Be rich in good deeds" (Proverb 23:5). Wealth must not triumph over God.

**THEME 95: A Religion Teacher explains Jesus' intent on comparing His followers to Salt and Light**

At a symposium on Christian-living, a participant asks the religion teacher, the resource person to explain what Jesus means by comparing His followers to Salt and Light.

She begins her explanation by saying that followers of Christ are called Christians. The functions of these Christians are compared to that of Salt and Light. Christians she says, are to be to the people in the world what salt and light are:

Salt: "You are salt for the earth" Salt is white. It works gently and it has cleansing quality (Mt. 5:13-16). It makes something pure and preserves something from decay. Salt penetrates any food, and gives parts of its taste to it.

Christians are salt for the earth. But for them to be salt for the earth, they must be sweet in temper and gentle in character. They must be good to everybody without distinction: they must spread and mix with people as salt penetrates into any food. If a Christian does not perform these duties, then he or she is like salt which has lost its taste, therefore rejected and to be thrown away.

Light: "You are light for the world (Mt. 5:14). Christians are also light for the world. Light has the quality of giving an environment a welcoming atmosphere. Light drives away darkness; it shows the true nature of something. It

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gives life and warmth to home and environment. Light guides, cheers up cloudy settings, and so on. Christians as light, are expected to guide, direct and lead people to Christ. As light, they have the function of driving away the darkness of ignorance and fear. Christians are to show others an example of how God wants them to live, by their own good actions and holy lives. As light for the world, Christians are on the top of the mountain and therefore cannot hide because many people are watching them.

By comparing the Christians to salt and light, Jesus is showing Christians their position, duties, and responsibilities. By the comparison Jesus is teaching Christians that there must be something inviting and attractive about their character if they are to be called Christians.

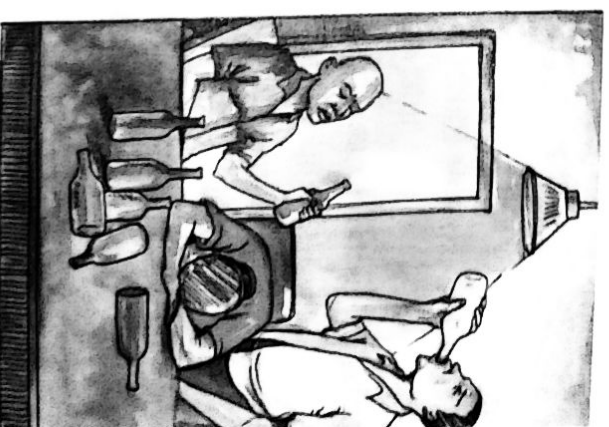
#### **THEME 96: A Religion Teacher explains Practical Theology**

Practical theology designates the understanding of the lived faith experience in its pastoral dimension.

Practical theology completes systematic theology by incorporating the abstract reflection process and testing its practicability (its possible practice) in the lived practice of faith. Practical theology raises questions for how to proceed in the practice, what is prudent to be done, what

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needs to be done and in what order, what can be accomplished, how a person can respond. The topics under the category of practical theology include: Christian ethics, spirituality, worship and pastoral. Practical theology is an equal partner with fundamental and systematic theologies in raising the questions of what must be examined by theology.

#### **THEME 97: The Negative Result of Alcoholism**



Alcoholism means excessive drinking of alcohol. Those people who drink too much alcoholic drinks are

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called drunkards. The alcohol in these drinks makes their whole body constitution too weak. Their brain is made too weak to reason, too weak to study, too weak to work and even too weak to play. People who drink too much alcohol behave unreasonably.

Bible view on Alcoholism: God warns the people "It is not for kings to drink wine, not for rulers to crave beer, lest they drink and forget what has been decreed, and deprive all the oppressed of their rights" (Proverb 31:4-5). A moderation in taking alcohol would be better for a reasonable person.

#### **THEME 98: A Teacher explains Christians' Prophetic Role**

Students of CRS told teacher to mention some areas in which Christians can play their Prophetic role.

Teacher accepted to mention at least three areas, and they (students) will mention more.

The three areas in which Christians can play their role are:

1. Christians as Prophets are to fight against injustice and live justice.
2. Christians as Prophets are to condemn the ill-treatment of the poor, by being the voice for the poor, speaking for them and helping them.
3. It is the function of Christians as Prophets to condemn

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any ill-treatment of House-Helps.

#### **THEME 99: Drug Abuse and its Negative effect**

Drug Abuse means the use of prescription or over-the-counter drugs for purposes other than those for which they are meant to be used.

Drug Abuse is the use of a drug in amount or by methods which are harmful to the individual or others.

Drug Abuse is the use of drugs and medication without doctor's prescription. A person may abuse drug by taking overdose or too little of that particular drug. Drug abuse can affect several aspects of a person's physical and psychological health.

**Biblical View on Drug:** "Things are lawful for me, but I will not be enslaved by anything" (1 Cor. 6:12). What is advised is the rational use of drugs as prescribed by doctor in doses that meet the individual requirements, for the adequate period of time. If an individual takes drugs for the sake of pleasure derived in them, it becomes an abuse. And it does not depict or show person that take his or her spiritual life seriously.

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**THEME 100: Seeking Human Protection cause of Israel's Unfaithfulness**

To trace the unfaithfulness of Israel, one has to examine the sources of the abandonment of Yahweh.

King Omri of Israel (885-874 BCE) had sought to strengthen Israel's ties with the Phoenicians by marrying for his son, Ahab, Jezebel, the daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Chief Phoenician cities of Sodom and Tyre. Jezebel was a worshiper of Baal, the Canaanites god of fertility.

Ahab (874-853 BCE)

When Ahab became king in Israel, he did not only allow Jezebel to continue to worship Baal, but he also institutionalised the worship of Baal in Israel by building temples and erecting altars to Baal, and by maintaining a large body of Baalist Prophets. Jezebel brought hundreds of Prophets of Baal into the royal court, while the Prophets of Yahweh were being executed at Jezebel's commands. The strength and success of Baalism during Ahab's reign in Israel implies that many Israelites must have been worshipping Baal instead of Yahweh or in addition to worshipping Yahweh. This means the worshipping of Yahweh and Baal; and it is called Syncretism. This is not allowed by Yahweh (God). It is a contradiction to the covenant Israel made with God. Israel turned their back on Yahweh because she was seeking human protection

A Book on Living as God's Child- Akwukwo maka ibi ndu ka nwa Chukwu instead of that of God.

A big lesson for all!

**THEME 101: Teacher of Religion explains Holiness in the Bible**

The Teacher of Religion explains the meaning of Holiness in the Bible.

Holiness in the Bible means "Spotless or Blameless". God is holy and nothing unholy has any communion with Him. In the vision of Isaiah during his call to prophecy, Isaiah saw the Lord seated on a high and lofty throne. His train fills the sanctuary. Above Him stood Seraphs, each one with six wings: two to cover his face, two to cover his feet; and two for flying and they were singing the following expressions to each other: "Holy, Holy, Holy, is Yahweh of Sabbath".

Holiness was the core of the Prophet Isaiah's message whether he spoke of questions of morality, worship, or politics (cf. Is. 6; 6:5; 6:8-13).

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### **THEME 102: A Teacher of Religion explains Qualities of false Prophets**

A Junior Secondary School Student asks the class teacher to tell them how a person dictates false Prophets.

Teacher explains that false Prophets do not have mandate from God. They always send themselves communicating their own message and will instead of Gods. False Prophets prophesy what people would like to hear. They are after monetary gain in their prophecy.

The biblical false Prophets were often court Prophets and their whole interests were to tell the king and their officials what they wanted to hear. Teacher explains that false Prophets were and are those Prophets who derive monetary benefits from favourable prophecies that assured their clients of divine blessings which will never materialise.

### **THEME 103: God's Children should Dress Modestly**

Every human person created by God, is called to dress appropriately and modestly.

The beauty of every woman, every girl, every man, and every boy, is noticed and appreciated when she or he dresses appropriately and modestly.

It is sad to behold a healthy human person, in a half-naked manner walking the street of God in the world. It is a

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behaviour that must be checked.  
Beauty is admired in modesty!

### **THEME 104: Do not get tired of Forgiving**



Forgiveness is a pardon giving to an offender for whatever offence he or she must have committed. Forgiveness is a deliberate disposition of someone who is offended to refuse to take a revenge.

Jesus gives us mandate to forgive others. He demonstrated the true nature of forgiveness in the Prodigal son.

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Forgiveness has a big basket full of fruit and a person can never allow the basket to be empty because forgiveness can never cease to be.

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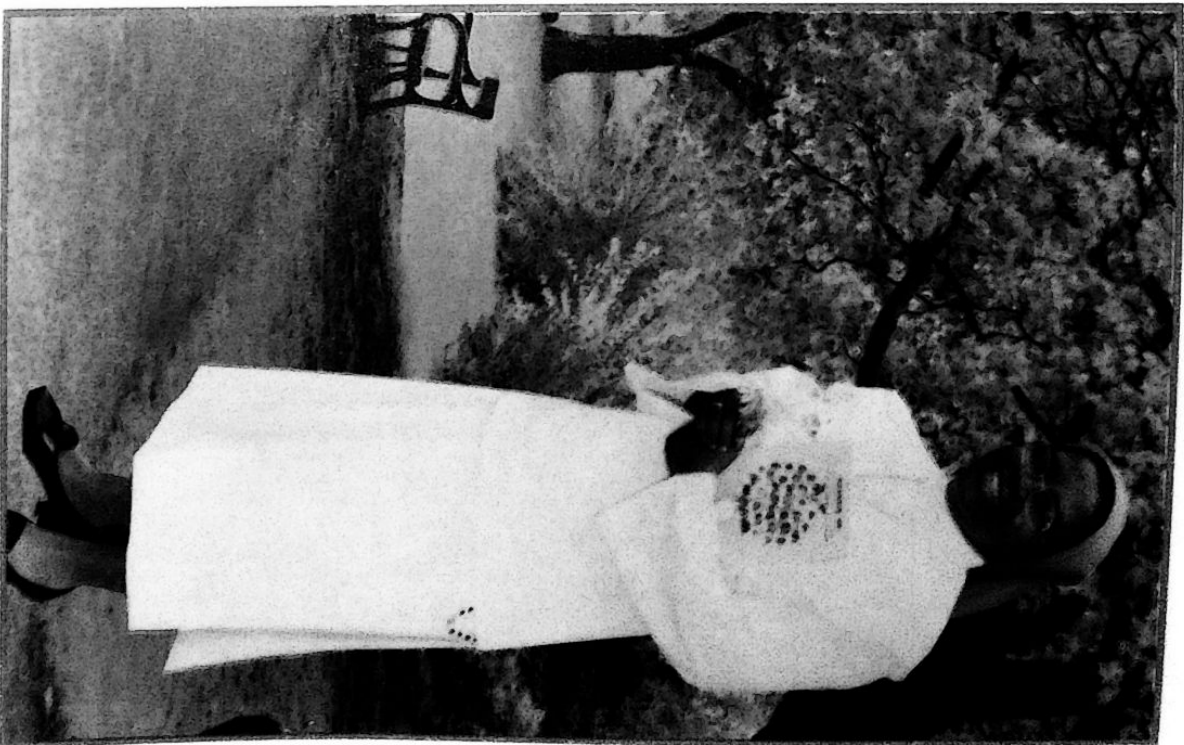
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# Thanksgiving

**L**ord, you know me through and through. The Good Shepherd you are, is outstanding in me, in the way you have carried me all along. On my part, you know my disposition for you but my love for you is still weak, full of unfaithfulness.

In spite of this, you have carried me in your Shepherding hands all these years. Your love, Lord is eternal. I thank you, Oh my living God.

Sr Chlota Elochukwu





Sr Chilota with nature

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**C**hilota Elochukwu, Maama, belongs to the Daughters of Divine Love Congregation, Nigeria. She is trained in Growth Facilitation (That is: Formation, Spiritual Direction, and Global Human Growth), and she divides her time among studying, teaching, and sharing with individuals.

Chilota holds a diploma and a higher diploma in Religious Sciences at Regina Mundi, Rome. She holds a Degree in Philosophy, a Degree in Theology, a Master's Degree in Theology, and a Doctorate Degree in Spiritual Theology, all obtained at the Gregorian University, Rome.

## ABOUT THE BOOK



**T**his is a book on spirituality for all. It is a book for all persons, individuals, communities, and peoples. This book is also for students at all levels, primary, secondary, and university. The author selected from so many available routes and means, some significant topics, ideas, information, themes, stories, write-ups that will be helpful to someone searching for a quality daily human and spiritual living among God's people.

**Seek and Find-Achoba Afu** is the testimony of paths and routes that lead a human person to the aspired meeting with God. The book inspires a person to live as a Christian, and to live as a child of God.