



Catholicism In Ikot Ekpene Diocese: The Contributions of The Nyoyoko's Family (1912-2022)

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Abstract

The hundred and ten years of catholicism in ikotekpene has been a contributory effort of the european missionaries and native agents.this work chooses to pay tribute to roles played by the nyoyokos in inviting, planting, sustaining and protecting the catholic faith in ikotekpene diocese to date.while the work outlines a brief history of catholicism and its benefits in the area of increase in the number of faithful, social and educational welfare as well as infrastructural and structural developments, it aims at encouraging the present age on the need to be more committed in the mission of the church to enable a sustainable faith and benefits as received from the past generation. It is descriptive, historical, missiological and sociological in outlook. It treats the history of Catholicism in ikotekpene on a threefold division of the missionary era, church organization and effects on the life of the people. The paper calls for consolidation of the catholic faith through building a godly family that would transmit the faith to the greater good of private and public life thereby influencing the society positively.

Key Words: Catholicism and Diocese.

Introduction

Catholicism In Ikotekpene Diocese Is A Hundred And Ten Years While As A Diocese Ikotekpene Is Fifty Nine Years. As The Diocese Prepares For The Second Diocesan Synod In Line With The Declaration Of 2023 Pope Francis As A Year Of Synod On Synodality, She Also Prepares To Celebrates Her 60th Anniversary As A Diocese With The Theme – “Ikotekpene At 60; Communion And Mission In Our Journey Of Faith”. This Is A Celebration To Pay Tribute To Our Heroes Of Faith”. It Is A Call To Celebrate The Co-Operation Of Our Fathers In Faith. More So, The Diocese Is In Her Fourth Generation Even As The Third Generation Is Gradually Winding Down, It Is Not Out Of Place To Get Facts Documented For Posterity Of The Contributions Of The Past Generations, When We Can Still Be Corrected Should There Be Mistake In Our History.

In The Series Of Those To Be Celebrated We Have Chosen To Begin With The “First Family – The Nyoyokos Of Adiasimikotessiendot”. This Is Done Within The Celebration Of 70th Birthday And 44th Priestly Anniversary Of Very Rev. Fr. Prof. Vincent G. Nyoyoko. The Role Of The Nyoyokos In The Arrival, Organization And Effects Of Catholicism To Ikotekpene With A



Firm Hope Of Sustaining The Growth And Making New Advance For Greater Mission Among The People Is To Be Outlined Here.

It Is The Deliberate Intention Of This Work To Create A Link Between The Present Generation And The Past While Encouraging The Crop Of Catholics Today In Ikotekpene Diocese To Show Commitment In Faith And Learn From The Past Rather Than Commit To Waste Bin Of History The Efforts Of The Elders.

Thus Pope Francis Reminds This Age:

The Elders Are Not Aliens. We Are Theirs: In Short Or In A Long While, We Are Inevitably Them, Even Though We Choose Not To Think About It. A Society Where The Elderly Are Discarded Carries Within It The Virus Of Death. The Quality Of A Society Can Easily Be Evaluated By The Way It Treats Its Older Members As Well As The Place It Gives Them In Community Life. The Elders Are Structures Of Wisdom. A Culture Without Respect To Elderly, The Youth Have No Future And Finally A Society Without Proximity To The Elders Is A Perverse Society (www.Ncregister.Com-Retrieved On 28/6/2022).

The History Has Not All Been Smooth And Rosy. There Were Moments Of Pains And Thorns. It Has Been A Weave Of Joys And Sorrows. It Has Been A Mosaic With Mixture Of Events And People But In All, God Preserved The Catholic Faith In Ikotekpene Diocese To The Present Age In Line With His Assurances, “God Will Never Forsake His People (Psalm 94:14) And I Am With You Always Till The End Of Time (Matthew 28:20)”.

Renwick And Harman (1998:8) Suggest A Fourfold Division Of Doing Church History To Cover The Missionary Activity, Church Organization, Doctrines And The Effects On Human Life But Here We Shall Consider A Threefold Division Of Missionary Era, Church Organization And Effects On Human Life. Since The Catholic Church Is Guided By Doctrines World Over There Is No Way The Diocese Of Ikotekpene Could Have Formulated Doctrines Different From That Guiding The Universal Church. Be That As It May, There Are Rules Guiding The Pastoral Life Of The People As Formulated Through The Ages Especially During The First Diocesan Synod And Reviewed At The First Diocesan General Assembly Held Between 1st And 17th November, 2017. Around The Belief In The Existence Of A Higher Being Responsible For Every Living Thing In Existence. This Higher Spiritual Being Was Not An Absent Or Separated Entity From The People; He Is With The People, Bears With The People And Propels The Actions Of The People:

The dichotomy which is so characteristic of graeco – christian world is strikingly absent in african world views. There is no clear cut distinction or opposition



between the visible and invisible, the material and spiritual, the temporal and non-temporal, the sacred and the profane. Rather characteristics of african world view is that sense of cosmic oneness which is an essential feature of primal religion... (Ikenga- metuh, 1999:51).

Everything for the people of Ikot Ekpene has a religious interpretation. They attribute everything to the will of the supreme god (awasiibom). Thus, whatever they see each day is “uduakawasi” (the will of God). They agree to have seen a new day by the will of god as expressed in the response to morning greetings: “emesiere – emesierende k’uduakawasi” – good morning, good morning too, by the will of god. The belief in the existence of god is equally expressed in names such as, “Abasiofon, Abasiodiong, Uduakabasi, Abasiono, etc”.

The people believe there is a strong bond connecting the living with their dead, a reminder of the continuation of some sort, of the earthly families with their dead members – the ancestors, who are now on the spiritual plain and hence more empowered to come to assistance of their earthly dear ones” (umoh, 2010:101).

This understanding of the supreme being acting with the other spiritual beings is in line with the christian doctrine of the supreme god, the angels and the “communion of saints” (catechism of the catholic church, 1994: no. 946). It is pertinent to note that the catholic european missionaries did not introduce religion to ikotekpene. To deny this is to deny the very nature of man as “homo religiousus”:

Religion is one of the most significant features in a given human society and culture. It has been regarded as a major determinant of the life-style of a people. Although there is no uniformity in its manifestation or evolution, it still generate a lot of feeling in a people, and attracts a certain followership and loyalty. Its manifestation encompasses every facet of human existence (Nyoyoko, 1997:160).

Religion moves beyond the human society to interact with other cultural institutions. **This holistic interplay is vividly expressed in the African worldview, where** African culture embraces religion, music, dressing, food, values and all human endeavours as parts of communal life (Edem, 2024). Religion is seen to be playing great part in morality, arts, commerce and relationship. Religion is the vital determinant of people’s life and an irresistible force within the human society and physical environment.

The presence of the Europeans in ikot ekpene since 1904 and the setting up of the first british united trading company by the british administrators (ekanem, 2006:28) was accompanied by the establishment of churches. Within the ikotekpene region was the methodist, (umana, 2010:36), ika region had the qua iboe and presbyterian dominated the ikono and ini region. There



was however, the condemnation of the African religion by these christian religious groups as they forced the people to give up some practices. Every attempt that led to disregard for the customs and culture of the people met with stiff opposition.

May it be known that questioning the truth or falsehood of any one's belief is an exercise in futility or useless venture. This is because beliefs are neither true nor false and that is why everyone is entitled to his or her own belief. To have considered anyone within the territorial borders of ikotekpene catholic diocese irreligious was erroneous, since nobody could remain indifferent to religion and religious related matters. In other words, there were no atheists and deists. An annang personality was found to be religiously conscious everywhere and at all times. The fear of the gods, the ancestors and other spirits formed the frame-work for his whole life Umoh, 2010:102).

Be that as it may, the introduction of christianity in general and catholicism in particular to ikotekpene catholic diocese by the early european missionaries broadened the religious world view of the people.

Arrival of Catholicism to Ikot Ekpene

The history of Catholicism in ikotekpene diocese cannot be considered in isolation from the missionary enterprise carried out by the Holy Ghost and st. Patrick missionary priests in union with the female religious in calabar and anua. The holy ghost missionary priests led by Rev. Fr. Alexander leon lejeune, a priest who earlier served as a missionary in gabon, first settled in onitsha before arriving calabar in 1903. Calabar was an outstanding business hub for European traders. It was also a great centre for missionary activities, having been the home of the Church of Scotland missionaries since 1846 and a fertile ground for other protestant churches.

On Arrival In Calabar The Holy Ghost Missionaries Found Out That There Were Already Catholics Among The Traders: “Calabar Had Traded With Europe Since The Mid-Seventeenth Century. There Were A Number Of Tribes In The Town But The Dominant Group Was The Efik... The Catholic Missionaries Visited Calabar In 1900 And Found A Tiny Nucleus Of Catholic Among African, Lebanese And European Immigrants... A Catholic Mission Was Established In 1903” In Calabar (Kiggins, 1991:20).

The Spread And The Success Of Christianity In Most Cases Have Often Been Attributed To Migration And Trades. This shows that religious growth often depends not only on formal missionaries but also on ordinary people who carry faith, values and social influence across communities (Essien & Edem, 2024). For Instance, Christ Chose His Earthly Ministry Companions From Among Artisans And Commercial Fishermen (Matthew 4:18-22, Mark 1:16, John 21:3) And These He Sent Out To Spread The Good News To The Ends Of The Earth. The Pentecost Event (Acts 2) Got To The Ends Of The Jerusalem Empire Through Traders And



Migrants Who Came To Jerusalem For The Fifty Days Of The Passover Season. The European Culture Adopted Christianity From Migrants And Traders:

Far More Important Was The Religious/Cultural Response, Which Led To The Christianization Of Europe And The Primary Means Of Stabilizing The Social Confusion Of The Period, As Well As Evangelizing The New People Was Monasticism. This New Religious Culture Was Brought Back By Travelers Visiting The Desert And French Settlers Were Engaged In The Profitable Fur Trade, And Were A Rough, Coarse Group... (Brockman & Pescantini, 2011; 54-56, 135-136).

The story of anua catholic mission resembles the picture painted above. As indicated earlier, the holy ghost missionaries on arrival in calabar, in 1903, met with people from various tribes who were engaged in business and trade. This group became the first set of people with whom they began their work. Among this set of people were the ibibios. As such, “soon after, a father’s boy from anua who lived and worked in the catholic missions in calabar after his conversion invited the fathers to his village. Father lena was the first to honour the invitation. He went to anua and the chiefs offered him a piece of land on which to establish a mission station. He returned to calabar and sent two priests, fathers kraft and treich who were living with him” (obi, 1985:157-158). After this first visit, anua mission was opened in 1909 and became a residential station in 1912 (obi, 1985:189).

One Striking Thing About Anua Mission Is That The Missionaries Came On Invitation Of The Natives: “The People Came From All Round Begging For Teachers For Their Little Girls. Always The Cry Was, Come To Us And Bring Us The Light, We Do Not Want Our Children To Grow Up In The Darkness As We Did” (Okure, 2016:81).

Ikotekpene Became A Business Hub As Early As 1904 Following The Establishment Of European Trading Company By The Colonial Government. Having Become An Administrative And A Vibrant Business Hub As Well As Metropolis, The City Hosted Many Migrants, Traders, Missionaries And Tourists, Both Native And Foreigners. Thus, In 1905, All Trading Posts Were Visited By Father Lena Who Equally Made Individual Treks Into The Villages (Obi, 1985:189). Like Father Lena, Fr. Kraft, An Energetic And Hardworking Priest, On Resuming As The Resident Priest In Anua, With The Help Of His Motorcycle Traversed The Length And Breadth Of The Hinterland, (Udondata, 2013:15).

Though These Contacts Had Been Made, It Is Fitting To Mention That The Catholic Missionary Enterprise In Ikotekpene Area Started As Brockman (211:24) Holds, With “The Traders And Market People (Who) Took Every Opportunity To Bring The Good News To Those They Met”. These Individual Artisans And Merchants Went About Gossiping The Good News. These Gossips Ignited In The People The Desire To Share In The Good News And Spurred Them Up To Invite, Sacrifice And Keep The Gospel Alive In The Land.



The Following Story Will Go To Support “The Gossiping The Good News Theory” And The Advent Of Catholicity Into Ikotekpene.

From reliable history (oral and written) adiasimikotessiendot which serves as the central (mother) station of st. Peter parish, adiasim, is the oldest catholic church station in annang land. This church dates back to 25th december, 1912, when the catholic church was established in adiasimikotessiendot through the instrumentality of late okuku (chief) nyoyokoudoumoren, the okuku of adiasim clan and one of the most prominent warrant chiefs of annang land during the colonial days. The catholic church was introduced to late chief nyoyokoudoumoren by one mr. Dibue, a government carpenter and interpreter in ikotekpene newly opened administrative centre... thereafter chief nyoyoko sent four able bodied men to anua on foot to bring the rev. Fr. In-charge of anua station. The four men according to oral sources were chief akpanisonguyo, chief akpananwa ada, chief luke akpan and chief nkanang (george) udoumoren. These four men brought rev. Fr. Paul biechy in a hammock (iyire) to chief nyoyoko's compound (nyoyoko, 2013:16).

The Strength Of Every Christian Community Within The Catholic Church Is The Holy Eucharist – The Unity, Centre And Confirmation Of Our Faith:

the eucharist is the source and submit of the christian life. the other sacrament, and indeed all ecclesiastical ministries and works of the apostolate, are bound up with the eucharist and are oriented towards it. for in the blessed eucharist in contained the whole spiritual good of the church, namely christ himself, our pasch. the eucharist is the efficacious sign and sublime cause of that communion in the divine life and the unity of the people of god which the church is kept in being. it is the culmination both of god's action sanctifying the world in christ and of the worship men offer to christ... the eucharist is the sum and summary of our faith... (catechism of the catholic church, 1991:1324-1327).

Having Received The Good News In 1912, The Catholic Faith In Annang Land Was Firmly Established With The First Ever Celebration Of The Holy Mass On December 25th, 1915:

By 1915 the first station Church was built in mud and Catholics had a permanent site for religious activities. On December 25th, 1915 the first ever Holy Mass in Annangland was celebrated in the new church by Rev. Fr. Paul biechy (Nyoyoko, 2013:16).

Ikot Ekpene Catholic Diocese 1912-2022



Catholicism In Ikot ekpene Has Seen Four Generations And Could Be Considered In Threefold Division Of The Missionary Era, The Period Of Organization And The Effects On Human Lives.

Considering the generations, the diocese has been shepherded by bishop james moynagh when it was a section under calabar diocese and by his eminence dominic cardinal ekanem, his lordship, and most rev. Camillus a.etokudoh, rt. Rev. Msgr. Sylvaus u. Etok and most rev. Camillus r. Umoh. These generations span through the missionary era 1912-1963, the creation of the diocese and organization of the diocese, 1963-1989 at first instance and 1989-2009 at the second instance followed by the transmission and consolidation of faith and life, 2009-2022.

During the missionary era activities were centered on introduction of the good news, the acceptance of the good news and the planting of the good news On The Land. The Period Witnessed Great Sacrifice On The Part Of The European Missionaries Who Suffered Lots Of Sickness, Harsh Weather And Stressed Condition But With Firm Hope And Faith In God While Seeing To The Planting Of The Word Of God. It Was Equally A Period Of Great Generosity On The Part Of The Natives Who Opened The Doors Of Their Heart And Lands To Receive The European Missionaries, Keep Them Protected From Dangers, Offered Up Their Lands For The Word To Be Planted And Their Children To Serve The Needs Of These European Missionaries.

One Jamesekanem Led A Team Of Young Men To Anua. They Went With His Luggage On Foot, To And Fro Anua, As Was Common In Those Days. As There Was No Other Building Near The School, Rev. Fr. Kraft Had To Put Up In The School Building And Small Groups Of Young People Took Turn Towatch Over Him During The Night. (Udondata, 2013:160).

The Next Period In The History Of Ikotekpene Diocese Is The Time Covering The Creation Of The Diocese And That Of Organization Of The Diocese For Easier Administration And Pastoral Effectiveness. When The Diocese Was Created In 1963 It Was Handed Over To Be Administered By The Native Bishop In Union With Clergy And Entire People Of God:

The Sacred Congregation For The Propagation Of Faith Having Long Borne With Solitude Matters Of Catholic Interests; Has Considered That A New Diocese Be Established In A Territory Of Nigeria, West Africa, Which Would Be Committed To The Care Of Native Clergy... (Udondata, 2013:12).

The time had his eminence dominic cardinal ekandem as the chief shepherd and his lordship, most rev. Ephraim silas obot, as his auxiliary. This was indeed an opening era for the



involvement of the native clergy and lay faithful in the day to day spreading of the gospel of christ. The time saw to the opening of schools, for boys and girls, establishment of hospitals, formation of groups for men, women, youth and professionals. Such social ministries reflect the church's responsibility to care for the poor, promote human welfare and give vulnerable people a sense of belonging within the faith community (Essien & Edem, 2024). It was intended that these groups become channels through which the gospel can be preached to the people. Building on the work started by the european missionaries, the doors were opened for young men and women to answer the special call of god to become priests, brother and sisters. This call was supported by prayers of the people to st. Theresa to help us have priests and sisters who were natives of ikotekpene.

Following the creation period was the third generation that was fathered by his lordship, most rev. Camillus to etokudoh. The first task before the father of the third generation was that of uniting the faithful and directing them towards the purpose of building a greater ikotekpene diocese, thus he chose as his motto: “ut omnes unum sint” (that all may be one).

Faithfully, bishop camillus etokudoh lived his motto by re-organizing the diocesan laity council in such a way that offices were termed and rotated to reach all parts of the diocese. He gave prominent place to the contributions of the laity while remaining a father of all with an exceptional humane disposition. He embarked on pastoral visits to parishes where many were reconciled to the church and one another. He strongly believed in the education of the priests, religious and lay faithful. Many priests were sent on further studies, schools were established, the training of catechists and lay evangelizers was encouraged, many were admitted to the seminary for formation, many priests were ordained. The first synod of the diocese took place during this time in 2003 with the objective of reconciling and reawakening faith in the diocese.

The Last Generation Is That Of Transmission Of Faith And Consolidation Of Faith And Life. In 2009, Bishop Etokudoh Was Transferred To Port Harcourt Diocese. To Fill The Empty Seat, Rt. Rev. Msgr. Sylvanus U. Etok Was Appointed The Diocesan Administrator. His Was To Hold The Diocese Together For The Arrival Of The New Bishop. He Kept The People Together, Strengthen Faith And Hope Of The People That The Diocese Would Remain Great. He Celebrated The Year Of The Priests And Saw To The Beautiful Preparation For The Ordination And Installation Of The New Bishop, Most Rev. Camillus R. Umoh.

The New Bishop, Who Was Appointed By His Holiness, Pope Benedict Xvi On 16th July, 2010 Wasted No Time When He Took Over The Care Of The Diocese On 9th October, 2010, In Announcing That He Has Come To Inject More Life To The Faith Of The People, With His Motto Being, “Ut Vitam Habeant” – That They May Have Life.

His Lordship, Most C. R. Umoh Stresses Teaching Of The Faith While Calling For Commitment In Service Of God. Many Reforms Have Been Seen In Areas Of Parish And Diocesan Administration Reception Of The Sacraments And The Youth Apostolate. He Gives High Premium To Proper Education Of The Youth For A Better Ikotekpene Diocese Tomorrow. He



Believes In Transparency And Accountability In The Handling Of The Church's Finances. He Has Embarked On Pastoral Visit To All The Stations, Parishes, Deaneries, Organizations And Groups Of The Diocese.

Contributions Of The Nyoyokos To Catholicism In Ikotekpene Diocese

The Shape And Growth Of Christianity In Every Community Depends Largely On The Involvement And Co-Operation Of The People. Therefore The Role Played By The Nyoyokos In The Spread Of Catholic Faith In Ikotekpene Diocese Between 1912 And 2022, Cannot Be Over Emphasized. They Have Been There From The Inception Till Date As Stake Holders, Maintaining The Faith And Defending The Growth Of The Church.

While Not Intending To Give The Biography Of The Nyoyokos, This Works Gives Outlines Of Their Various Contributions To The Growth Of Catholic Faith In Ikotekpene Diocese.

Okuku Nnyoyoko Udo Umoren

As Already Mentioned In This Work, He Was The Warrant Chief And The Clan Head Of Adiasim Who Sent Four Able Bodied Men To Anua To Bring To Adiasim The Rev. Fr. In-Charge Of Anua Mission, Becoming Therefore The One To Officially Invite The Catholic Church Into Annang Land.

Not Only Did He Invite The Priest For The Establishment Of The Catholic Church, He Equally Provided For Their Immediate Needs:

...Rev. Fr. Paul Biechy Was Brought In A Harmock (Lyire) To Chief Nyoyoko's Compound. The Priest Was Accommodated In The "Ufokmbot" As The Chief's Rest House Was Then Called. This Rest House Was To Remain The Priests' Guest House For Some Years (Nyoyoko, 2013:16).

He Remained Vocal In The Face Of Attack Against The New Faith and The Missionaries. One Irish Missionary, Bishop James Moynagh Recalls The Role Played By Okuku Nyoyoko udoumoren Thus:

Also there was an outbreak of pagan society called "ekaekong". It was viciously pagan. They went in and made pagan sacrifices on the altars of the weak churches. Local church members had to carry machete to protect themselves and their wives going to Sunday service. They once interrupted me at adiasim where i was hearing confession until I was "saved" by chief nyoki (nyoyoko), the okuku of the clan... (kiggins, 1991:82).



Catechist Sabastian Nyoyoko

Working With The European Missionaries Also To Plant And Spread The Good News In Ikotekpene Was Catechist Sabastian Nyoyoko. He Served As A School Teacher In Ifuho And Was There When The Legion Of Mary Was Established On September, 7th, 1933. He Became One Of The Pioneer Members Of The Legion Of Mary. “A Veritable Tool For The Evangelization Of The People Of Ikotekpene” (Akpan, 2021:25).

Chief Patron Gabriel Udom nyoyoko (1922-1994)

Born into a family that had already opened his doors to the european missionaries, he was brought up in the catholic faith in ifuho where he lived with his brother, teacher (catechist) sabastian nyoyoko.

He studied and became a teacher also, and as a teacher he was performing the work of a catechist also in the various schools and stations he served. The biography of his life holds that he was in the fore front of other faithful catholics who requested for the creation of ikotekpene diocese. When the diocese was created and organized, he became the first assistant secretary of ikotekpene diocese between 1963 and 1980.

He was a devoted member and dedicated president of the st. Vincent de paul society, ikotekpene diocese. A society dedicated to the care of the poor and needy in the society. This commitment agrees with the Lukan concern that the poor should not be neglected by the religious community but should be treated with dignity and practical care (Essien & Edem, 2024).

His faith extended beyond the catholic fold to embrace other christians. He pioneered the formation of the Christian association of nigeria in adiasim.

He served as the treasurer of st. Peter catholic church, adiasim ikot essiendot and saw to the building of the new church in ikot essie ndot.

He was not a passive but an active catholic and christian, whose meritorious services to the church earned him an award of a papal medal in 1971. He was a great promoter of the sacred heart of Jesus Christ, a devoted member of the legion of Mary and world apostolate of Fatima. These pious societies in the Catholic Church are engaged in the practice of the spiritual and corporal works of mercy in the name of and in accordance with the teachings of the church.

Very Rev. Fr. Prof. Vincent Gabriel Nyoyoko

This Reverend gentleman was born into a devoted catholic family of chief patron gabriel udomnyoyoko as the first child of the parents seventy years ago. Inspired by the exemplary life of ephraim silas obot (a young seminarian who later became priest and bishop), he opted to study for the catholic priesthood:



He (bishop E. S. Obot) was exemplary and remained as a model for us the very young ones; he was saintly and courageous. He remained a model and point of reference... His life influenced our choice of the catholic priesthood (Okpe & Ekanem, 2019:13-14).

After his training in the seminary, he was ordained a catholic priest on the 2nd of july, 1978, being one of the first set of twelve to be ordained priest for ikotekpene diocese. In the past 44 years as a priest, he has contributed a lot to the spiritual, pastoral, organizational and administrative growth of the diocese.

Having served as the pastor in st. Joseph parish, okon, st. Paul parish, ekparakwa, st. Anthony parish, obongnkwtikono, st. Vincent de paul parish, ikotobongedong, st. Michael parish, ikotetim and st. Francis xavier autonomous catholic community, ikotosurua, he has had the blessing of preaching the gospel of christ and admitting so many to the sacraments of baptism, eucharist, marriage, penance and that of the sick.

In the course of his ministry as a priest, he had been involved in the formation of future priests having served as a formator in bigardmemorial seminary (now st. Joseph major seminary), Ikot Ekpen. According to him, he was taking it as a point of duty to be supporting the diocese financially in the formation and training of seminarians yearly. He has been so involved in the pastoral running of the diocese for over two decades as the pastoral council coordinator. He played a prominent role during the first diocesan synod. He was one of the consultants to rt. Rev. Msgr. S. U. Etok during the transmission of faith era in the diocese. He was actively involved in the planning for the ordination and installation of his lordship, most rev. Camillus r. Umoh as the third bishop of ikotekpene catholic diocese.

He has not forgotten the fact that he is what he is by the grace of god and the benevolence of the church. That is why he will often say to any priest, consult your bishop in all you wish to do and never disobey the bishop.

He holds the bishop so dear as a father and can afford to let go of his personal interest for the good of the church and the bishop.

On 30th june, 2022, he told a story of how his bishop, most rev. Camillus a. Etokudoh had to cancel his visa to ireland in order for him to be part of the first diocesan synod.

In appreciation to the church, he has built for st. Michael parish, ikotetim a befitting presbytery and is embarking on another for his present parish, ikotosurua.

He has carried out beautiful reforms in the diocesan education commission of ikotekpene and is working towards improving the education standard as well as the welfare package of the staff.

As he marks 44 years as a priest it is good to recall for the benefit of the present generation the sacrifice he under went as a young priest in his pastoral assignment. Once, his car was taken



away by the dealer because his home parish could not balance the amount having purchased the car on hire.

He was serving as a pastor without a car for some time. He was equally denied the use of a car he had repaired for use by the church authority. All these he saw as the will of god.

Rev. Fr. Philip Nyoyoko and Rev. Fr. Gabriel Fabian Nyoyoko

As The Third Generation Of The Nyoyoko's Family Is Winding Down, The Faith Has Remained And There Are Prospects Of Growth In Faith Within The Family.

The Two Priests Mentioned Above Are Actively Involved In The Spreading Of The Goodnews of Christ Wherever They Find Themselves. While Rev. Fr. Philip Nyoyoko Is Serving As A Missionary Outside Ikotekpene Diocese, Rev. Fr. Gabriel F. Nyoyoko Serves As An Assistant Parish Priest In Assumption Parish, Ikpeannang And He Is The Youth Cahplain Of The Parish As Well As The Manager Of The Nursery And Primary School In That Parish. In These Positions He Adds Value To He Catholic Faith And Growth In Ikotekpene Diocese.

Apart From The Ones Named Above, So Many In The Family Have Been So Involved In Church Activities As Choir Master, Youth President, Chief Sacristan, Parish Secretary, Parish Treasurer And President Of The Catholic Women Organization Of Nigeria, Adiasim Parish. Indeed, There Is A Firm Faith That This Will Be Transmitted To The Next Generation.

Evaluation and Conclusion

While Some Authors Hold That Catholicism Came To Ikotekpene In 1910 Or 1914 It Is Good To Remark Here If Catholicism Arrived Anua In 1909 And The Priests Took Residence In 1912 There Is No Way The Church In Ikotekpene Would Have Preceded Anua The Mother. Records Presented Here Reveals That The Actual Year Of Arrival Of Catholicism In Ikotekpene Diocese Was 1912 While The First Holy Mass Was Celebrated Three Years Later On 25th December 1915, After Proper Catechesis On The Importance Of The Holy Mass And The Responses At Mass As Well As To Mark The First Baptism Of New Converts.

The Character Of The Church Is Missionary But No Missionary Can Function Well Without The Co-Operation Of The Natives. There Is Need For All Natives To Own The Church Not As Something Alien But That Which Has Been With Us Since The Entry Of Western Civilization To Our Land. Each Person Should Contribute His Quota To The Growth And Development Of The Church.

The Church Is A Reforming Church Always Making New Advances At Improving Herself For Greater Pastoral And Spiritual Achievement In That Sense, Members Should Be Docile And Opened To The Workings Of The Holy Spirit, Getting Involved With Others In Their Culture And Share Experiences That Enhance The Growth Of The Church. A Proud Church That Refuses To Go Out Cannot Correct Herself Nor Can A Proud Culture That Refuses New Ideas Improve.



The Past Should Not Be Neglected As There Is Much In The Past That Can Help Shape Our Present.

Above All, Let Each Person Always Think Of What To Do In Order To Improve Where He Finds Himself Other Than Always Seeking To Destroy What Others Have Labored For. There Is Need For Consolidation Of Every Development. This Way The Church And Human Society Will Be Better For All To Belong.

Families Should Bring Forth Godly Children Who Would Sustain The Catholic Faith In Private And Public Life Thereby Affecting Positively The Larger Human Society. Intergenerational transmission remains essential because values survive when elders, families and communities intentionally pass them to the young (Edem & Akpan, 2025).

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