

**CATHOLIC EDUCATION AND NATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT**

PASTORAL LETTER 2014

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Retrospection and Gratitude

1. The year of Faith which was declared by His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI, was celebrated by Catholics throughout the world from October 2012 to November 2013, ending on the feast of Christ the King. The major parts of last year 2013 therefore saw us celebrating our faith in God The blessed Trinity, through Christ our Lord and Redeemer, in the Holy Spirit. Here in the Archdiocese of Onitsha, the year was celebrated with seminars, workshops, retreats, conferences and prayers in the parishes, episcopal regions and at the diocesan level. Many of you; priests, members of consecrated life, and Christ's lay faithful participated actively playing different significant roles. The Spiritual celebration has enabled us to learn our faith anew, love our faith more and more as well as live our faith with enthusiasm and greater commitment. To God be all glory, honour and never ending praise for ever.

My profound appreciation goes to all of you who actively responded to the call of the Holy Father to celebrate that year of Faith. May the celebration renew, reinvigorate and increase our faith, through Christ our Lord.

2. Many other events of note happened last year among which I will like to mention, the completion, blessing and commissioning of the Holy Family Youth Village Hostels (on March 16, 2013). The four twin hostels we set out to build in the original plan are now completed, equipped with essential facilities and fully occupied by students. That project of faith borne out of pastoral necessity but which seemed impossible or even utopian is today a reality. May God be ever praised. I sincerely thank all those who contributed to the realization of that dream. May Divine Favours come down upon you in abundance.

3. Also, I remember with special thanks and deep appreciation, prayers, tributes, gifts and good wishes extended to me on the occasion of my 60' birthday, 20 October, 2013 which I celebrated in the Nigerian prison Onitsha. Not minding the venue and audience, many men and women of goodwill trooped to the Nigerian prison, to celebrate with me and show solidarity and love to the prisoners. May God reward you.

4. There have been other events in Anambra State that directly affected the Children of God in the State. We thank God that the gubernatorial election in spite of some hitches did not lead the state to violence, and that all the candidates comported themselves in a way that is worthy of emulation by politicians throughout Nigeria. We ask God to continue to bless our state as a new government begins its term of service to the people. We pray that

with His assistance, the state will continue to make new strides in its mission to improve the life of all the children of God within its borders.

5. It is noteworthy that the outgoing state government in Anambra State, led by Governor Peter Obi, was able to handover and return the schools confiscated from voluntary agencies (especially the church missions) in 1970 by the then administration led by Ukpabi Asika in the defunct East Central State immediately after the civil war. The Government of Peter Obi started by returning the secondary schools to their former or original owners, and completed the circuit by also handing over the primary schools taken away from their church owners. Since these historic acts took place, the Government has in addition provided ample material subvention for refurbishing these schools which after forty years of utter mismanagement were virtually ghost of their former selves. Since the inception of this policy of return of schools to their church owners, the faces of many of these abused schools have dramatically changed for the better. Schools which lacked roofs have been reroofed; those with breached walls have been repaired; those whose outward appearances were virtually eyesores have been refurbished and repainted and many now look like institutions where children of God are nurtured

6. While the harm done to our educational institutions and system still festers very much, it is hoped that steady advancement in the right direction will with time make of our erstwhile mismanaged schools, new institutions where the best in the God-given ability of our youth will be nurtured for optimal benefit to the nation. Moreover, while the return of schools has not been very smooth on account of some false claims of ownership of some of our schools, it is hoped that the state Government will do the right thing by giving the affected schools back to their rightful owners. We are aware they have set up a panel of experts to that effect.

7. It is also within this year that we witnessed yet another lengthy strike action of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) in our country. In addition to many other things, what this unfortunate strike tells us is that something is seriously wrong with our educational system. It appears that our country as a whole has become oblivious of the fundamental importance of education and its necessity for national development. It is in view of this among other reasons that I have chosen to reflect on Catholic Education and National development. This is to explore how Catholic Education fertilizes the all-round development that is greatly desired by all and sundry in our country and which has so far challenged our nation since its independence.

MOTIVATION AND CHOICE OF THEME

8. The ever new and ageless mandate of Christ to his apostles, “to go and teach all nations” remains as valid and urgent today as it was over 2000 years ago when it first came. “Go ye therefore and teach all nations” (Mtt. 28:19), this mandate given to the Church by her Lord

and Founder Jesus Christ, anchors the catholic evangelization drive which has education at its centre. It could be said that evangelization is integral education or holistic education and the converse would not be totally out of order. This is because education leads one to discover the truth of existence rightly appreciated, thus leading one to the true source of ultimate happiness and fulfillment which lie beyond us. More so, human experience reveals an innate hunger and thirst after something beyond all that is available to acquire in this material world. Hence, integral Catholic education helps in discovering and naming the true object of the human longing. In fact, it leads ultimately to the appreciation of God as the meaning of life and Christ our Lord and redeemer as the centre of creation and of history. The Catholic Church continues to actualize today that mandate from Jesus Christ our Lord to teach all nations.

9. In my last pastoral letter we discussed Living Hope, the Christian hope. Hope an essential characteristic of Christians as well as humans in general, which gives confidence for existence and all its challenges, must be alive for life to be meaningful and worth living. At the heart of the message which was that we Christians possess a living hope on account of our faith and vocation, I stressed the fact that the Christian hope is not only informative, but performative. Since it is a hope on account of Jesus Christ, it performs. Christian hope leads to transformation of both individuals and society. By appropriating truth and freedom, it engages in action for the good of all. The overwhelming reception and huge impact of the message has truly inspired me to move further to another step which sees to the realization of that hope- the hope of fullness of life.

10. A veritable tool for the realization of this hope is integral education. The value of education in this regard can never be overemphasized. It helps humans created in the image of God with creative capacity to create values and indeed to unleash their creative potentials on the society. Education imparts on and changes everything about how to be human; such as - personal development, wealth creation, value orientation, interpersonal relationships, approach to the mystery of life, to the spiritual and to overall societal development. Education makes a difference between merely existing and living. In acknowledgement of the fact that even the best of diamonds were first of all obvious that humans need education in order to be who and what they are meant to be. Nothing becomes better by being left fallow. Consideration of this inspired me to call on all in our society to embrace healthy and holistic education, hence Catholic education, because it prepares, equips one to be fully human who is about his "father's business" here in the world and ready heir of eternal life in heaven. Education enables one to apply the unchanging principles of divine and natural law to the ever changing circumstances of human life. I therefore call on all to rediscover the immense value of proper education and its link to personal, societal and national development.

CHAPTER TWO

THE MEANING AND PURPOSE OF EDUCATION

11. According to New Catholic Encyclopedia, Education as a generic term, has both a broad and a restricted meaning, and an informal and a formal application. In its widest interpretation, education is the aggregate of all those experiences that enlighten the mind, increase knowledge, foster insight, develop abilities and attitudes, and strengthen the will. In its restricted sense, education implies the systematic acquisition of knowledge through recognized agencies and a controlled environment, particularly that of the school, on an elementary, secondary, or higher level, in order to attain social competence and optimum personal development. (cf. J.W. DONOHUE, *Education, in New Cath. Encyclopedia*). Catholic education involves both meanings. The philosopher John Dewey describes education as a social process of growth. Etymologically, the word education comes from Latin infinitive *educare*, to lead out, to pull out. Education entails the process of bringing up usually young and impressionable human beings to realize their native capacities as humans. It involves all round development, primarily of the human person. But it also impinges on a person's relationship with his neighbors and the community and with God the creator.

12. Education is very often understood in terms of intellectual formation which is often biased in favour of acquisition of knowledge and skill: training in a trade or profession, and in general acquiring the aptitudes necessary to exercise specific roles in the society. All these are necessary parts of the process of education, but they do not exhaust the concept of education. Education can be understood as both formal and informal. But here we mean more of formal education such that is given in schools and other institutions where today human beings go to learn how to realize to the best possible level their capacities as human beings, as members of the society and as Children of God.

13. There is no doubt that viewed from this perspective, education is of utmost importance to the human society in general. The importance of education entails that all discussions on it naturally calls up issues in various fields of liberal arts, psychology, philosophy, medicine, metaphysics, politics, ethics, economics and others. As a discipline education touches immediately on many great issues of the ages including virtue, truth, arts and science, knowledge and opinion, desire, will, sense, memory, mind, habit, family, state, change and progress, man, nature and God. Given this wide range that the concept of education scratches, it is not surprising that there are varied opinions about the aim of education. However, this does not in any way detract from the broad consensus among thinkers which can be summarized in the statement that, education should seek to develop the characteristics excellence of which humans are capable and that its ultimate ends are human happiness and the welfare of the society.

14. It is around this broad agreement on the general aim of education that specific aims arise. These are many and can always be prolonged. Professor Babs Fafunwa lists fifteen of these while discussing secondary education. Among the aims are: “to think effectively, to communicate thought clearly, to make relevant judgment, to play one's part as a useful member of one's home and family, to understand basic facts about health and sanitation, to understand and appreciate one's role as a citizen of a sovereign country, to understand and appreciate one's cultural heritage, to develop economic efficiency both as a consumer and as a producer of goods, to acquire some vocational skills, to recognize the dignity of labour, to develop ethical character, to appreciate the use of leisure, to understand the world outside one's environment, to develop a scientific attitude towards problems, to live and act as a well-integrated individual”. (B. Fafunwa, *New Perspectives in African Education*, pp, 51-52).

15. It follows that the purpose of education is so all-embracing, and there are many facets of the aims as enumerated above. That is why thinkers like Jacques Maritain and Alfred North Whitehead take the subject matter of education to be “life in all its manifestation”. For Dewey, education is not a preparation for life, education is life itself.

16. The aims of education include those that entail the transformation of the person as a subject, and others that target his ability to perform certain good functions. In general the endowment of education includes proficiency in learning and the formation of character. Education is therefore aimed at improving the individual in form of intellectual growth and his person as a human being. The philosopher Bertrand Russel discusses four of the features which among others form the basis of an ideal character. These are vitality, courage, sensitivity and intelligence. (Bertrand Russell, *On Education*, 1926, p.41ff). The above list is far from being complete since the sense of the sacred or love of God and neighbor is absent. Nevertheless these are essential features of human character.

17. Vitality imbues the individual with the joy of being alive. It enables him to take interest in what happens around him. By promoting interest in the outside world, it also promotes the power of hard work and thus becomes a safeguard against envy since it helps to make one's own existence pleasant. Courage entails absence of fear, especially irrational fear. Courage enables the human being to acquire impersonal outlook combined with a modicum of self-respect. The courageous person does not despise himself, but he values much which is not himself. The sensitive person is the one who is affected pleasurably or otherwise by the right things. For instance, the normal child loves praise and hates blame, and the wish to be thought well of remains a dominant motive in life. Sensitivity involves sympathy. But sympathy can be purely physical, as when a child is crying because the mother is crying. But the higher and nobler sympathy is rather abstract as when sympathy is felt when the sufferer is not a special object of affection; more so when it is aroused for human suffering that is not sensibly present. Sympathy is a serious desideratum in human affairs

and for G.J. Warnock, one of the greatest problems of the human society is that of limited Sympathy. (cf. Warnock, *The Object of Morality*).

18. Intelligence includes both knowledge and receptivity to knowledge, but it signifies more the aptitude for acquiring knowledge than knowledge already acquired. Given that the complexity of our world requires intelligent human beings both for its subsistence and progress, the cultivation of intelligence is one of the most important purposes of education. Intelligence includes the habit of curiosity and open mindedness and these are like the engine that powers progress in the human society.

19. Needless to say, a well-developed intelligence will lead to in-debt inquiry about the origin of things. In philosophical terms, why is there something rather than nothing? Serious and open inquiry on this issues will inevitably enable the educated mind to come to certain conclusions about the origin or cause of all things; their creator or maker, the explanation of their reason for existence or their *raison d'etre*. Well rounded intelligence imbued with curiosity and open-mindedness will inevitably come to the question of God, and that is why there is no balanced education that excludes God.

20. The aim and content of education is summarized in canon 795 which states that; “Education must pay regard to the formation of the whole person, so that all may attain their eternal destiny and at the same time promote the common good of society. Children and young persons are therefore to be cared for in such a way that their physical, moral and intellectual talents may develop in a harmonious manner, so that they may attain a greater sense of responsibility and a right use of freedom, and be formed to take an active part in social life.”

Consequently, all round physical, moral and mental development including realizing the purpose of existence are vital aspects of the meaning and purpose of education.

CHAPTER THREE

CATHOLIC EDUCATION

21. In canon 794, it is stated that “the Church has in a special way the duty and right of educating, for it has a divine mission of helping all to arrive at the fullness of Christian life”. Truly the concern of the Catholic Church for education arises from the life and mission of Christ and the mandate he gave to the Church before his ascension. “Go therefore and teach all nations...” (Mtt. 28:19), informs the teaching and evangelization efforts of the Church. Again, the gospels tell us how Jesus began to do and teach. Thus is embodied the maxim that examples posed by concrete acts are great and effective means of instruction. Actions speak louder than words, says the old adage. In the proclamation of

his mission the Lord left no doubt that he had come to show the way by teaching not just the pristine ways of living, but the type of knowledge that leads to salvation. “I am the light of the world, whoever believes in me will not remain in darkness”.(John 12:46). His mission is thus to enlighten the world and by so doing dispel its debilitating darkness. This is done in a very special way by witnessing to the truth. Hence he came to give his people knowledge of salvation.

22. This witnessing is seen as a special plan in the salvific mission in such a way that it can be taken as the summary of his incarnation, his life, death and resurrection, in short his entrance into human history for the salvation of men. “For this I was born, for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth”. (In. 18:37). This truth is not such that he communicates it in an impersonal manner to his listeners. He assures them that He himself is the personification of the truth that gives life and the way that leads to that life. “I am the way, the truth and life” (Jn14:6). This life is the one that is complete and wholesome. It is not the life that seeks for fulfillment. What Christ has come to give us is life that is perfect, eternal life. Hence he assures us, “I have come that they may have life and have it to the full” (Jn. 10:10)

23. Christ is thus the perfect teacher who teaches as one “having authority”. He did not intend to end the teaching he impacted during his earthly sojourn. Sure he continues to teach with authority given his diverse presence within the world and in his Church. But he still mandated his disciples to “Go make disciples of all nations teaching them to observe all that I taught you. And, behold I am with you till the end of the world”. (mtt. 28:19-20). No doubt the mandate of Christ to his Church refers specifically to the knowledge of salvation. But there is no chasm, no dichotomy between the knowledge of salvation and all positive knowledge. Right knowledge about the human person and about the world is not divorced from knowledge of God. On the contrary true knowledge of man and the world, inevitably leads to the knowledge of God. They are therefore indispensable starting points for the knowledge of salvation.

24. Accordingly the Church always recognizes the "paramount importance of education in the life of men and its ever-growing influence on the social progress of the age" (Vat II. *Gravissimum Educationis*, Preface). The Church further stresses that it is not just a right but a “fundamental right” of children and parents. To the Catholic Church, it is an obligation “to promote the welfare of the whole of man”. “Holy Mother Church, in order to fulfill the mandate she received from her divine founder to announce the mystery of salvation to all men and to renew all things in Christ, is under an obligation to promote the welfare of the whole life of man, including his life in this world in so far as it is related to his heavenly vocation”. (*Gravissimum Educationis*). It is in order to fulfill this obligation that the Church devotes special efforts to education well aware of how vital it is to human

welfare. The *Gravissimum Educationis* underlines the right of all human beings to education and outlines what the actualization of such a right should entail. (cf. G.En 1-3).

25. The education of children should achieve the following objectives:

25:1 Physical, moral and Intellectual Development: This is due recognition of the integral nature of the human person, Human beings are not compartmentalized into disparate chambers. The human person in Aristotelian parlance is a substance, a unity. It means that proper education should focus on the person as a whole. It is not just intellectual, but must be at the same time moral and physical in order to attain universal well-being of the person.

25:2 Develop a sense of Responsibility: Responsibility entails a kin consciousness of what one owes to himself, to other human beings to the society and to God. Catholic education helps the subject to know that none of these should be evaded or shirked, and that dereliction in any of them adversely affects the proper integration of the person and the working of the human society.

25:3 Participation in the Life of the Society: Catholic education imbues the human person with a sense of community. On account of this, the aptitudes and skills which proper education enables a person to acquire should be employed for the service of other human beings in the society.

25:4 Openness to Dialogue: Dialogue is the mark of freedom and respect for the freedom of other persons. The educated person is well aware of the fact that others have right to their opinion or their points of views, and that free human beings should be won over by persuasion not by force.

25:5 Promotion of Common Good: The truly educated individual is also conscious of the fact that the earth and all its goods are God's gifts to his children. Like a good servant such an individual should strive to be found worthy of this trust. Care for the common good is thus based on the supernatural origin of all earthly endowments. Accordingly the effort to preserve and further such goods is a mark of respect for God and consideration for other human beings.

25:6 Development of Sound Moral. Judgment: The free human being constantly performs acts which because they are free and voluntary, have moral worth. Good Catholic education prepares the individual to acquire the principles of morality; to be trained in the necessary virtues and so to acquire the power to make correct moral judgment in every circumstance.

25:7 Prudent Sex Education: Sex education at an appropriate age is also an important aspect of Catholic education. Human sexuality is an important gift of God to his children.

Well-rounded education should be conscious of the importance of this gift; be clear about its real purpose so as to avoid the temptation of abusing it.

25:8 Knowledge and Love of God: Above all, Catholic Education should enable its subjects to acquire helpful knowledge of God through the teachings of Jesus Christ in the Bible and the tradition of the Church. It should inculcate in the subjects more perfect love of God through the love of one's neighbour. In fact the development of the religious faith which leads to improvement of the individual devotion and love of his creator is one of the hallmarks of Catholic education.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN THE HISTORY OF EDUCATION

26. Constantly aware of her mandate to teach all nations, the Catholic Church has through her long years of existence tried to carry out this obligation in varied circumstances. She has therefore been a strong custodian of formal education for more than two millennia of her existence. Granted that different societies and traditions have their system of formal education, the Church was special in being the first institution to take education with such seriousness that it became a vocation. By so doing it played an important role in the social, economic, political, cultural liberation of the people. According to Epictetus, “only the educated are free”.

27. The role of the Church as custodian of education and from there of freedom is exemplified after the fall of the Roman Empire. It became the lot of the Church and her institutions to preserve human culture. The monastic schools that sprang up developed a culture in which learning was highly cherished. With time this endeavor was spread beyond the confines of the monasteries to the cathedral schools. Between the twelfth and thirteenth century, the cathedral schools developed into universities as we know them today, with the traditional faculties of Arts, Theology, Law and Medicine.

28. University education developed on account of the needs of the medieval society. First the monastic schools and cathedral schools were gradually found to be inadequate to meet the educational needs of the time. By the tenth and the eleventh centuries, there was acceleration of certain developments. Towns were increasing in population due to rapid urbanization; new land was brought under cultivation with consequent increase in wealth and power. Feudalism had taken shape and increase with kingly powers and the ambitious designs of emperors. There followed increase in the demand for educated officials in government and administration. Rulers both secular and ecclesiastical needed the services of trained men to take care of their affairs. Growth in the member of parish churches also required the services of well-educated clergy. The great demand for educated officials

including lawyers, clerics and school teachers made the more ambitious young men to flock to the international centers of learning.

29. These centers originally called *Studium Generale* were first established in Bologna, Paris, Salamanca and Salerno. They later developed into co-operation and were named *Universitas*. The legal aspect of the Universities was reinforced when in the year 1200 the universal valid authority to teach *jus ubique docendi*, was granted. To the papacy was reserved the right to grant this authority. Thus in the words of *Vignaux*, “the medieval university, like the priesthood and the Empire, was considered an organ of Christendom”. (Philosophy in the middle Ages, 1959, p59).

30. This rather brief history of the development of formal education and the role of the Catholic Church in it points to the fact that the Church in terms of history and experience qualifies as a strong player in the field of education. This is still shown in practice by the enduring interest of the Church in the education of the people all over the world. In Nigeria the Catholic Church is still poised to do the same. The Nigerian Church or the Church in Nigeria started the education apostolate in colonial times. It was able to build and run very good schools both at the primary and secondary levels. Unfortunately these schools were erroneously taken over by the state governments after the Nigerian civil war. Today, after more than forty years of mismanagement many of the church schools have been handed back or returned to their original owners virtually in dilapidated states. With the cooperation of the governments of the states concerned, the lost glory of the mission schools will be restored and the Church will be enabled to better fulfill her divine mandate of teaching all nations,

31. In the South-Eastern part of Nigeria, the history of formal education is entirely traceable to the efforts of the early Christian missionaries. The Roman Catholic missionaries, the Methodist Church of Scotland and the Church Missionary society built and established schools as they struggled to teach the goodnews. The Catholic Church built more primary and secondary schools than any other group in this area. They built primary schools in almost all the villages especially in Igboland. This is the origin of western education and modern civilization in this part of the world. Though evangelization was the primary target of the missionaries, nevertheless, through their education apostolate they developed the human person and the society.

32. These were interrupted by the Nigerian civil war and government take-over of schools after the war. However the policy of Government takeover of schools championed by the Ukpabi Asika led administration of the then East Central State Government has now been reversed forty years after by the Anambra State Government led by Mr. Peter Obi. The Governor Mr. Peter Obi has gone further to give huge financial grants in aid for the renovation and rehabilitation of the schools which are terribly dilapidated. **33.** We are confident that the formal education which flourished for a while (after the war) without

Christian principles, will once again embody the cherished principles of discipline, hard work, truthfulness, respect for the common good and above all love of God and neighbor. The formation of character which is the hallmark of Christian education and Catholic education in particular will once again be realized. The development of human capital leads to the development of the society, the communities and the nation.

CHAPTER FIVE

EDUCATION AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

34. Social Scientists, Politicians and policy makers the world over have been preoccupied with the concept of national development. In our days, nations draw up development plans to serve as guide in reaching the Eldorado. This consciousness grew after the Second World War with the need of rebuilding Europe. The emergence of independent nations in Africa and the need to advance the fortunes of other nations in Latin America and Asia helped to raise the importance of development and the conditions necessary for it. The role of education in development remained a key point of every discussion on development. This is not surprising, especially given the amount of investment some countries put into education. In the 1980s some countries like Bolivia, Ecuador and Philippines spent over one quarter of their annual budget on education. Today, Ghana and South Africa spend up to 30% of their annual budget on education. The United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) directs all developing countries to devote at least 26% of their budget to education.

35. The reason for this large investment is the link between education and development. According to J.F. Kennedy “our progress as a nation can be no swifter than our progress in education”. In other words unless the rate of learning in an organization is equal to or greater than the rate of change then that organization is doomed to failure; that organization will not survive. Therefore the reason why education is so strongly linked to national development is not farfetched. Educated population as a whole contributes more to socio-political and economic development. Again, education contributes a lot to the well-being of the individuals. There is then the fact that the world is becoming technologically more and more sophisticated and in the past decades this change is taking place at a speed that has never been recorded in human history. It is almost unimaginable a few decades ago that typewriters would all but be obsolete today. The progress that the world has experienced from the all manual typewriter, to electric typewriter, to electronic typewriter, to the word processor and to personal computer has occurred in less than a life-time. Today our cellular phones and iPods perform virtually the same function that our PCs, laptops and palmtops perform and sometimes they do so with more efficiency and ease.

36. The concept of development has many synonyms but it is in general akin to growth, progress, advancement, modernization etc. R. Fletcher draws an analogy from the simple

and natural process of growth to explain development. According to him, Development can mean the actualization of an implicit potentiality, the simplest example being the patterned growth and maturation of seed, or an initial germ cell, to the full adult form of the individual plant, or animal, or human person. Without stipulating... anything too weighty or too precise, this can also certainly seem to apply to man and his social situation. (cf. *Evolutionary and Developmental Sociology*, 1974, p.43).

37. Society is seen as efficient or inefficient to the degree it actualizes human potentials. In this vein, individuals can be seen to be healthy, happy, productive, etc and well attuned to the social environment. They can also be seen as the contrary of these states. The large society can also be judged in the above light like individuals. It can therefore be said that any change which promotes or actualizes the positive dimensions of society represents development in the appropriate meaning of the term. (cf. Faegerland and Saha, *Education and National Development*, 1989.p.5). Well directed and efficient education is very necessary for this process of actualization in modern times.

38. Literacy and numeracy bring changes that we often tend to neglect. With literacy, dissemination of knowledge and its preservation through generations become more efficient. Thus the harnessing of human potentials for social action is better where literacy and numeracy are high. This utilitarian aspect of education does not exhaust the benefits of education since it is also good for the human person. This notwithstanding, some scholars have argued that a literacy rate of about 40% is necessary though not sufficient if sustained level of economic development is to be assured. Industrialization is however difficult if 70 to 80 percent literacy is not attained in a society. (cf. Bowman and Anderson, *Human Capital and Economic Modernization in Historical Perspective*, 1973,p.250). Thus the correlation between literacy and industrialization can be seen as the following table clearly indicates.

39. Adult Literacy Rate for Countries of Different Level of Development.

| | 1960 | 1975 | 1985 |
|---------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Low-income countries | 29 | 38 | 32 |
| Middle-income countries | 54 | 71 | 72 |
| Industrialized countries | NA | 99 | 98 |

(Source, World Bank, “Education”, World Development Report, 1980)

40. It is on account of this conviction that education is generally considered in modern times as one of the crucial elements in fast economic growth. This conviction has come to percolate into what has been called Human Capital Theory which argues that the educated population is a productive population. The background of this theory is that for economic development, technological advancement and improved production, it is necessary that

human resources be used in the harnessing of technology. Both the skill and the motion for this employment is provided by formal education.

41. Humanistic education is not thereby excluded in the improvement of the human input toward development. Humanistic education for Russell contributes immensely to human progress by fostering imagination and it is only through imagination that men become aware of what the world might be; without it, progress would become mechanical and trivial. (cf. Russell, *On Education*, p. 23).

42. For this reason investment in education is investment in the productivity and inventiveness of the population. There is thus consistent pattern between levels of education and levels of development among countries. School enrolment ratio is thus considerably lower in poor countries than in advanced countries.

43. Another attempt to provide a theoretical framework to explain the link between education and national development is the modernization theory. It says that in order for a nation to become modern (developed), it is necessary that it adopts modern values which education can impart. This idea is simplified in the theory that well guided and efficient education produces the desired knowledge, skill and human aptitude for the labour market. There are of course other studies that cast doubt on some of these conclusions. But what is not doubted is that broadly speaking the more a population is formerly educated, the more it is liable to be productive, to be inventive and to add value to life in many aspects of existence. Education has positive impact on the global life of a nation touching on the economic, political, cultural, social and religious. But it is of utmost importance to determine “what kind of development is desired, what kind of education is more suitable for this development, and whose interest in the development process should prevail” (cf. Faegerlind and Saha, p. 62). This leads us to a brief consideration of the value of Catholic education to national development.

CHAPTER SIX

CATHOLIC EDUCATION: IMPETUS TO NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT.

44. It is evident from all we have said above that the human element is the primary factor both in education and development. As our Lord rightly said, “the Sabbath is meant for man not man for the Sabbath”. (mk.2:27). Knowledge and skill that good education should purvey are good things, but what is determinant is the use to which these endowments are put. Technology can be helpful but not in itself. It is the human being who employs it and decides whether the good purpose it is meant for is achieved. Even the whole process of national development needs to be guided by human beings with wisdom, good conscience, moral uprightness, and with respect for fellow human beings and with the fear of God. The

right type of education is such that will make the subjects of education good as men, as citizens of their state and as children of God.

45. It is in this regard that Catholic education excels. Deriving its inspiration from the mandate of Christ to his Church to teach all nations, Catholic education is not driven exclusively by the imperative of acquisition of knowledge, skill and aptitude. While giving proper weight to scientific and technological development, the ability to be adaptable to the conditions created by this development; and their role in the real world, it goes beyond this to pay special attention to the human person.

46. We have earlier enumerated the qualities which the Declaration on Christian Education (Vatican II, *Gravissimum Educationis*) enumerates as aims which catholic education should achieve is the young and impressionable people. The foundation of these aims is the truth that the human being is made of body and soul, of the material and spiritual and that the two components form one substance. The human being is therefore not divided. It forms one whole, one complete substance. Thus any lopsided concentration on any of the aspects of this composite is basically erroneous. The happiness that is the hall mark of the good life in any correct philosophical system will not be achieved by paying exclusive attention to either the body or the soul. Catholic Education in striking this balance most properly succeeds in producing also balanced human beings whose engagement in any human society should be an invaluable asset.

47. Catholic education accords the Family a very special place in creating the atmosphere in which the desirable qualities of Catholic education will be nurtured from the beginning. It therefore gives to the parents the primary responsibility of educating their children. It also gives rights and obligations of the civil society in the education of its members. (cf. *Gravissimum Educationis*, no 3-6).

48. Among these are:

48:1 Promotion of the Education of the Youth: Every responsible society should be keenly aware of the enormous responsibility it has to promote the education of its young people. In fact, all that is necessary should be done to cease the opportunity of their youthfulness, malleability and impressionability to give them sound direction through proper education. Any society that does not take this matter seriously cannot hope for a bright future.

48:2 Recognition of the Duties and Rights of the Parents: “As it is the parents who have given life to their children, on them lies the gravest obligation of educating their family. They must therefore be recognized as being primarily and principally responsible for their education'. (*Gravissimum Educationis*, n.3) The state in all cases should regard as sacred the duty of parents to educate their children. It is a mandate which should never be taken away from them under any guise. Many Governments have made this mistake with dire

consequences. One remembers the terrible Australian government policy which removed children from care of aboriginal parents so as to forcibly attune them to modern ways. The same mistake could be made by imposing an ideology on the children through education (but against the will of the parents) as was done in many communist countries in the past. Again in Nigeria, the systematic government takeover of schools under the guise of giving the children equal and centrally guided education has proven to be an absurdity, not appropriate, a colossal failure and a hindrance to the progress of the Nigerian nation.

48:3 Application of Subsidiarity in Education: Recognizing the rights and duties of parents entails that Catholic education insists on the application of the principle of subsidiarity in education. This principle states that: "a community of a higher order should not interfere in the internal life of a community of a lower order, depriving the later of its functions, but rather should support it in case of need and help to co-ordinate its activity with the activities of the rest of the society, always with a view to the common good". (Pius XI, Quadragesimo anno, I; *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1883).

In education, this implies that instead of reserving all powers to itself, the state should give families due right to determine the proper education of their children. It should also respect the special demands of the education of smaller communities whether these are ethnic, religious or geographic.

48:4 Providing Parent with Requisite Assistance: Also in line with this, the civil society should assure that parents are not too encumbered in the exercise of this right of educating their children. It should therefore be solicitous in ensuring not only that this duty is performed but that it is performed with efficiency and that it produces desirable results.

48:5 Establishing its Own Schools: The State should not therefore wash its hands off the proper education of its citizens. While it is not to establish a monolithic educational structure that does not give adequate room for the expression of individual requirements, it should also be a participant in fostering the education of its citizens. This it should do by running its own schools that could take care of all who for various reason may not find it convenient to go to existing private or denominational schools

48:6 Provision of Universal Access to Education: The establishment of its own schools should also be seen as a special means of providing access to education for all. Catholic education does not subscribe to the pristine practice where education was reserved for the Children of the wealthy and the aristocrats. The state should make special efforts to ensure that no child is left behind in the process of education because of poverty or other social, psychological or cultural hindrances.

48:7 Safeguarding Standard: One unfair or even an invidious way of short changing the education of the young is to allow a situation where some people receive good education while many are subjected to the type of education that will not lead them very far in life.

Catholic education ensures that neither financial considerations, nor gender, nor social or traditional classification creates a vicious circle where the disadvantaged receive poor education. The state should therefore strive to maintain such a standard that it gives its citizens equal opportunity in life.

49. The principles and the aims of Catholic education, the different roles assigned to parents, the church and the state, enable the products of Catholic education to fulfill the developmental role that education is generally known to fulfill. Only a lopsided education system can neglect any of these planks. A balanced education must take account of the human person, his family, the role of the state, the right of all to education; and the objectives which education should strive to achieve in the young. It is a combination of all factors, including the role of the teacher that enables catholic education to serve as veritable impetus to National development.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE TEACHER IN CATHOLIC

50. The role of the teacher is of capital importance in Catholic Education. “Splendid, therefore, and of the highest importance is the vocation of those who help parents in carrying out their duties and act in the name of the community by undertaking a teaching career” (*Gravissimum Educationis*, n.5). Indeed in all theories of learning, the teacher occupies a special place and is a major factor in the economy of education. He is sometimes regarded as the principal cause of learning. Sometimes, as in Plato's maieutic method, he is taken as a midwife that mines what is already embedded in the minds of the young. Thomas Aquinas in his tract *Concerning the Teacher* compares the art of teaching and the art of healing. Both are cooperative acts. They succeed in so far as they serve nature which is for him the principal actor. The teacher should not act as the cobbler that produces something from dead nature, but like the healer that nurtures what is already alive to better development. Hippocrates compares teaching to the planting of seed in the ground at the proper season and in the proper terrain.

51. For Augustine, special interest is needed to be a teacher. Teaching for him is the greatest act of charity. Learning is facilitated by love. Docility is required by the student but the good teacher must have respect for the student's mind.

52. The *Gravissimum Educationis* describes the vocation of teaching as “splendid” and of the “highest importance”. Teaching requires special qualities, most careful preparation and the readiness to update one's knowledge. The Catholic faithful should therefore cooperate in the training of teachers competent to impart good education to their students. Without the teacher, Catholic education cannot achieve its end of properly integrating the physical,

moral, intellectual, and spiritual aspects of human life. Accordingly, teachers have certain obligations in order to ensure that this lofty aim is translated into reality especially in view of national development.

53. Here are some of the obligations and duties of teachers.

53:1 Personal Preparation: The teacher has the sacred duty to prepare himself proximately and remotely for this task. There are many aspects to this preparation but it is primary that a teacher should be skilled in what he intends to impart to his pupil. Nobody can give what he does not have (*Nemo dat quod non habet*). A teacher that lacks knowledge cannot strictly speaking be a teacher.

53:2 Skill in the Art of Education: Needless to say, a teacher that is not skilled in the best means to impart the knowledge he has, will not be an effective teacher. It is thus not enough to be knowledgeable in one's field and have the desire to teach. Personal preparation should include the efforts to learn the method of teaching and the results of most current researches on the art of teaching.

53:3 Charity: If there is any modicum of truth in St Augustine's view that teaching is the most charitable profession, then a good teacher must be imbued with charity. He should be aware that even though his lack of effectiveness may not always be punished or even known, it is a moral responsibility to equip his students for the journey of life.

53:4 Testimony to Christ: The engagement of the teacher as well as his life should be a testimony to Christ. The good Catholic teacher should have Christ as his model, and by so doing appreciate the importance of his duties as a teacher, especially the importance of his work in helping to channel the lives of his students.

53:5 Cooperation with Parents: The teacher should work in close co-operation with the parents who have the primary right and duty of educating their children. The experience of these parents and their view about the performance of their wards should be taken very seriously in children's education.

53:6 Spirit of Personal Initiative: The activity of the teachers gives so much room for personal initiative. It goes from his engagement in determining the best method to employ in guiding and instructing his students to the necessary duty of helping them when they have personal problems.

53:7 Advice and Friendship: Since a teacher occupies a special place in the life of his students, he should be ready with useful advice to them, especially in difficult situations where serious decisions are necessary. To serve this purpose effectively, it is necessary to establish a cordial, respectful and friendly relationship between the teacher and his students. This service could be very useful even in later life.

53:8 Allowance for Difference of Sex: The teacher should cooperate with the parents in making adequate allowance for the gender difference among his students. He should give special weight to the role which divine providence has assigned to each sex both in the family and in the wider society.

54. It is on account of these services and many other duties and obligations that the engagement of the teacher is described as a special apostolate “one which is admirably suited for our times and indeed is very necessary”. (G.E. no 8).

CHAPTER EIGHT

NO EDUCATION WITHOUT GOD:

55. At his sermon to the thinkers of Areopagus, St. Paul described God in the word of Philosophers, as the one in whom we live and move and have our being”. It means that God is the principle of our existence, our activities in it and our end. It is obvious from what we have seen so far that catholic education aims to integrate to the highest degree the intellectual, physical, moral and spiritual needs of the human person. This effort in the right direction constitutes a great service to the advancement of the human society towards its goal.

56. Thinkers of all ages are agreed that the ultimate end of human life is the attainment of happiness. For Plato, the quest for happiness is so all-embracing that even a person who commits crimes hopes to be happy through such acts. Aristotle and Aquinas agree that all human actions are in the final analysis aimed at happiness. The difficult question is the location of this ultimate happiness. It goes without saying that nothing that is temporal, ephemeral and changeable can guarantee that happiness that is the ultimate aim of human actions. This fact has a direct consequence on the ultimate aim of Catholic education.

57. If happiness cannot be fully achieved on earth, then whatever temporal ends education serves must themselves be ordered to eternal salvation, and the whole process of human development must be a direction of the soul to God.

58. It is in line with this thought that St. Augustine declared at the beginning of his confessions that God made us for himself and hence our minds remain restless until they rest in Him. It means that good education, education that is directed to the good of the human person must lead to God. The well-developed intellect must of necessity raise the question of the origin of being, the mission of human beings on earth, the end to which these human beings are finally tending. The question of God thus remains a necessary dimension of any education that is attuned to the benefit of the human person and the human society.

CHAPTER NINE

THE STATE OF EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

59. Even though our traditional societies have ways of bringing up and educating the young, the type of formal education that we have been discussing here was introduced into Nigeria through the process of colonization. It was during the colonial time that the Christian missionaries namely the Roman Catholic Missionaries, and others from Methodist Church of Scotland and the Church Missionary Society built the first schools to educate young Nigerians. The colonial government developed serious educational co-operation with the missionaries and thus recognized schools were given grants in aid to enable them defray the cost of running their recognized schools. After some time, the colonial government also had their own schools but these were very few, but were then of very high standards.

60. The efforts of the missionaries and the cooperation of the colonial administration resulted in very highly rated educational system. The missionaries established and managed very good schools. Some of our secondary schools then were comparable to those in other countries of the world. The few Government Colleges that were built were also model schools.

61. After the Nigeria civil war in 1970, different state governments started to forcefully take over the mission schools. Consequently, almost all the schools in our states were taken over and run by the state governments. It was a complete disaster since this act went against the principle of subsidiarity which is one of the guiding principles of Catholic education. The schools were very poorly managed and over time there was almost a complete collapse of the school system and formerly very good schools were allowed to dilapidate. Standard mission schools as well as formerly well run government schools soon became a shadow of their former selves.

62. But the parental concern for good education for their children did not diminish. Private schools started to spring up in every corner of Southern Nigeria most especially. It was a calculated effort to distance their children from badly run public schools. At a point, all who could afford the fees, sent their children to private schools. Thus while the state governments continued to hold tightly to the mostly dilapidated schools, the parents moved their wards on to different private schools where they at least hoped that their children would receive better education.

63. The efficiency rate of the teachers did not help matters. Serious societies ensure that they make adequate provision for the training of good teachers for their schools. But generally in Nigeria, teachers are very poorly trained. In some states, vast majority of teachers still remain untrained. In the states where a reasonable percentage of the teachers

are trained, their working condition is nothing to write home about. Teachers are poorly paid, and often this ensures that those who want to teach are those who would accept any offer of employment for its own sake, and not on account of any predilection for the teaching profession. It is remarkable that in some of the states in Southern Nigeria, there is an overwhelming majority of female teachers in our schools both primary and secondary.

64. The paltry investment in public schools is also not helpful. We have remarked that UNESCO advises developing countries to invest up to 26% of their annual budget in education. In Nigeria, the level of budgetary investment is still well below 10%. What more, the budgeted sum is also not necessarily put into education. Corruption constitutes a drain on whatever funds that are in fact put into education, thus worsening the already very bad situation. Hence instead of gradually improving the system, ours is one that has been worsening for years.

Awareness of this has propelled many people who can afford it to send their children overseas to study. In recent times, many young Nigerians are sent to other African countries for higher education at great cost where we have more than a hundred Universities in Nigeria.

65. The Academic Staff Union of Universities ASUU recently declared an indefinite strike in order to pressurize the Federal and State Governments to invest in education, and to arrest the slow death of the Nigerian educational system. This strike lasted for almost six months and was brought to a stop by the personal intervention of the Nigerian President. A country that needs such a drama in order to take the education of the young ones seriously is one that has fundamentally missed its priorities.

66. It is important to remember that a society that invests on education; a society that ensures that quality education is available for its children is providing them a better future both individually and collectively. It is wood that the Federal Government has agreed to spread the educational investment which ASUU has been asking for in order to improve education in our country. However, our country needs a serious self-examination to get its system of education back to normalcy. It is a duty that the whole country has if it hopes to hand over a better country to future generations.

CHAPTER TEN

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN EDUCATION IN ANAMBRA STATE

67. Anambra State is one of the Nigerian states with the highest percentage of educated people. The state benefited a lot from the missionary educational engagement during the colonial period and soon after. It was however part of the then East Central State of Nigeria

which was the first state to take over and manage all the schools belonging to Church denominations and private investors. This was the worst legacy of the administration of Mr. Ukpabi Asika who was the then administrator of East Central State after the civil war.

68. Today, more than forty three years after this historic horrific governmental decision, the sad results are there for all to see. Our public schools have been left to become physically completely dilapidated. School buildings in most places have no roofs, no windows and no doors. The teachers quarters have been allowed to crumble, and where it was once comfortable for teachers to live and teach within the school, today the fallen teachers' quarters stand as testimonies of stupendous mismanagement. **69.** But it is not as if, the physical decay of the schools is the only rot that the system has experienced, the academic draw-back is even worse. The physical decay is only an outward sign of the invisible academic destruction and moral decay that have taken place. The children of the poor are now left to attend such low grade and inadequate schools, while those of the relatively well to do find their way into one of the several private schools that seek their patronage. In Anambra State, practically all who can afford it send their children to private schools. This in itself is telling judgment on the system. It is a judgment that also has terrible social consequences. **70.** One can observe that on account of the neglect of our educational system, there is now serious establishment of class in a society that had no serious class system in its tradition. The children of the wealthy now find themselves in better, more costly and well managed schools. They will most certainly get better education, and be better placed in the society to enjoy the advantage gained. Their performance in their places of work will be better. They will eventually earn more and be able to send their children to even better private schools. The poor who could not break the circle of bad school remain in the vicious circle of poverty since their level of performance will negatively also affect their children.

GOOD NEWS OF HOPE

71. Fortunately, the Anambra State Government today under the administration of Mr. Peter Obi decided to stop the negative trend of neglect and decay of the educational system. The Governor reversed the policy of Government takeover of schools and in the years 2011 and 2012 he returned the secondary and primary schools to their original mission owners. Governor Peter apologized on behalf of the Government for a wrong decision implemented for more than forty years. He further approved and gave huge sums as grant in aid for the rehabilitation of those returned schools that were grossly mismanaged. At this point as the Archbishop of Onitsha and Metropolitan of Onitsha Ecclesiastical Province, I did not hesitate to tell Gov. Peter Obi that the return of schools will serve as the best legacy of his administration. I assured him in these words "you have written your name in gold on the sand of history and you have wiped the tears of our people. You have rectified the

anomalies of the civil war and the faults of our past leaders. With this action the Church has forgiven them for forcibly taken over our schools"

The recent handover of schools to their pristine owners, the Christian denominations, in Anambra State by the Governor Mr. Peter Obi led administration is a very important move in the right direction to save education in the State. The fact that the State Government is conscious of its responsibility to bring the numerous schools to reasonable physical state is commendable. The state has given reasonable sums of money to the two main Christian denominations to repair their schools that have virtually crumbled over forty years. It is remarkable that within these long years none of the schools was in a better condition than it was more than four decades ago. However, within the past one year the difference in the physical renewal of our schools is being noticed. Many school buildings have been re-roofed; new classroom Blocks are being constructed and there is a general face-lift of the school environment. In addition, some of the schools as well as individual students are beginning to win national awards for excellent performance such were unknown for the past forty years.

72. But the state of the educational system goes beyond mere physical condition of the schools. Many of the schools do not have enough teachers. A few in urban areas certainly have more teachers than necessary. But there has been consistent hold on the employment of teachers. While some teachers retired each year, new ones are not employed to replace them. The consequence is that many schools in the villages have insufficient number of teachers. We are confident that the Government addresses his challenge by employing many competent teachers.

73. Again, the seriousness of education also goes beyond mere number of teachers. Some of our teachers are well below standard. Many are not able to impart reasonable knowledge to the children. This situation should take us back to the training of teachers to our colleges of education and to our faculties of education. If the teachers are not able to guide the young people, then our hope that the educational system will produce better results could be diminished. There is need to give more attention to the training of teachers.

THE CHURCH AS MOTHER AND TEACHER

74. According to the venerable Fathers of the second Vatican council, "The Church as a mother is under an obligation, therefore, to provide for its children an education by virtue of which their whole lives may be inspired by the spirit of Christ. At the same time it will offer its assistance to all peoples for the promotion of a well-balanced perfection of the human personality, for the good of society in this world and for the development of a world more worthy of man". (*Gravissimum Educationis*, no.3)

It follows that the church has a duty to assist parents and the state to provide holistic education to all especially the younger ones. Such education will not only develop their

minds and skills equipping them for the life challenges of the future but will teach them the ultimate meaning of life, the life of virtue and the way to eternal salvation. The Church has to help the parents and the state as well as supply where there is need. The church is advised to build and run primary and secondary schools and even universities in her pastoral solicitude for the education and overall well-being of her people. The church is further advised to establish catholic residences or hostels near secular universities for students both Catholics and non-Catholics who may desire to receive proper intellectual and spiritual guidance as well as holistic formation. (cf. G.E. no 9&10). The Church must continue to carry out her educational mandate which is to all people. So far the Archdiocese of Onitsha has responded to the call of the Church to build and run primary and secondary schools. We have also built hostels for University students. However, our desire to establish a formidable Catholic University is yet to materialize.

CONCLUSION

75. Education has become a very strong factor in the whole process of national development. If today we speak of progress, of industrialization, of cultural evolution and religious awareness, we cannot bracket from any of these processes a sound education for all the members of the society. Given its importance therefore, it is most essential that the society becomes concerned about the quality of education its populace receive. It is in this guise that catholic education lends itself as one of the most fundamentally conceived systems or methods of education. Catholic education recognizes that the human being is made of different parts. The human being is physical and mental; he is material and spiritual. He is a moral being; a psychological being; an economic, social, political and religious being. To neglect any of these dimensions in education is to shortchange the whole being; to pay attention to only a part or some parts of his being.

76. The right to education is one that belongs to all the members of the society. No member of the society should be excluded from the process of education. But it is to the parents that the specific decisions about the education of their children belong. While the society should also establish schools to ensure that all its members have access to good education, it should apply the principle of subsidiarity in the organization of its educational system. This entails that religious bodies and purely private individuals should be able to establish and run schools with the assistance of the government to ensure that its citizens who happen to find themselves in those schools are properly educated. The government should fund all her approved schools in such a way that every child benefits equitably from the government support irrespective of the school the parents have chosen for the child.

77. The ultimate aim of all human actions, including the striving for proper education is full happiness. Given that real and lasting happiness cannot be found here on earth, there

is strong logical conviction that our quest for more in terms of happiness cannot be fulfilled by the temporal and earthly. Education that is sound must therefore necessarily lead its subject to God. The implication of this point of arrival is the conviction that the human being owes allegiance and worship to his creator who is also the creator of all. The involvement of God in Catholic education makes it a sacred engagement for all who play serious parts in its process: namely parents, teachers, pastors, governments and all who act in loco parentis. Sound education is a responsibility that should never be ignored for any reason. It is on account of this that we join the *Gravissimum Educationis* in enjoining all Catholics as follows:

78. Catholic parents are reminded of their duty to send their children to Catholic schools wherever this is possible, to give catholic schools all the support in their power, and to cooperate with them in their work for the good of their children. (G.E. no. 8).

79. We have argued that following this instruction is not only of immense benefit to all parents-catholic and non-Catholic alike and to their children but that the cumulative effect of this gain goes directly to the optimal development of our nation. Catholic education is indeed a veritable tool for national development.

PRAYER

80. Lord Our God,

We proclaim your majesty. In many and varied ways you continuously reveal yourself to us. And, in the Bible you have handed down your inspired word.

Listen to our prayers, that all who engage in pursuit of the arts and sciences, may always be docile to the wisdom of your Word. Grant that imbued with true learning, they will strive to create a more civilized world. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

(Adaptation of Prayer of Blessing, from the Book of Blessings, p. 278)

Given in Onitsha,

at the Basilica of the Most Holy Trinity, on the 5th of March, Ash Wednesday, in the year of Our Lord 2014.

MOST REV. VALERIAN MADUKA OKEKE

Archbishop of Onitsha.