

CHURCH OF THE NATIVITY, OROIGWE

(FROM DECEMBER, 2003 – APRIL, 2022)



OUR YESTERDAY, TODAY AND TOMORROW

CHURCH OF THE NATIVITY, OROIGWE

*A historical documentary of Church of the Nativity, Rumuewhara, Oroigwe
Catholic Diocese of Port Harcourt*

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DEDICATION

This documentary is dedicated to all the Parishioners (both living and dead) of Church of the Nativity, Rumuewhara- Oroigwe. It is also dedicated to all the parish priests and visiting priests who have pastored the parish from inception till date.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The documentary preparation working committee would like to say special thanks to the local ordinary, His Lordship, Most Rev. Dr. Camillus Archibong Etokudoh and the Auxiliary Bishop Most Rev. Dr. Patrick Eluke for the several times they have visited the Church of the Nativity Parish. We also appreciate the Late Bishop A.O Makozi who approved the establishment the out station and also pronounced it as a Parish. In a special way we acknowledge our former parish priest, Monsignor Cyprian Onwuli who was also a Vicar General of the Catholic Diocese of PortHarcourt and the founder of the Church of the Nativity, Rumuewhara, Oroigwe for his relentless efforts towards the establishment and development of the parish from inception to date. Further thanks go to all the succession of priests that have supported the development and spiritual growth of the parishioners. To the first Parish priest, Rev Fr. Charles Berebon we say thank you. The parish, Church of the Nativity has in recent times witnessed tremendous progress and so much credit will go to our current parish priest, Rev. Fr. Ambrose Bani for his positive energy to channel parish resources towards both spiritual development, infrastructural development and for initiating and supporting this documentary preparation project. We also acknowledge the parish pastoral council, the laity council and financial council of Church of the Nativity. We acknowledge and appreciate the various roles played by the parishioners of the Church of the Nativity, Rumuewhara, Oroigwe towards providing data to ensure the realization of this documentary. Our special credits go to Monsignor Cyprian Onwuli who gave time to share his story surrounding the vision for bringing the church of the Nativity to Rumuewhara, Oroigwe many years ago. We give special thanks to Sir Chris Okosodo, Sir B.C Ugwu, Sir Cyril Ogumba, Sir Mike Obinor and Chief Chidi Madufor, Rev. Sister (Prof) Caroline Mbonu and Rev. Sister Charity Onyejekwe for their time and for the valuable information they provided to the committee towards the realization of this documentary.

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FOREWORD

This documentary presents a concise survey of the life, people, culture and structure of the Church of the Nativity, Rumuewhara, Oroigwe including its past, present, and hope for the future perspective. It is the result of dialogue and communal living in the parish.

This work, takes us on a journey through history, exploring on possibilities and limitations of strength over time. It shows great living, ideas and accomplishments with cycle of liturgical, sacramental, pastoral, humanitarian activities and social life of the people of the Church of the Nativity.

It is a masterpiece that should be in the homes of our parishioners. This documentary is a treasurable gift and package presented to the parish by the working committee. It would help other parishes to learn more and be a primordial source to them. Through this documentary, we set a pace on the importance of maintaining and tracing historical facts and data about the establishment of our parish. We hope other parishes will learn from us and follow suit.

I would like to appreciate the parish pastoral council, laity council, the entire Christ's faithful of the Church of the Nativity, Rumuewhara, Oroigwe. My special thanks go to the committee responsible for the preparation of this history book and to all the persons that supported and made useful contributions towards the realization of this documentary. In a special way, I appreciate the efforts of each member of this committee and their chairman, Dr. (Sir) Patricks Chinemerem. Your efforts and performance have been outstanding. I appreciate all your hard work and dedications. Thank you for the team work.

Through this documentary, we further ascertain that it is all introspection that gives access to understanding ourselves, self- reflection, insights to stories, through self-awareness. The documentary presents a pathway to self-examination of our strength and limitation as a body and family of Christ's faithful. It offers an opportunity to understand our mission and vision including prospects for new faces and development of our parish community.

This history book of the parish will help us make out time and efforts to refocus our minds on the position and opportunity to grow and develop. It would enhance our abilities to understand our motivation and learn more about our own values, the

importance of doing it right, live happily and create an enabling environment for worship, study of the Word of God, prayer and works of charity.

It will help us to understand and define our foundation while setting a great pathway for sustainability and continuity of our parish life.

Rev Fr. Ambrose Bani

Parish Priest

Church of the Nativity, Rumuewhara Oroigwe

PREFACE

This documentary was borne out of a desire to create a resource that will aid parishioners of today's generation and the parishioners of the future including visitors to have an opportunity to mirror into the past years of the parish and there by appreciate the work of God and the huge efforts of parishioners in building and developing a place of worship for God.

This parish documentary project was conceived and commissioned by the parish priest Rev. Fr. Ambrose Bani in January 2022.

This documentary is structured into two parts (Part1 and part 2). Part one comprises three chapters (chapters 1, 2 and 3) which provided general introduction, the vision for a church at Rumuewhara, Oroigwe and information related to Parish infrastructures and project development. Part one offered an opportunity to understand important historical facts about the vision to build a Catholic church in Oroigwe. This part gave a vivid account of what brought about this vision, how it started, who and what were the drivers behind the vision, the role played by the mother Parish St John to actualize the vision. This section offered information on the early challenges, obstacles, key issues and struggles to acquire the land for the church, brief about the first success stories including land acquisition and the setting out for the great mission at Rumuewhara, Oroigwe. From part one; we are also able to understand the early foundation works and developmental projects which the early parishioners embarked upon.

Part two of this documentary has three chapters (chapters 4, 5 and 6) which provided information on Parish administration and governance there by emphasizing on the succession of priests that have pastored in the parish. The governance section also elucidated key facts about the parish pastoral council, laity council, the administration and leadership of the Catholic Women Organization (CWO), Catholic Men Organization (CMO) and Catholic Youth Organization of Nigeria (CYON). Also in part two we shall find information on parish pastoral life and evangelization especially related to the formation of basic Christian communities and state worshiping communities, first Eucharistic celebration (first holy mass), episcopal visits, first holy matrimony and mass marriages that took place, first infant baptism, the out stations from the parish, first crusades and other community outreach/evangelization programmes. The last chapter in part two focused on our present (today) as a parish and on our tomorrow (the future to come).

This documentary was compiled and edited by a committee of six parishioners' who

were charged with the responsibility to help in tracing the history of the parish from its inception. The task to write this documentary effectively started with an inauguration meeting convened by the parish priest on Tuesday January 18th, 2022 during which the parish priest made known his intent and gave working terms of reference to the committee members to commence the task of data and information gathering and subsequently compiling a credible documentary for the parish.

The aim of this work is to produce a credible reference resource that can be considered as a documentary of the parish- Church of the Nativity, Rumuewhara, Oroigwe, which will provide traceable and valid historical information on the establishment of the parish, its foundation members and developmental strides from inception. The objectives are to: enable present day parishioners have an opportunity to understand where their journey to build a parish and a community of Catholic lay faithful started. Another objective is to provide an opportunity for future parishioners and visitors to understand and be able to trace the historical evolution of the parish and be able to appreciate the early members that contributed to the growth and development of the parish. Another objective is to provide a chronological list of facts and data on how the vision to establish a Catholic parish in Oroigwe began, the early challenges, succession of priests, religious and lay faithful organizations that led the administration of the parish from its inception till present, the intrigues of acquisition of the land for the church and information on infrastructural development of the parish which aided the pastoral mission for evangelization and outreach to the Catholic faithful and others (Christians and non-Christians) within its surrounding neighborhood. A final objective is to create an opportunity to mirror deeply into the present day realities of the parish and into its future- a projection of the infrastructural developmental plan of the parish (master plan) and programmes proposed for the spiritual growth of parishioners.

In achieving the objectives set out for this documentary, the six member committee commenced the process of data and information gathering which adopted a descriptive approach. The information provided in this documentary were generated following interviews and focus group discussions arranged among parishioners, past parish priests and friends to the parish. Other sources of data were derived from parish register, minutes of meetings of various pious societies and unpublished addresses delivered by heads of parish organizations at the end of their tenure of leadership. The interviews were unstructured in nature and the respondents were asked open questions which allowed them the opportunity to tell their story and describe events and processes that might have taken place over the past years numbering almost two decades. The respondents who constituted the study sample were drawn from the larger population of the church of the Nativity parish and these included the pioneer parish priests, parishioners that have been in the parish from the beginning and also

members from the mother parish of St John's parish, Rumuokrushi. The respondents or samples were drawn based on a purposive and judgmental technique that these are persons that will provide the information that was needed to prepare the documentary. At the end of the data gathering process, all information and data collected from various respondents were found to be positively correlated as there were no significant differences in the facts and data provided by the various selected respondents in their narrations regardless of the fact that they were interviewed at different times and locations.

The draft documentary was later subjected to a three phased review process starting first from the documentary development working group and committee, then by the parish priest and finally by the parish council representatives. Observed gaps and errors were verified and corrected and finally the documentary went through a process of adoption and approval.

This documentary is today a reference resource of the Church of the Nativity, Rumuewhara, Oroigwe and can be used and referenced by parishioners and visitors and all heads and leaders of various pious societies of the parish to learn and to understand the past.

The documentary preparation working committee recommends that every family in the parish should have a copy of this documentary in their home.

Dr. (Sir) Patricks-E, Chinemerem KSJI

IFTDO Representative, TC/260- ISO-30422, DIS- Learning & Development
Member IFTDO International Projects Committee
Lecturer & Member Academic Board, COHSE, University of Port Harcourt.

Part 1

WHO WE ARE AND HOW IT ALL BEGAN

Chapter 1 Introduction

A journey that began almost two decades ago has blossomed and increased in all ramifications. It is a perfect reflection of the realization of Gods command in the book of Genesis Chapter 28, Verse 28 “..... Be fruitful and increase” The Church of the Nativity indeed has blossomed in fruitfulness and has increased in both number and value. It was a vision that was sown in the heart of Very Rev. Monsignor Cyprian Onwuli many years ago and like a mustard seed has grown huge to shelter Gods people and have nurtured several other branches (out stations and parishes). Over the years, the Church of the Nativity has been steady and committed towards fulfilling its mission to evangelize the Rumuewhara, Oroigwe community and to shine forth as the beacon bringing Gods word- Christ Jesus to the people. Hence it is today the rallying point as the Centre for Oroigwe Deanery.

Location and Layout

The Church of the Nativity is among the 21st century and Millennium parishes created by and for the Catholic Diocese of Port Harcourt during the episcopacy of His Lordship, Bishop Alexius Makozi of blessed memory. The Church of the Nativity is situated in the Rumuewhara community in Oroigwe Kingdom of Obio-Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State.



Figure 1. Map of Rivers State showing Parish location in Obio Akpor Local Government
Source: Google search

OVERVIEW OF PARISH CHARACTER:

The Church of the Nativity parish has an average of 300 families who are committed to building for the Lord. These are dedicated holy families of Christ's faithful with eagerness to give their time, talent and treasure to God and God's mission. The average population of the parish is estimated to about 1200 parishioners including women, men, youth and children.

The sources of above estimated population figure are from:

- i. A head count of about 300 families that took part during the year 2022 opening Mass and thanksgiving procession held on Sunday January 19th, 2022.
- ii. the physical head counting of attendees to the four Masses celebrated in the parish on Sunday February 6th, 2022
- iii. Reports from various parish organizations related to their membership

In his words, a former parish pastoral council vice chairman and one time laity council chairman of blessed memory – Late Sir Alex Illah described the parish and parishioners as vibrant, dedicated, charitable and highly motivated community of Christ faithful and devoted Catholics (Church of the Nativity Harvest Brochure, 2019). According to Late Sir Illah, they have been a source of motivation to the good works and progress achieved in the parish.

Similarly, a former and first parish CMO chairman and parish building project committee chairman Sir Chris Okosodo confirmed that the parishioners are steadfast in their desire to make sacrifices amidst difficult and challenging economic realities of our country in order to support the development and ongoing building projects in parish - church of the Nativity.

Sir Mike Obinor, the first Pastoral council vice chairman described the parishioners as passionate members of the community with unprecedented and uncommon zeal and corporation to build a place of worship for God.

In his account, the founding priest and former vicar general of the catholic diocese of Port Harcourt, Very Rev. Msgr Cyprian Onwuli described the parishioners as a group of Christ faithful with a burning desire and deep interest and commitment to build for the lord and to develop their parish. According to him he truly acknowledges and appreciates their support and involvement in parish project development.

The Church of the Nativity Oroigwe is a welcoming Catholic community that is continually making efforts to grow in both the spirituality of its members and also in terms of infrastructures.

It is among the new millennium parishes of the 21st century in the Catholic diocese of Port Harcourt. At the moment of writing this documentary, the parish is at the peak of efforts to complete its ongoing new church building. The church also at this time is characterized by several infrastructural development projects geared to making it a conducive and pleasant place of worship for parishioners and visitors to the parish.

A visit into the parish premises greets you with a beautiful grotto of our Mother of Perpetual Help, a giant crucifix, an air of peace and an atmosphere of friendliness and God's divine presence.



Plate 1a: The Grotto of our mother of Perpetual Help
(A visible monument that characterizes the parish)



Plate 1b: Entrance view of the Parish church building

CHAPTER 2

THE VISION FOR A CHURCH AT RUMUEWHARA, OROIGWE

Preamble: From the time of conceptualizing the need to bring a Catholic church to Oroigwe, to the time of land acquisition and early site preparations and kick off for the construction of the first church building, Rumuewhara community in Oroigwe and the immediate environment surrounding the present day church and parish premises was a thickly forested area and remote locality. It was actually the church that attracted settlement and accelerated development to the immediate Rumuewhara community.

THE VISION: HOW IT ALL STARTED

It was a vision conceived by Very Rev. Msgr Cyprian Onwuli in 1993 while serving as the parish priest of St John's Catholic Parish, Rumuokwurushi.

The Church of the Nativity, Oroigwe was created through a deep passion and emotional commitment to support the development of the Catholic Diocese of Port Harcourt and to promote further evangelization of the Catholic Lay-faithful and to bring the church closer to communities far and near within the Catholic Diocese of Port Harcourt. This was the motive that gave birth to the out station (now a parish) Church of the Nativity, Rumuewhara in Oroigwe.

It all started in 1993 when Msgr Cyprian Onwuli first drove into Oroigwe community to help take home his visitor who happened to be an Anglican Pastor.

Obinor (2013) confirmed that the Church of the Nativity was the brainchild of Msgr. Cyprian Onwuli when he was the Parish Priest of St. John's Parish, Rumuokwurusi. He conceived the need to establish this church after his adventurous tour of Oroigwe kingdom in search of a fertile ground for evangelization (Obinor, 2013).

In an account narrated by Msgr Cyprian Onwuli during an interview, he had these to say.

“I was posted to St John's parish Rumuokwurushi in October 1991 but I moved into the parish on the 1st of January, 1992. While I was at St John's as parish priest, my interest and priorities were to build a church at Woji and Elemenwo. I had Woji in mind because when I was at the Sacred Heart Minor Seminary, Rumuibekwe, we used to take students (Seminarians) through Woji on a Cross country and that experience of a long distance motivated me to establish a church at Woji and Elemenwo. Oroigwe

was not in my plan then. However, it was not until 1996 that I realized the vision for a church at Woji. The reason was that I had to obey my Bishop then who was the late Bishop Alexius Makozi who requested and insisted that I start up a church at Rumuokoro which is today's St. Jude's parish Rumuokoro which started in 1994 and the SS Peter and Paul Parish at Elemenwo started in 1997. The vision for a church at Oroigwe was ignited in me in 1993. It was a Saturday when an Anglican Pastor from Oroigwe visited me at St John's parish in Rumuokwurushi and at the end of his visit, I escorted him out but discovered he did not drive so I took my car key and offered to drive him back to Oroigwe. It was during this drive into Oroigwe that I noticed the long distance and the nature of the roads and I said to myself- perhaps some of my parishioners may be coming to St John's from here. There and then, the vision and the desire to bring a church into Oroigwe was born. Hence as soon as I completed the starting of the churches in Rumuokoro (1994), Woji (November, 1996) and Elemenwo (June, 1997), I moved in for the church at Oroigwe. However, it was not until 2001 that I bought the first 18 plots of land at Oroigwe for the church because I needed to complete the Rumuokoro, Woji and Elemenwo parish start up projects. As soon as I paid for the land at Oroigwe in 2001, there were challenges which made me to halt the process."

In his narration, Sir Mike Obinor, who was the first parish pastoral vice chairman stated *"The Church of the Nativity was the brainchild of Msgr. Cyprain Onwuli when he was the Parish Priest of St. John, Rumuokwurusi. He conceived this creation in 1996 after his adventurous tour of Rumuewhara, searching for fertile grounds that will enable him extend his work of evangelization. As the idea began to develop he saw a truer picture of the Church to be, and being a man of action in this area, he wasted no time before meeting with selected elders of the Church at St. John as well as the indigenes of Rumuewhara. Amongst these selected few was a seasoned lands Officer who helped to negotiate the acquisition of the present Church's premises"*.

Land acquisition:

The land on which the parish, "Church of the Nativity" is situated was bought and acquired in 2001 from the seven Elders of Onunwo family in Rumuewhara community of Oroigwe. A total of 18 plots of land were paid for and bought in 2001. Following the need for future expansion and projections for more land space that will accommodate future infrastructural needs of the evolving parish, some additional six plots of land were acquired from adjoining and neighbouring lands to meet anticipated future expansion and development of the parish. It will be of interest to note here that at the beginning, the land that was to host the present day parish "Church of the Nativity", Oroigwe would have been bought further away into the Rumuewhara farm road, but in order to benefit the people at living at Elimgbu, Monsignor Onwuli Cyprian decided to settle for the present land where the Church is located today. It will be important to note here also that the Church had to give out some large portion of its land to serve as access road in order to ease the movement of people in and out of the neighborhood where the Church is presently located.

Although the land was acquired in 2001, early development works and building could not commence until 2003 due to some resistance and challenges experienced from the host community.

The challenge

It was a two sided problem. The first major challenge was the Rumuewhara Oroigwe community boys who were not friendly as at that time and another was a deep consideration on the resources of St Johns Parish which were been used to acquire and develop these new churches.

Monsignor Cyprian Onwuli had these to say

“As soon as I was done with starting the churches at Rumuokoro, Woji and Elelenwo, Oroigwe came up. We bought the first 18 plots and wanted to start building but the Oroigwe community boys were rough. They were not kind enough. Hence, I told my catechist at St Johns parish Baba Anthony Verisimo that we have to leave Oroigwe since they failed to realize that we were bringing development to their area. We left Oroigwe project for a year but after much considerations we had to return because it was glaring that the more time we lose the more we allowed parishioners to suffer the difficulties of bad road and distance. So we came back in 2003, started the foundation for the Oroigwe church and started block work to lintel level and put a temporary roof then handed it over to the people at Oroigwe. Actually, I was afraid of opening the church at Oroigwe because despite the difficulties and challenges we got from the Oroigwe community boys, I really felt I was spending my time and using much of the money I had at St Johns outside”.

Another important fact about the church at Oroigwe was an interesting episode that happened when one of my major benefactors, Sir Johnson Arumemi lost his mother about the time we started the Oroigwe project. I attended Arumemi's mothers burial at Benin with Monsignor Pius Kii and my late Bishop Makozi. On our way back to Port Harcourt from Benin and driving along East West Road near Rumuodara axis, my late bishop looked out through the car window and said “you see this area, I think we need a church around here” he pointed in the direction of Oroigwe. What my late bishop did not know was that I had already bought land and started building a church at Oroigwe. Sometime later in 2003, I reminded my Bishop that I needed money to buy land in the area he mentioned and expressed interest the day we were returning from the burial of Arumemi's mother. He told me to take my money and buy the land. But off course I had gone far before making this request. Then came the big surprise to my late bishop. One day in December 2003 about two weeks to the first holy mass at Oroigwe my late bishop drove in to St. John's parish was his culture then. From time to time he drives in to check on us. During that visit I told him I was going to take him out to show him something somewhere but never told him what it was. I told him we will drive in my own car which he accepted and we drove into Oroigwe.

On approaching the road leading to the church he noticed the sign post which had been erected for the purpose of the first holy mass on Christmas day and he exclaimed “*you have a church in here*” on seeing the sign post which read “Church of the Nativity, Rumuewhara, Oroigwe, Catholic Diocese of Port Harcourt”.



Plate 2a: A signpost leading to the new out station

We finally arrived the church and it was a huge surprise for my late bishop seeing that we already had a church building. At this point I told him we were going to have the first holy mass during next Sunday which was December 25th, 2003.

It will be good to emphasize here that this was the very first episcopal visit to the new church although it was informal and not a celebrated visit since there were not any prior notice to the would be parishioners of this new out station.

THE ROLE OF THE MOTHER PARISH – ST JOHN'S PARISH RUMUOKWURUSHI

The mother parish to Church of the nativity is St. John's Catholic Parish, Rumuokwurushi. It was from this parish that the early resources used to start the out station at Oroigwe which today is parish was collected.

Here are some words from Msgr Cyprian Onwuli

“It was not always very easy at the beginning but I always opened a funding support register in the parish and requested parishioners to make voluntary and free will donations to support the early development works. Some definitely supported but I really must commend the huge supports and deep interests shown by my then Catechist, Mr. Verismo, Sir Joe Ebudaghe, Late Sir George Ukpong, brother Nwadike and Sir Johnson Arumemi.” Let me emphasize here that Sir Johnson Arumemi was very supportive financially and Sir Joe Ebudaghe contributed a lot in the whole land acquisition process and it was from Sir Joe Ebudaghe that I met Wakamma Chukwumati of the Church of the nativity. *“My then catechist Verismo was deeply committed and involved in all the activities and processes leading to the establishment of the church at Rumuewhara, Oroigwe. There were also other persons like Phil Anozie, Mike Obinor, Chris Okosodo and Mrs. Calista Ezeaku who played supportive roles. These were parishioners of Church of the Nativity resident at Oroigwe as at 2003 who eventually supported and facilitated the vision to grow and develop the church at Rumuewhara in Oroigwe.”*

CHAPTER 3

PARISH INFRASTRUCTURES AND PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

Infrastructures and parish project development at the Church of the Nativity, Oroigwe effectively commenced in 2003 following the return to site. Let us recall that the church project was put on hold for one year from 2001 when the land was acquired due to challenges and lack of corporation experienced in the hands of Oroigwe community boys that time. It can therefore be stated here that following land acquisition, effective early development works commenced in 2003 with foundation works and bricklaying work to lintel and subsequent roofing of the temporary church building structure in preparation for the first mass that was scheduled to take place on December 25th of that same year- 2003. A fact of interest to note here is that these very early development works were directly carried out, supervised and funded by the founding priest Very Rev. Msgr Cyprian Onwuli with his supporting parishioners from St Johns Parish Rumuokrushi - The mother parish. This implies that as at this early works stage, the would be pioneer parishioners of the new out station- Church of the Nativity Oroigwe did not know much about the church and its first church building foundation laying and site clearing. It was after the Christmas day first holy mass celebration that the new out station was formerly handed over to the would be pioneer parishioners of Church of the Nativity, then as an out station of St John's parish, Rumuokrushi.

One of the pioneer parishioners, Sir Barth Ugwu confirmed above narrative in his submission stated herein:

“The first church building was a cross-like or T-shaped structure that was laid in the East-West direction. This structure was having zinc roofing which were supported on wooden rafters which stood on 225mm x 225mm concrete columns at intervals of 3.6meters on wall lines down to foundation. The dwarf walls of the first church building were built with 9” blocks chained round at the lintel level and thereafter stopped. The floor was uniformly floored with sand cement mortar. This was the state we met the church as at the day of first holy Mass celebrated on December 25th, 2003. This extent of work was wholly carried out by very Rev. Msgr. Cyprian Onwuli, the then Parish priest of St. John Catholic Church, Rumuokrushi”.



Plate 3a: The church building as at December 25, 2003

EARLY DEVELOPMENT WORKS AS A NEW OUT STATION:

Key notable personalities during the first holy Mass that eventually took up both leadership responsibilities and personal commitment responsibilities to see towards the continuation of early development works of this new out station were Sir Mike Obinor, Sir Chris Okosodo, Chief Chidi Madufor, Sir Theophilus Ezeonodo, Mrs. Calista Ezeaku, Sir Barth C. Ugwu, Engr Emeka Otutu, Mr. Charles Idemudia, Justin Ubakamma, Mr. Wakamma Chukwumati and Baba Catechist Anthony Verisimo of St. Johns parish in Rumuokrushi who continued to provide support until a substantive catechist was appointed for the new out station.

After the first holy mass that was celebrated on December 25th, 2003, the new out station members quickly rose to their responsibility of church building and development in 2004 with the inauguration of a church building committee as it was called then.

It will be interesting to note here that during the first holy Mass there were no chairs or pews. Rather, concrete blocks were arranged and used as make-shift chairs.



Plate 3b: During first holy Mass without chairs and pews

As part of the early development works done to sustain worship at the parish was the need to ensure electricity supply. During these early days, there was no public electricity supply to the Rumuewhara community in Oroigwe where the church was located. It was Sir Mike Obinor who provided the first electricity generating set. This power generator was kept in the house of Mr. Greg Okwudiafor and moved to the church whenever required. This was done to ensure the generator was secured from theft and vandalization. To further the electricity supply project, Chief Chidi Madufor liaised with then National Electric Power Authority (NEPA) thereby facilitating the provision and installation of electricity poles and cables from the Oroigwe Road to the church. This was the first NEPA line into the church and its environs.

THE FIRST BUILDING PROJECT

Following the handover of the new out station to the catholic community resident within Oroigwe and surrounding environ and those who graced and attended the Christmas day first holy Mass, the next project embarked upon in the Church of the Nativity out station was the completion of the existing church building which was more like a tent with dwarf walls and lacked windows although there was a roof. A major modification was done on this first church building which included an expansion of the Church, raising of the walls beyond lintel level, plastering, fixing of windows, electrical wiring and painting as well as the addition of the

sacristy and the children mass center. Sir Mike Obinor, who was first parish pastoral council vice chairman with the help of other early foundation members like Sir Chris Okosodo, Engr Emeka Otutu and Chief Chidi Madufor were very instrumental to the development of the parish from the day of first inaugural holy Mass of 2003 Christmas day. In a brief account and narration, Sir Mike Obinor had these to tell “.....the walls were dwarf walls and only part raised to its full height was the wall behind the sanctuary. However, God opened the hearts of His people (our members) and in about 100 days from the first Holy Mass, all the walls were raised to their full height. Our membership strength increased rapidly and by January 2005 the church became too small for us and this lead to the expansion of the first church building”



Plate 3c: The first church building standing completed.

Through the help of contributions realized from few parishioners and other benefactors like Sir Mike Obinor, Chief Chidi Madufor, Sir Chris Okosodo, Engr Emeka Otutu, generous parishioners of St Johns Rumuokwurushi like Late Sir Ukpong George, the much needed funds and material resources such as six inches pipes, blocks, paints, and sands were achieved to enable additional reinforcement of beams for the church building, drilling of water bore hole, installation of access and security gate at the church premises, further expansion and to raise the existing dwarf walls and painting of the first church building. These marked the first early development works before the commencement of additional building projects like the presbytery and parish hall. It will be important to mention that the drilling of a water borehole at the parish and the establishment of a building committee to supervise the construction of the father's house were necessary pre-requisites towards the assignment of a resident parish priest and the attainment of a full parish status in the diocese.

A GLANCE ON THE FORMATION OF PARISH BUILDING COMMITTEES

THE FIRST PARISH BUILDING COMMITTEE

Rev. Fr. Bartholomew Uzoma who was by then the assistant rector of the Sacred Heart Minor Seminary, Rumuibekwe was among the assigned visiting priest- in-charge of the new out station. It was Rev. Fr. Bartholomew in 2007 that constituted the first building committee whose first task was to commence and ensure a speedy completion of the construction for the Father's house (Parish Presbytery). The members of the first parish building committee were: Sir Chris Okosodo (as chairman), Engr. B.C. Ugwu (as vice-chairman), Sir Mike Obinor (as member), Arc. Adesieye Idemudia (as member), Torhemba Iwenger (as secretary), and Mr. Wakama Chukwumati and Chief Ejims were also members.

THE SECOND BUILDING PROJECT

The second project that was embarked upon by the first building committee was the building of the presbytery (father's house). The Foundation of the presbytery was laid by Monsignor Cyprian Onwuli on 22nd April 2007 and this project was completed in 2008 which was within one year from date of commencement. The completion of the father's house within one year was a major success mile stone achieved by the first building committee headed by Sir Chris Okosodo.





Plates 3d: The foundation blessing of the parish Presbytery



Plate 3e: showing ongoing construction work for the presbytery



Plates 3f: Showing completion works and sandfilling of parish house premises with laterite
The trucks that were used to sandfill the presbytery arena were provided by Engr. Emeka Otutu

Following the successful completion of the presbytery, the then bishop, Most Rev. (Dr) A.O. Makozi of blessed memory on 13th April, 2008 commissioned the presbytery and also blessed the parish chapel and tabernacle for use. It will be interesting to note that it was during this event that the late bishop pronounced and elevated the church to a full parish status.



Plate 3g: Showing the blessing and dedication of the presbytery by His Lordship, late Bishop A.O Makozi, then Bishop of the Catholic diocese of Port Harcourt (April 13th, 2008)

Much of the motivation and drive that aided the quick completion of the parish house came from the then building committee lead by Sir Chris Okosodo and also from the then pastoral council vice chairman, Sir Mike Obinor. An interesting conversation once took place in early 2007 in which Sir Mike Obinor was quoted as saying “we cannot be sleeping in our comfortable houses while the priest of God has to be travelling long distances every day after celebrating week day evening Mass and return back along same long routes next day”.

During this time, the Oroigwe road that connects the parish location to the major Elingbu-Eneka road was in a very bad and deplorable state which caused long hours of stay on traffic jam. Then, the priest -in-charge of the out station (Rev. Fr Charles Berebon) would finish celebrating the evening holy Mass or other parish week day activity and had to return to the mother parish at St Johns,

Rumuokwurushi. This return trip was usually more difficult than the trip to come. The priest usually spent hours on traffic. He was spending close to 3 hours on a journey that should be within 10 minutes' drive. This was the sorry state of the road situation then. It was this concern borne out of a need to reduce the difficulties experienced by priests trying to access the parish that made the parishioners then to expedite and commit time and resources to realize the father's house project.

THIRD BUILDING PROJECT

The Parish hall was the third building project embarked upon by the parishioners of Church of the Nativity. This followed the Inauguration of the second building committee on May 31st, 2009, being the feast of Pentecost. It was on this date that the then priest, Rev. Fr. Charles Berebon constituted members of the second building committee during the 9am Mass. It will be of interest to note here that Rev. Fr Charles resumed at the Church of the Nativity at a time when the church was an autonomous Christian worshipping community. During this period his designation was "Priest-in-charge". He officiated in the church through this period while seeing it through a quasi-parish status and eventually to a full parish status on April 13th, 2008.

THE SECOND BUILDING COMMITTEE

The second building committee members were charged with the responsibility to ensure the commencement and completion of the Parish hall building. The members of this second building committee included: Sir Chris Okosodo (as chairman), Engr. Berth Ugwu (vice-chairman), Onyeka Ikebudu, Sir Mike Obinor, Arc Adesieye Idemudia, Mr. Powerful Onuh, Engr. Victor Aguluonu, Laz Ogbonna, Mr. Ben Adim, Mrs. Toyin madufor, Torhemba Iwanger, Wakama Chukwumati, Mr. Ifeanyi Ozumba and late Sir Alex Illah.. The building construction began the same year and was completed and put into use in 2011



Plate 3h: Showing Church of the Nativity Parish hall under construction



Plates 3i: Showing Church of the Nativity Parish hall completed for use

THE FOURTH BUILDING PROJECT

The New Church Building which today can be considered as the new modern temple where parishioners gather to pray, worship and adore the Lord is the fourth building project embarked on by the parishioners.

THE THIRD BUILDING COMMITTEE

It was in 2014 that the then Parish Priest Monsignor Cyprian Onwuli constituted the third building committee for the main and would be new church building. The committee members included Sir Chris Okosodo (as chairman), Engr. Berth Ugwu, Sir Mike Obinor, Sir Ben Adim, Mr. Ifeanyi Ozumba, Sir Victor Agwulonu (the builder), Uche Obival, Ubah Anyankah, Osi Nicholas, Ambrose Anukwuru (Surveyor) and Mr. Audu Williams.

This fourth project has been a major capital intensive project for the parish. With the efforts of parishioners, this project has been on progress since inception.

The foundation of the new church building was done in December 2015 while actual civil construction and building block work started in January 2016.

Construction Work on the new building has been progressively steady thereby paving way for the relocation out of the old church building to the new church building in February 2021. The first Sunday Mass in the new church building was celebrated on February 21st, 2021. This Sunday was a unique day during which

the parish organized a send forth for the immediate past parish priest Monsignor Cyprian Onwuli.

The new church building considered as (the Temple) has an underground basement hall for multi-purpose use with a capacity to sit quite a large number of persons. The new building complex has an in-built chapel and a large span of Sacristy area with a rest room in-built. The auditorium has galleries on every side and block of offices on the first floor of the building. Six staircases are configured in the building complex taking into consideration safety, security, comfort and convenience.

It will be of interest to note here that the direct labour approach was the strategy deployed by the building project management committee. In adopting this strategy, consideration was given to use labour and work men from within the parish as in-house human resources under the supervision of project committee. The project committee was made up of seasoned and experienced professionals in fields of engineering, building, project management, surveying, architecture, accounting, procurement, business administration, and HSE Management.

Another interesting fact to note was that in January 2016, the new church project building committee was mobilized with the sum of one million naira only and 9,000 blocks to commence work. From this little beginning, the committee made gradual but steady progress up to roofing level in November 2019. The building of the new church is a demonstration of faith and a manifestation of God's goodness and the generosity parishioners to build a temple to honour the Lord, God.



Plates 3j: In Photo are parishioners during the laying of foundation for the new church building with the parish priest and Vicar General of Catholic Diocese of Port Harcourt, Monsignor Cyprian Onwuli (December 2015)



Plate 3k: Showing the land space marked out for setting and foundation of new parish church building.



Plate 3l: Showing the new church building still under construction

Part 2

PASTORAL LIFE OF THE PARISH

CHAPTER 4

PARISH PASTORAL LIFE AND MISSION WORKS

Church of the Nativity was founded by Msgr. Cyprian Onwuli as an outstation of St. John's Parish Rumuokwurusi in the Catholic Diocese of Port Harcourt. The new outstation commenced pastoral activities and mission works on December 25th, 2003.

THE FIRST EUCHARISTIC (FIRST HOLY MASS) CELEBRATION

The Church of the Nativity Rumuewhara, Oroigwe Port Harcourt was opened for worship on 25th December 2003 by Rev. Fr. Dr. Cyprian Onwuli (now a Monsignor). This First holy Mass celebrated on Christmas day (December 25, 2003) had less than 35 adults (male and female) in attendance. If we include youths and children we had about 60 persons in the first Mass.

It will be important to reflect back into history to recall the events preceding the first holy Mass. Sometime in November 2003 after the 8Am Mass celebrated at the mother parish, St Johns, there was an announcement requesting that parishioners of St. Johns Rumuokrushi who resided around Elingbu and Oroigwe communities should stay behind for a brief meeting after that 8am Mass. That meeting was convened and chaired by the Catechist Baba Anthony Verisimo; Sir B.C Ugwu recorded the minutes of that meeting. During that meeting it was announced that a first holy Mass would be celebrated at Oroigwe on the 25th December, 2003 to start up a new out station in that vicinity. Members at the meeting were requested to attend that first mass and to provide support to make the day memorable.

On the day of the first Holy Mass: In compliance with the earlier announcement and request made from the mother parish, most parishioners willing to participate in the first holy Mass came with chairs from their respective homes. Most of the chairs were brought from St. John's parish and transported to Oroigwe new out station with the help of parishioners. Worthy to mention here are Brother Theo Ezeonodo and Mrs Toyin Madufor who went round trips from Oroigwe to St Johns to carry chairs. Additional seats were provided onsite with the use of blocks and wooden plank boards. Some kind hearted parishioners whose homes were near to the church brought some upholstery cushioned seats which added to the number of seats available during the first Mass.

In his narration and account of the first holy Mass, Sir Mike Obinor, who was the

first pastoral council vice chairman had these to say “At that inception Mass on December 25th, 2003, the church was virtually an open hall with no pew or bench. A congregation of 33 persons was present at this first mass – 26 of them were from St. John's Rumuokwurusi and only 7 came from the immediate local community. The compound was full of tree stumps and very few vehicles managed to get into the uneven premises. It was not difficult to see the great challenges at a glance. These initial threats notwithstanding the congregation grew rapidly from 7 at the subsequent Sundays to 32, 43, and 120, and by July 2004 we had congregation strength of nearly 300 members.”



Plates 4a: Offertory session at Church of the Nativity on December, 25th, 2003
Photo taken by Chief Chidi Madufor



Plates 4b: Showing the car park and outside view of the out station during the first holy Mass of December 25, 2003

ELEVATION TO A PARISH STATUS

Church of the Nativity, Oroigwe evolved as an out station of St John's parish, Rumuokwurushi. From the status of an outstation, it was made an autonomous worshipping community in 2005. During its phase as an autonomous worshipping community, the pastoral activities and the spiritual needs of the parishioners were attended to by Rev. Fr Polycarp Henetu and Rev Fr. Bartholomew Uzoma. Both priests were the Rector and Vice Rector respectively of the Sacred Heart Minor Seminary, Rumuibekwe, PortHarcourt. In 2006, the church was made a quasi-parish and Rev. Fr. Charles Berebon was appointed as the Priest-in-charge of the new quasi parish. As a quasi-parish, the priest-in-charge was staying and coming from the mother parish- St Johns. It was at the completion of the presbytery in 2008 and following the visit of the then bishop that the church of the Nativity was elevated to the status of a full parish in the Catholic Diocese of Port Harcourt. At this instance, Rev. Fr. Charles Berebon, the officiating Priest-in-charge became the first parish priest of Church of the Nativity. The late bishop A. O Makozi pronounced Church of the Nativity a parish on 13th April 2008 during his first officially celebrated episcopal visit to the new parish. We recall, he made an un-official and non-celebrated visit to the outstation, some days before the first holy Mass of Christmas day in 2003. We recall also that this first visit was at the request of Monsignor Cyprian Onwuli, who then wanted to show the late bishop the new out station. It was an unannounced and an unscheduled visit carried out between the late Bishop and Monsignor Cyprian Onwuli. During this pastoral visit of April, 2008, the late bishop blessed and commissioned the newly built parish presbytery and tabernacle. This day was also remarkable in the life of the Catholic Diocese of Port Harcourt as it marked the grand finale of the vocation week of the priests in the Diocese. In attendance was the Diocesan vocation director- Rev Fr. Felix Gbarador with members of the various vocations and other priests of the Catholic Diocese of Port Harcourt who participated during the vocations week event. The above narration points to express that the then Bishop and his priests chose the then quasi-parish as a venue to mark the grand finale of the vocations week, but being impressed with the huge efforts and works done by the lay-faithful within six years was moved to pronounce the church a full parish.



Plates 4c: Showing late bishop A.O Makozi with the first parish priest of Church of the Nativity, the pastoral council chairman and the then chairman of the parish building committee to mark the grand finale of the diocesan vocations week (It was during this event that he pronounced the church a full parish)

In his request, the first pastoral council vice chairman who read a speech to the late bishop and before the entire congregation stated below “.....My Lord Bishop, today you are here, “live”. We are full of expectations. Here is our Church with congregation strength of over 1500 Christ's faithful. The Father's House, complete with a Chapel, is ready for occupation. The Tabernacle is ready for your blessing. The borehole is already in use, and Fr. Charles has a saloon car, superlatively equipped and executively appointed. What else do we need to do? My Lord, do I pass the microphone to you to make a pronouncement?” Indeed, the then bishop, His Lordship, late bishop A.O Makozi did make a pronouncement to confirm Church of the Nativity a full parish.



Plate 4d: The first pastoral council chairman (Sir Mike Obinor) delivering his speech to the Bishop

His comments can be likened to what the Ethiopian Eunuch told Philip in Acts of the Apostles (Acts 8:36-37) “...Look, here is water, what is to keep me from being baptized?”



Plate 4e: His Lordship, Late Bishop A.O. Makozi responding to Church of the Nativity parishioners



Plate 4g: The Late Bishop Makozi seated with the first CMO chairman (13th April, 2008)

ROLL CALL OF PRIESTS THAT SUPPORTED THE EARLY DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS OF THE CHURCH

In other to sustain the newly created out station, the founding priest, Msgr. Cyprian Onwuli ensured the availability of priests to celebrate Masses for the lay faithful of Church of the Nativity. From time to time he would come himself and celebrate the holy Mass for this new out station.

From the early days of the out station, several priests visited to support Monsignor Cyprian Onwuli in growing the new church at Oroigwe. Most of the visiting priests came from the Catholic Institute of West Africa (CIWA).

Several other priests of the diocese also came from time to time to support the new out station. Among the early priests visiting were Rev. Fr. Kevin Agbakolam, Rev. Fr. Eric Bien, Rev. Fr. Polycarp Henetu and Rev. Fr. Bartholomew Uzoma.

At some point in the historical past, Rev. Fr. Henetu Polycarp and Fr. Uzoma Bartholomew were in charge of administration of the Church of the Nativity. They supported this parish in addition to their huge responsibilities as the rector and vice rector of the Sacred Heart Minor Seminary.

These priests supported the pastoral needs of the church and her members until Rev. Fr. Charles Berebon was appointed as the Priest-in-charge for Church of the Nativity.

A ROLL CALL OF OTHER VISITING AND SUPPORTING PRIESTS FROM CIWA & OTHER PLACES

The parish will always appreciate the various roles played by these catholic priests to help the growth of the parish over these last two decades:

Rev. Fr. James Afangideh
Rev. Fr. Oliver Ugwu
Rev. Fr. Douglas Gaiya
Rev. Fr. Innocent
Rev. Fr. Moses Ogbodo
Rev. Fr. Anthony Sangie
Late Monsignor Anthony Onyeso from Catholic Diocese of Abuja
Rev. Fr. Mark Ally
Rev. Fr. Chidi Jude Ozumba
Rev. Fr. Joe Peter Sweneyor
Rev. Fr. Jonah Peters
Rev. Fr. Peter Osuji
Rev. Fr. Charles Essien
Rev. Fr. Dominic Okoronkwo
Rev. Fr. Emmanuel Olusola

A SUCCESSION OF PARISH PRIESTS OF THE CHURCH OF THE NATIVITY, OROIGWE



REV FR. CHARLES BERE BON (2007- 2010)

Fr. Charles was posted to the Church of the Nativity in 2007 as priest in charge. He officially resumed at Oroigwe in January 2007. He became the first and pioneer parish priest of the church in from April 2008 following the official pronouncement and elevation of Church of the Nativity to full parish status by late bishop A.O Makozi. Rev. Fr. Charles was supported by a good number of visiting priests and seminarians. Rev. It was during his tenure as parish priest that the presbytery was build and completed and commissioned. It was also during his time that the once out station/autonomous worshipping community and quasi-parish became a full catholic parish in the diocese. Fr Charles left the parish in 2010 following a new posting and assignment by the bishop. He worked in the parish for about 4 years.



MONSIGNOR CYPRIAN ONWULI (DEC 2010- JAN 2020)

Very Rev. Msgr Cyprian Onwuli became the second parish priest of Church of the Nativity. He took over from Rev Fr. Charles Berebon. It will be important to note here that Monsignor Onwuli functioned in a double capacity as both parish priest and Vicar general of the Catholic Diocese of Port Harcourt. During his time as parish priest Church of the Nativity witnessed monumental growth and development. These include: The birth of two out stations that are today full parishes (St John the Apostle Mgbuesilaru and Church of Divine Mercy), another remarkable achievement was the startup of the new church building and the recognition of the parish as the center for Oroigwe deanery. Several Seminarians served under Msgr Onwuli and under his guidance they were ordained as deacons and eventually as priests of the Catholic Diocese of Port Harcourt. It was during his tenure as parish priest that the congregation of the sisters of the Holy Child Jesus set up a convent at the Church of the Nativity and also he established the Nativity Nursery and Primary school. He worked in the parish for about 10 yrs



REV FR. AMBROSE BANI (JAN 2020-DATE)

Rev Fr. Ambrose is the third and current parish priest of Church of the Nativity. Since resuming his pastoral works in 2020, he has transformed the parish. He has initiated several programmes to support and grow the faith of parishioners. He has also committed much of his energy towards the completion of the new church building having started its roofing in the first half of 2020. Rev. Fr Bani led the movement from the old parish church building into the new church building in 2021. He also initiated the building of a parish Grotto of Our Mother of Perpetual Help. Rev. Fr. Ambrose Bani supervised the roofing of the new church building and also motivated the relocation of parishioners into the new building. Presently he has been able to carry on works on the new church building to almost 65% completion status. Additional projects embarked on are the construction of a modern toilet facility, acquisition of an additional one plot of land to support future parish development plan.

A ROLL CALL OF ASSISTANT PARISH PRIESTS OF CHURCH OF THE NATIVITY

The following priests of the Catholic Diocese of Port Harcourt have also supported pastoral and mission works as assistant parish priest in Church of the Nativity. They are:

Rev. Fr. Samuel Inaku (2013-2014)

Rev. Fr. Good luck Peter Deebom (2015-2016)

Rev. Fr. Kenneth Oone (2017-2018)

Rev. Fr. Maurice N. Livinus (2018-2019)

Rev. Fr. Pancreas Patrick Wagozie of blessed memory (2019-2020)

Rev Fr. Malachy Udokanne (2020)

A ROLL CALL OF SEMINARIANS THAT SUPPORTED THE PARISH

Church of the Nativity as an out station and as full parish also hosted several senior seminarians who came on apostolic work. These Seminarians in different ways supported the parish mission work and the need to evangelize the lay faithful within the Oroigwe community. It will be interesting to note that most of these Seminarians were in this parish to celebrate both their deaconate and priestly ordinations. The seminarians include:

Joseph Nwuju (Now Rev. Fr. Joseph Nwuju. He was the first seminarian posted to Church of the Nativity.

John Dumale (Now Rev Fr. John Dumale

Collins Menebo (Now Rev.Fr. Collins Menebo)

Mark Odoemene (Now Rev Fr. Mark Odoemene)

Linus Ayaraekpe (Now Rev. Fr. Linus Ayaraekpe)

Valentine Azike (Now Rev Fr. Valentine Azike)

Fr. Jonah Eluke (Now Rev. Fr. Jonah Eluke)

Emmanuel Ukonna (Now Rev Fr. Emmanuel Ukonna)

Leo Luka Meeyinikor (Now Rev. Fr. Leo Luka Meeyinikor

Malachy Udokanne (Now Rev. Fr. Malachy Udokanne)

Moses Ogbodo (Now Rev. Fr. Moses Ogbodo

Anthony Bakee

Pius Awaji

THE SISTERS OF THE HANDMAIDS OF THE HOLY CHILD JESUS (HHCJ)



Plate 4h: The pioneer sisters of HHCJ that started the convent at the Church of the Nativity

The Church of the Nativity is among the very few parishes in the diocese that has a convent of the religious sisters in very close proximity. The Rev. Sisters of the Handmaids of the Holy Child Jesus (HHCJ) are very important part of the parish pastoral life. The sisters moved into their convent and accommodation on the feast of the birthday of the Blessed Virgin Mary being September 8, 2017. However, the convent and residence of the Rev. Sisters was officially opened on October 7, 2017 which was a unique day as Catholics all over the world celebrated the feast of the Holy Rosary. The opening mass for the convent was celebrated by Monsignor Cyprian Onwuli on behalf of the Local Ordinary who delegated him. The convent of the sisters of the Handmaid of the Holy Child Jesus, started at their Oroigwe residence with only five Rev. Sisters. They are Rev. Sisters Veronica Mgbo, Patricia Eke, Theresa Eke, Dorothy Ugwu and Rev Sister (Prof) Caroline Mbonu who is their Superior. The Sisters of the HHCJ have played active and supporting roles to the parish through their involvement in various parish pastoral and liturgy programmes. The reverend sisters participate in both the parish pastoral and laity council as members; they have supported the parish Catholic Women Organization (CWO) as spiritual adviser. Rev Sister (Prof) Caroline Mbonu started supporting the CWO as spiritual adviser since the year 2013. The sisters of HHCJ are involved in the parish choir and currently they are in charge of

the parish bookshop. One of the remarkable supports provided by the sisters of the HHCJ was the establishment and mentoring of Altar girls Association which was headed by Mrs. MaryAnn Udoh and currently supporting the funding of the stylist of the altar.

Rev. Sister Charity Onyejekwe of the HHCJ started visiting the new out station Church of the Nativity in 2004 at the request of Monsignor Cyprian Onwuli to teach the Altar girls about altar decoration, liturgical colours, sacred linens, sacred vessels and important facts about the altar decoration and the Holy Mass. She supported in in this function for about 18 months when she had a new posting and handed over to another sister of the HHCJ, Rev. Sister Lilian Nnadi who continued from where sister Charity stopped. The Sisters of the HHCJ also support the teaching of pupils at the Nativity Nursery and primary school as well as teaching of Catechism at the parish. It will be of interest to note here that the congregation of the sisters of the Handmaids of the Holy Child Jesus (HHCJ) was founded by Mother Mary Charles Magdalene Walker who came to Nigeria on October 2, 1923 as a Religious Sister of Charity at the invitation of Bishop Shanahan, the then bishop of the Vicariate of Southern Nigeria.

ROLL CALL OF CATECHISTS

Prior to the first Eucharistic celebration and few months after the first holy Mass celebration at the outstation, the parish continued to enjoy the support and services of Baba Anthony Verisimo, the then Catechist of St John parish, Rumuokwurushi.

The first appointed catechist of Church of the Nativity was Bro. Clement Amhenrior. He served as catechist from year 2004-2006. At some point the parish had a seminarian (Joseph Nwuju) who supported as acting catechist for some time before another substantial catechist was appointed.

In the year 2006, Sir Theophilus Mary Ezeonodo emerged as catechist. He has continued to support the parish in this position. Catechist Theo Ezeonodo has Bro. Desmond Ugwuoke as his assistant catechist. Brother Desmond resumed duties in 2011.

EPISCOPAL & PASTORAL VISITS BY THE LOCAL ORDINARY

From December 2003 till date, the parish has had four episcopal visits from the local ordinary and one unique visit from the Catholic Bishops conference of Nigeria, in the year 2015, when the CBCN had their meeting in Port Harcourt.

FIRST EPISCOPAL VISIT

His Lordship, late Bishop A.O. Makozi, former Bishop of the Catholic diocese of Port Harcourt visited church of the Nativity on the 13th of April 2008 to mark the close out of the diocesan priests vocation week celebration. Church of the Nativity happened to have been selected as venue by the bishop for the grand finale of the priests' vocation week, thereby making it his first episcopal visit to the church which became functional on December 25th, 2003. This first episcopal visit was very remarkable because it was on this date that the late bishop officially pronounced and declared the church a full parish. The bishop also during this first episcopal visit blessed the presbytery and the parish chapel and tabernacle.



Plates 4i: Showing late Bishop A.O Makozi during his episcopal visit to Church of the Nativity

SECOND EPISCOPAL VISIT

The second Episcopal visit took place on December 15, 2013. It was a unique and special pastoral visit by His Lordship Most Rev. Dr. Archibong Etokudoh who received a warm reception from the parishioners of Church of the Nativity.



Plate 4j: Parishioners of the Church of the Nativity meet and greet His Lordship Bishop C.A Etokudoh

THIRD EPISCOPAL VISIT

The third Episcopal visit took place in 2018. It was a unique and special visit by His Lordship Most Rev Dr. Camillus Archibong Etokudoh to participate in the years Cathedraticum which the parish, Church of the Nativity hosted on behalf of the Rumuokwurushi deanery.

HOSTING OF CATHEDRATICUM (2018)

The Cathedraticum is a remarkable event of the Catholic Church. It's a yearly

event during which parishes pay homage and give honour to their local ordinary-the bishop. These can come in the form of gift items, cash and other material donations. It is usually from the proceeds derived from each year Cathedraticum that the bishop raises funds to supports the needs of the diocese and some other few poorly funded parishes in the diocese. The church of the Nativity has always taken part in this yearly ritual of Cathedraticum. However, in the year 2018 it played host to other parishes in the Rumuokwurushi deanery to receive and honour the Bishop, Most Rev Dr. Camillus Etokudoh.

FOURTHEPISCOPAL VISIT

The parish reckoned another pastoral visit on September 26th, 2021 by Auxiliary Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of PortHarcourt, His Lordship Most Rev Dr. Patrick Eluke. This visit by the Auxiliary bishop marked the fourth episcopal visit to the parish. It will be of interest to note that 122 candidates received the sacrament of confirmation and 56 received the sacrament of first Holy Communion. During the pastoral visit, the Auxiliary Bishop also commissioned and blessed the new parish chapel and the newly built Marian Grotto of our Lady of Perpetual Help.



Plates 4k: His Lordship Bishop Patrick Eluke blessing the Marian Grotto



Plates 4l: His Lordship Bishop Patrick Eluke with candidates of first Holy Communion and confirmation

VISIT BY THE CATHOLIC BISHOPS OF NIGERIA (CBCN) VISIT

In the month of September, 2015, the CBCN had their synod in Port Harcourt. One of the events to mark their stay in Port Harcourt was a tour round some selected parishes in the diocese. Church of the Nativity was among the selected parishes to host the bishops. This event took place on September 15, 2015.



Plates 4m: Cross sections of the bishops during the CBCN visit to the parish in September 2015 on the feast day of St Cyprian.

OTHER HISTORICAL AND REMARKABLE PARISH PASTORAL ACTIVITIES

Table 4a: Important and remarkable parish pastoral activities

NATIVITY DAY CELEBRATIONS	The Nativity day celebrations started in the year 2008. The purpose of this celebration was to instill love, unity and a culture of community sharing among the parishioners.
Church of the Nativity Parish crusades	As part of its mission works and tools for evangelization, Church of the Nativity started an annual crusade programme in the year 2009. These series of crusades have been sustained in the last 13 years. The crusades are quite instrumental to the growth of faith and spirituality of parishioners
First Holy matrimony in the parish	The first time the sacrament of holy matrimony was administered in the parish was in the year 2004
The Parish Presbytery	The father's house (Presbytery) was blessed on 13 th of April 2008 by the late Bishop, Most Rev. A.O. Makozi who was impressed with the tremendous physical and spiritual growth of the Church within a period of 5 years.
The First Parish Laity Council (2009-2014)	The first officially constituted Laity Council after the creation of the Parish was carried out by Rev. Fr. Charles Berebon in 2009 under the chairmanship of late Sir Alex Illah and some other nine council members.
The Second Parish Laity Council (2014-2018)	In 2013 the 2nd Laity Council was inaugurated by Msgr. Cyprian Onwuli, the new Parish Priest who retained late Sir Alex Illah as Chairman, and reshuffled the team. This second council started work in 2014.
The Third Laity Council (2018- date)	The current Laity Council under the leadership of Sir Mike Obinor has 12 Councilors
Parish Annual Harvest Thanksgiving & Bazaar	The first annual harvest and thanksgiving event was done in the year 2004- tagged Harvest of Gratitude

THE LIST OF OUT STATIONS THAT EMERGED FROM CHURCH OF THE NATIVITY

An Igbo proverb will say *“He that is given birth to should also give birth to another”*. The Church of the Nativity fulfilled this proverb. It is interesting to note that this parish, Church of the Nativity, which was in the last two decades ago an out station of St John's parish in Rumuokwurushi, has today given birth to two new parishes.

These are:

- i. St John the Baptist Parish, Mgbuesilaru (March 2, 2014)
- ii. The Church of Divine Mercy, Eneka (December 7, 2014)

CHILD LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT (A FOCUS ON CHILDREN MASS CENTRE, CATECHISM CLASSES AND NATIVITY NURSERY AND PRIMARY SCHOOL)

The parish, Church of the Nativity, have made huge investments towards learning and development of the children of parishioners and non-parishioners as well. The parish approach to learning and development of children is a two phased programme. Phase one is focused on building and nurturing the catholic faith of the children. To achieve this objective, the parish from inception started the children Mass center in 2009 and the teaching of the catechism of the Catholic Church to Children preparing for the sacrament of Holy Eucharist and those of confirmation. The catechism classes enrolls children from the age of four years into the prayer class session from where they progress to the specific classes for the various sacraments in view- whether for first Holy Communion or for confirmation. The second phase of the child learning and development programme of the parish is geared towards basic education. The parish started the Nativity Nursery and primary school in October 2014. This is a basic education level programme of study that is managed and funded by the parish to enable children of parishioners/non parishioners and others from the neighborhood to have access to basic education starting from nursery through basic 1-basic 6.

FIRST HOLY MATRIMONY IN THE PARISH

The first time the sacrament of holy matrimony was administered in the Church of the Nativity was in the year 2004 although as an out station of St John's parish, Rumuokwurushi. The first couples wedded in the new out station were Mr. and Mrs JBC Madu. This first wedding was documented in the records at St John's parish, Rumuokwurushi. From the year 2007 to date a total of 202 weddings have been conducted by various priests at the Church of the Nativity. It will be

important to emphasize that the documentations and records of sacraments of holy matrimony administered in the Church of the Nativity started in the year 2007 following its elevation above an out station status.



Plates 4n: Photo of first couple that wedded in the out station- Church of the Nativity, Rumuewhara, Oroigwe.

Table 4b: Number of persons wedded in the parish between 2007 - March, 2022

YEAR	Number Receiving Sacrament of Holy Matrimony
2007	8
2008	12
2009	19
2010	13
2011	8
2012	25
2013	8
2014	14
2015	13
2016	7
2017	20
2018	29
2019	11
2020	4
2021	10
2022 (March)	1
TOTAL till Date (March, 2022)	202

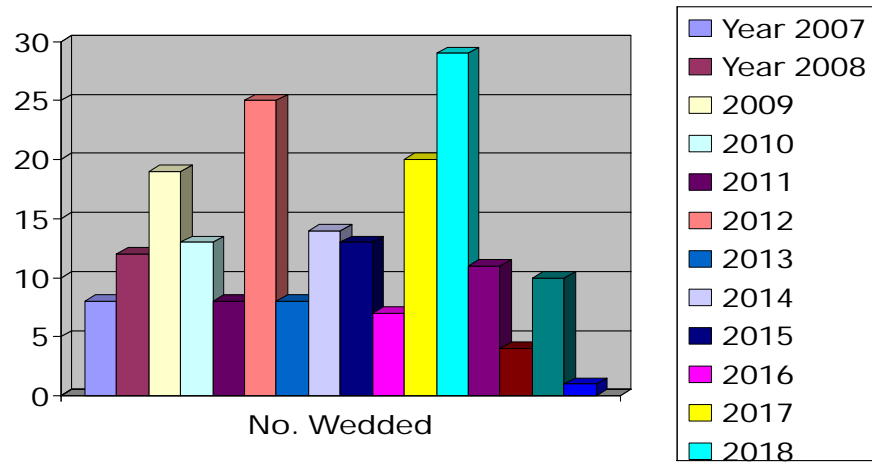


Figure4a: Histogram showing number of couples who received the sacrament of Holy Matrimony

FIRST INFANT BAPTISM

The first documentation of Sacrament of initiation administered in the parish was in the year 2007. Before this time, the records were kept at the St John's parish, Rumuokwurushi because the Church of the Nativity was still an out station.

Table 4c: Number of persons baptized in the parish between 2007 - March, 2022

YEAR	Number of Children Baptized
2007	70
2008	83
2009	119
2010	126
2011	79
2012	106
2013	80
2014	190
2015	144
2016	119
2017	116
2018	104
2019	83
2020	63
2021	65
2022 (March)	8
TOTAL till Date (March, 2022)	1,555

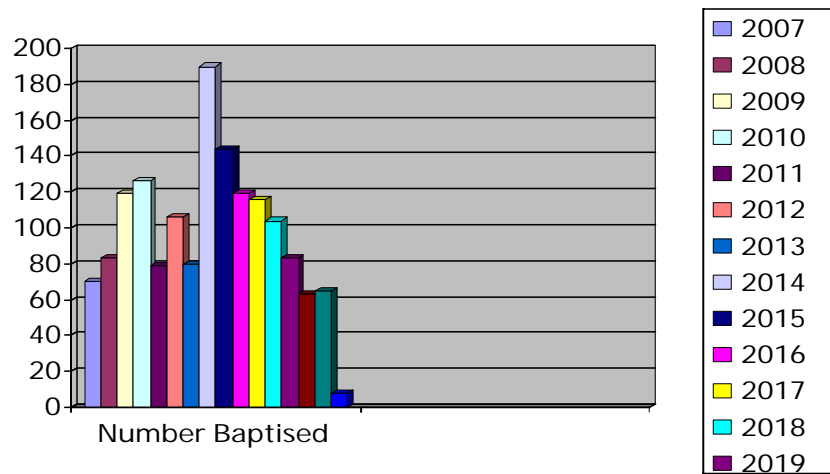


Figure 4b: Histogram showing number that received the Sacrament of baptism from 2007-March, 2022

FIRST HOLY COMMUNION AND CONFIRMATION

As an out-station earlier records related to candidates that received the sacraments of Holy Eucharist and that of Confirmation between 2004 and 2006 were kept in the mother parish- St John's Rumuokwurushi

Table 4d: Number that received the Sacrament of Holy Eucharist and confirmation between 2007 – March 2022

YEAR	Number Receiving Sacrament of Holy Eucharist	Number Receiving Sacrament of Confirmation	Comments
2007	31	nil	
2008	26	nil	
2009	68	30	
2010	60	nil	
2011	46	nil	
2012	38	nil	
2013	33	95	
2014	114	6	
2015	102	34	
2016	179	13	
2017	93	12	
2018	85	53	
2019	112	101	
2020	31		
2021	87	146	
2022 (March)	nil	nil	
TOTAL till Date (March, 2022)	1,104	510	

MASS (GROUP) WEDDINGS CELEBRATED IN THE PARISH

As part of its mission work and in pursuit of evangelization of parishioners, the church of the Nativity organized a group wedding for couples who are living together but have not had the blessing of their marriage or are yet to receive the sacrament of holy matrimony.

This mass/group wedding was facilitated by the parish Laity Council following the outcome of their meeting in February 2012.

The then parish Laity council under the leadership of late Sir Alex Illah constituted a working committee. Below listed members of the said committee was charged with the responsibility to identify and encourage members who have not received the sacrament of holy matrimony. They also had the responsibility to ensure proper planning and to support the parish to execute the mass wedding.

Below is the first mass wedding organizing committee members:

1. Sir. Theophilus Ezeonodo
2. Mr. Ifeanyi Ozumba
3. Mrs Joycliff Onyemaechi
4. Mrs. Gertrude Onwukwe, and
5. Late Sir. Bony Obiejesi

The first mass (group) wedding took place on November 24th, 2012. For this mass wedding, a total of 22 couples were prepared for the wedding, but only 19 eventually received the sacrament of holy Matrimony on the wedding day.

These couples were wedded by the parish priest Monsignor Cyprian Onwuli. The witnesses include parishioners, the various pious organizations (CMO, CWO, CYON, etc) in the parish and friends and relatives of the couples that attended the wedding ceremony.



Plates 4n: Mass wedding of 2012



Mass wedding of 2013

Another group wedding was organized and sponsored by the parish in 2013, but this time, the turnout was low. Only two couples were wedded.

FORMATION OF BASIC CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES AND STATE WORSHIPPING COMMUNITIES

The Basic Christian Community (BCC) was established by the then parish priest Rev. Fr. Charles Berebon in the year 2008. This was a major initiative to drive evangelization within parishioners and their neighborhood.

The formation of the Basic Christian community was aimed at fostering love and unity among parishioners and to enable parishioners to identify and know themselves. Another major aim of the BCC was to bring people living in the same area together to establish good relationship between them and for easy dissemination of information from the church and to encourage active participation of parishioners in church activities.

Six basic zones were identified and parishioners were meant to join the zone that is nearest to their residence.

The zones were:

1. Nativity Road Zone – The meeting venue was at the residence of Sir Chris Okosodo and the leader was Mrs. Florence Nwaogwugwu
2. First Avenue Zone – The meeting venue was at the house of Mrs Christiana Ejechi. Mrs Ejechi was also the leader.
3. Tony Estate Zone – The meeting venue was at Engr. Emeka Onwukwe's house. The leader for the zone was Mrs Gertrude Onwukwe.
4. BAMEF/Chief Ejims Zone: The meeting venue was at the residence of Mr. Azo Ejekwu.
5. Culvet Zone – The prayer meetings were held at the residence of Sir Cyril Ogumba. The leader was Mr. Sunny Ugorji.
6. Rumunduru/MTN Mast Zone – The meeting venue was at the residence of late Mr. Okonkwo. The leader for this zone was late Mr. Tony Okeya.

The BCC meeting days were scheduled to hold on Tuesday. .

There were recorded challenges which were basically due to the poor turn out and participation of members living within the respective zones. Most members of the various zones were not able to fit into the scheduled meeting time.

Within the years the BCC, existed, there were lots of benefits- Such benefits include:

1. Creation of close ties amongst neighbours who never saw the need to relate.
2. It created healthy competition amongst different zones especially during parish annual harvest events

3. It was more or less a domestic church where Masses were celebrated in different zones.

Unfortunately, the parish could not sustain the BCC programme beyond the year 2011.

PARISH HARVEST ORGANIZATION AND FUTURE HARVEST EVENTS

The first annual harvest and thanksgiving event took place on October 3, 2004. During that time, Church of the Nativity was still an out station. The harvest organizing committee was led by Sir Mike Obinor as chairman. The theme of the first harvest thanksgiving celebrated in 2004 was- Harvest of Gratitude



Extracted from the 2004 Harvest brochure (front cover page)

Figure 4c: Front cover of First Harvest Brochure

PIOUS SOCIETIES RESIDENT IN CHURCH OF THE NATIVITY, OROIGWE

To help in the spiritual growth of parishioners and to support parishioners understand better the catholic faith, doctrine and teachings, there are several pious organizations in the parish. The membership to these pious organizations is open to every parishioner.

Some of the active pious organizations existing in Church of the Nativity Oroigwe are:

- 1) Catholic Charismatic Renewal of Nigeria (CCRN).
- 2) Legion of Mary.
- 3) St. Anthony of Padua society
- 4) The Choir (Salve Regina and Angelic voices)
- 5) Divine and Mercy society
- 6) Catholic Biblical Instructors Union (CBIU).
- 7) Altar Boys Association
- 8) Altar Girls Association.
- 9) Infant Jesus society
- 10) Association of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary (ASH).
- 11) Men of Order and Discipline (MOD)
- 12) St. Vincent De Paul society
- 13) Ministers of Hospitality (Church warden)
- 14) Precious Blood society
- 15) Purgatorian society
- 16) League of Sacred Heart of Jesus
- 17) Our Mother of Perpetual Help confraternity.
- 18) Block Rosary crusade
- 19) Catholic Lectors Association of Nigeria (CLAN)
- 20) Association of Queen of all Heart devotion group

THE INFANT JESUS SOCIETY



Plate 4p: Cross Section of Parish Priest with member of infant Jesus Society.

The Confraternity of the Infant Jesus was inaugurated in the parish in June 2005. It was with the help of brothers and sisters of the Infant Jesus society in St. John's parish, Rumuokwurushi that the society was brought to church of the Nativity. The efforts of Brother John from the mother parish will always be appreciated. Today, in the church of the Nativity, current members are Bro. Wakama Chukwumati, Sis Joy Wakama who was the parish President till 2018 when she handed over to Bro. David Atsa. The Society holds her monthly Novena from 16th-25th day of every Month. The major challenge facing the society is low number of members. In terms of achievement the Society have always participated actively in all the parish programmes such as the annual harvest event for which they have always sponsored the picture placement of the of The Holy Infant Jesus in each year's harvest brochure booklet

THE ASSOCIATION OF SACRED HEART OF JESUS AND IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY IN CHURCH OF THE NATIVITY PARISH



Plate 4q: Cross Section of members of ASHJIHM

The Association of Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary was introduced into Church of the Nativity on Thursday 27th May 2004. This date marks the first adoration and prayers held in the parish, then as an out station. This association stands out as the first pious society that came into existence in Church of the Nativity. The pioneer executives and pioneer members played key roles to build up the association and to sustain it. The association through the dedication of its parish leaders and members carried out regular enthronement of homes. They also built a strong bond among members while at the same time ensuring that members participate actively in the parish, deanery and diocesan activities.

Some notable achievements of the association in the parish include:

- i. Purchased and presented to the parish the very first mass box
- ii. Formed a support Choir group for the parish that sings the 6Am Mass every Sunday for more than 4 years.
- iii. Supported and facilitated the establishment of the Association of Sacred Heart of Jesus and Immaculate Heart of Mary in the new out stations that emerged from Church of the Nativity. Hence today the association also exists in parishes like St John the Baptist Mgbuesilaru and Church of the Divine Mercy, Eneka and that of Mater Ecclesia Eneka. These efforts of members of the association from Church of the Nativity Parish Oroigwe have greatly helped the mission works of the Parish towards evangelization. Sister Catherine Chinwe Patricks Chinemerem was among the members assigned to nurture the formation of the association at St John the Baptist parish.

The Association of Sacred Heart of Jesus and Immaculate Heart of Mary is one of the pious societies in the Catholic church whose membership is open to all Catholics especially those who are ready to propagate the social reign of Sacred Heart of Jesus through their life of prayer and love for the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Immaculate Heart of Mary and Christian perfection. It is also open to all Catholics who are ready to encourage and promote perpetual adoration and enthronement of Sacred Heart of Jesus in their homes in order to repay God's great love with gratitude, live a life worthy of emulation and to entrust everything concerning themselves both spiritual and material to the cares of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Immaculate Heart of Mary. Membership is also open to infants, young children, adolescents and youths and all adults (both married and unmarried).

Within the parish, Church of the Nativity, The population of the Association is gradually growing but still not above 100 members

The pioneer executive members lead the association from the year 2004 to the

year 2012. The following were the executives of the pioneer leadership. Lady Calista Ezeaku (president), Late Mr. Desmond Eluwa (Vice President), Mr. Gregory Okwudiafor (Secretary), Sir Berthrand Ugwu (Treasurer), Mrs Angela Kwamina (Fin. Secretary), Mr. Bernard Nwosu (Promoter), Mrs Hope Obieze (Welfare), Mrs Florence Nwaogwugwu (Night Adoration coordinator)

The second set of leaders emerged in 2012 and led the association from 2012-2015, The following were the executives Mr Benard Nwosu (President), Mrs Maryann Udo (Vice President), Late Mrs Onyeka Iyere (Secretary), Mrs Doris Ebulu (Assistant Secretary), Mrs Angela Kwamina (Treasurer and financial Secretary), Mr Gertrude Onwukwe (PRO) and Mrs Hope Obieze (Welfare officer).

The third set of executives that piloted the affairs of the association from 2015 – 2018 were: Mrs Gertrude Onwukwe (President), Mrs Maryann Udo (Vice president), Mrs. Ifeyinwa Mmorah (Secretary), Mrs Laretta Olumba (Asst. secretary), Mrs Angela Kwamina (Treasurer), Mrs Gladys Onah (Fin. Secretary), Mr Keneth Henry (Promoter), Miss Clementina Odoemena (Welfare), Mrs Florence Nwaogwugwu (Night Adoration coordinator), Mrs Jovita Nnanna (Tartiscian Coordinator) and Mr Bernard Nwosu (Register).

Since 2018 till date the Association of has the following as her leaders: Mrs Maryann Udo (President), Mrs Rita (Vice president), Mrs Laretta Olumba (Secretary), Lady Chinwe Patricks Chinemerem (Asst. secretary), Mrs Ifeyinwa Mmorah (Treasurer), Mrs Gladys Onah (Fin. Secretary), Mr Keneth Henry (Promoter), Mrs Hope Obieze (Welfare), Mrs Florence Nwaogwugwu (Adoration coordinator), Mrs Jovita Nnanna (Tartiscian Coordinator), Mr Dominic Johnson Umorem (Register).

CATHOLIC BIBLICAL INSTRUCTORS UNION (C.B.I.U)

The Catholic Biblical Instructors' Union (CBIU) was founded by the late Rev. Fr. Benedict I. Nwolu in September 18th, 1974 at CKC Aba, while a curate under late Rt. Rev. Msgr. Edward Nwafor and during the episcopal reign of late Most Rev. Dr. Anthony Nwedo, CSSP, the then bishop of Umuahia Diocese.

It was later established at St. Eugene and Our Lady Lourdes parishes Aba respectively. From Aba it was brought down to Port Harcourt, Rivers State, first at CKC Mile One, Diobu and then to St. John Rumuokwurushi. It was St. John Rumuokwurushi that established it here in the Church of the Nativity Oroigwe.

THE LEGION OF MARY IN CHURCH OF THE NATIVITY.



Plate R: Cross Section of Legion members

The Legion of Mary was inaugurated in the parish in 2004, with five members in attendance. This eventually became the first praesidium in the outstation as at then called Our Lady of Divine Grace praesidium.

This first praesidium of the Legion of Mary in the parish existed for about 2 to 3 years, before it sprang forth to a new praesidium named Our Lady Help of Christian. Between the year, 2008 and 2009 It gave birth to her third praesidium named Our Lady of Assumption praesidium. Due to the increase in praesidia, the Curia(the higher council) at St John's Parish Rumuokwurushi saw the need to create a Higher Council in the parish.

On Sunday 13th February, 2011, the CURIA was inaugurated in the parish with the name 'Our Lady Mediatrix of all Graces.' The following legionaries were voted as officers of their CURIA: Bro Dominic Aboh as President, Bro Patrick Otuji as Vice President, Sis Jacinta Chidozie as Secretary and Sis Angela as treasurer.

On 27th February, 2011, The Inaugural meeting of Our Lady Mediatrix of all Graces Curia was held. Praesidia from St Peter Claver Parish, St James Eneka, Church of Visitation Atali were all affiliated to the council seat in Church of the Nativity Oroigwe.

At present, the CURIA Council in Church of The Nativity have the following praesidia of the Legion of Mary from these parishes affiliated to it: St John the Baptist Parish, Church of Visitation Atali, Divine Mercy Parish Eneka. The praesidia in the parish have risen to six senior and two junior praesidia.

Some notable achievements of the Legion of Mary in the parish are:

- i. The Legion of Mary started the Rosary Procession in the parish with the approval of Rev Fr Charles Berebon.
- ii. The Legion of Mary also initiated the Block Rosary in the Parish, but at present not functioning.
- iii. The present day 6:00am mass choir was started by legionaries in collaboration with the members of the Association of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Immaculate Heart of Mary with a mandate from then Parish priest Monsignor Cyprian Onwuli.
- iv. The Church of the Nativity Nursery and Primary School came into existence with a mandate from then Parish Priest, Monsignor Cyprian Onwuli to legionaries to organize long vacation holiday lessons and programs for parish children in the month of August, with the view to start up a school. It was done for three consecutive years which gave birth to the school.
- v. Legionaries were mandated by Monsignor Cyprian Onwuli to sweep the church every Monday immediately after the morning mass. They took up the assignments and many other parishioners saw the need to participate in it. Today it has become a norm for most parishioners.
- vi. Legionaries have always maintained responsibility to in tune the CATENA prayer always at the end of every daily morning Mass.

The Divine Mercy Devotion in Church of the Nativity, Oroigwe



Plate 5: Cross Section of Divine Mercy devotees with Parish Priest.

The Divine Mercy group came into existence in the Parish on Sunday, May 11th, 2008. There was an inaugural event to mark the establishment of the divine mercy prayer group in the parish. This was performed during the 9 o'clock holy Mass celebrated by the then parish priest – Reverend Fr. Charles Berebon, about 8 diocesan devotees from various parishes to visited the parish to inaugurate the Divine Mercy devotion at church of the Nativity. The names of some of the delegates are: Peter Anthony, Wilson, Innocent Obinelo and Vera. Brother Peter spoke about the divine mercy devotion and its benefits to the congregation. Amongst his preaching, a statement that drew a lot of people like signet ring to the devotion was the promise of Jesus to all who proclaim His mercy in life, “I shield as hen shields her infant and in death, I stand between the soul of the persons and the Eternal Father as a just judge, but as a merciful savior”. He urged interested members to enroll at the end of the holy Mass.

The first 23 parishioners who enrolled to become members are:

- | | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Esther Agubueze | 2. Chidozie Jacinta | 3. Ahamefula Modestus |
| 4. Ben Adim | 5. Ukwa Philip | 6. Francisca Itegebe |
| 7. Nwabuchi Nnadi | 8. Rose Okonkwo | 9. Victor Ipighe |
| 10. Kelechi Maduagwu | 11. Juliet Ogbonna | 12. Adaeze Ede |
| 13. Immaculate Chibor | 14. Felicia Ikwuegbu | 15. Nduka Wopara |
| 16. Amaka Okoye | 17. Iwuchukwu I.K | 18. Prisca Chilaka |
| 19. Eucharua Iwu | 20. Francisca Henry | 21. Otunkeoma Cornelus |
| 22. Ugwu Josephine Mary | 23. Tuma Okwudafor | |

The regular prayer meetings were scheduled to hold every Saturdays by 5pm. Brother Innocent Obinelo from the diocesan level continued to visit the new devotees to educate them on how to use some prayer booklets: Formation manual and the Diary of St. Maria Faustina for prayers, cenacle and novenas. After about five consecutive visits, he helped us to elect the Secretary (Kelechi Maduagwu), the treasurer (Rose Okonkwo) and the leader (Josephine Mary Ugwu). Rev. Fr. Jonah Peters from C.I.W.A. was one of the early spiritual advicer that supported the new devotees.

The first cenacle was held on 17th May 2008, with only 6 members. These are Agubueze Esther, Ben Adim, Prisca Chilaka, Chidozie Jacinta, Philip Ukwa and Josephine Mary. The prayer meeting days were adjusted several times to accommodate the schedules of members. Similarly, several new leaders emerged following various elections conducted at the parish. Among the key successes

recorded was the inauguration of new sets of divine mercy devotees by members from Church of the Nativity who supported to establish the divine mercy devotion at the then new out station St. John the Baptist Mgbuesilaru and at the church of the Divine mercy parish Eneka. Christabel Obiekwe and Kizitto Nwachukwu taught at the Eneka out station while Josephine Mary taught at St. John the Baptist outstation then. The present leaders of the devotion at the Church of the Nativity, Oroigwe were elected on 14th April 2018. They are: Sister Tuma Okwudiafor (Leader), Sister Mary Johnson Ugwueze (Secretary) Secretary and sister Josephine Mary Ugwu (Treasurer).

STATE WORSHIPPING COMMUNITIES

The state worshipping communities were created to foster brotherhood and love among parishioners and to ensure parishioners identify with members from their home parishes. It will be important to note here that Sir Cyril Ogumba initiated the state worshipping communities in the parish when he formed the Imo State worshipping community.

The existing worshipping communities are

- § Abia state worshipping community
- § Imo state worshipping community
- § Enugu -Ebonyi state worshipping community
- § Anambra state worshipping community
- § Edo- Delta worshipping community
- § Rivers- Bayelsa state worshipping community



Members of Edo- Delta worshipping community



Akwa-Cross worshipping community

Imo State worshipping community



Middle Belt Worshipping Community

Plates 4t: Cross Section of Members of different state worshipping community.

MINISTERS OF HOSPITALITY

The Ministers of Hospitality play a very important role in in the parish especially during the celebration of the Holy Eucharist. . They ensure that peace and orderliness are maintained in the course of Holy mass and other activities of the Church. They were formerly known as Church Warden. The Ministers of Hospitality group in Church of the Nativity Oroigwe started their functions in 2004. They were inaugurated on the 3rd Sunday of January 2004 without an election



The following were the Pioneers executives:

1. Alozie Chibuikem Prince- Chairman
2. Florence Probenor - Secretary
3. Florence Nwaogugu - Financial Secretary
4. Jude Ugorji - Provost

As the parish began to grow and the members of the group also increased, an election was conducted in 2009. The new executives include:

1. Alozie Chibuikem Prince- Chairman
2. Innocent Nwanua -Vice Chairman
3. Florence Nwaogwugwu- Secretary
4. Mrs Ngozi Ejims - Treasurer

In 2014 another election was conducted and the following became the new leaders

1. Alozie Chibuikem Prince - Chairman
2. Innocent Nwanua -Vice Chairman
3. Nicodemus Nwaonu- Secretary
4. Tochukwu Mmorah- Treasurer
5. Christopher Onyegbule- Provost.

Another round of election took place in 2018 with the following as the current leaders

1. Tochukwu Mmorah- Chairman
2. Christopher Onyegbule -Vice Chairman
3. Florence Nwaogugu- Secretary
4. Hope Obieze - Financial Secretary
5. Comfort Ejims - Treasurer
6. Okey Saviour Okpa PRO
7. Chioma Onwukwe Welfare

In all these administrations the Hospitality group has recorded some remarkable growth and encountered challenges as well.

The achievements include:

1. The establishment of children ministers of hospitality, under the Children Mass Center (CMC) for succession planning.
2. The membership drive with the help parish Priest Rev Fr. Ambrose Bani introduced new energy into the group.

3. The Ministers of Hospitality Church of Nativity Oroigwe has hosted the deanery severally and has fully integrated into deanery activities.
4. The Parish has been a source of support to denearly EXCO and have her members represented at the EXCO.
5. The Sach worn by the members were recently changed to a more presentable Asoke quality.
6. Ministers of Hospitality are well represented at the Parish Laity Council and participate fully in all Church events.

THE PARISH CHOIR



Plate 4u: Cross Section of Parish Choristers.

SALVE REGINA CHOIR (FORMERLY CALLED ST MARY'S CHOIR)

Church of the Nativity Parish Choir which was then known as St. Mary's Choir started same day the new out station celebrated its first holy Mass with Msgr Cyprian Onwuli on the 25th of December, 2003. The Pioneer Choir Master was Bro Jacob Madu (JBC). Some of the pioneer members are Bro JBC Madu, Sis Queendalyn Nwaogwugwu, Bro Chigbo Ezeh, and Sis Ugochi Anyanka. The Pioneer Assistant Choirmaster was Bro Patrick Inyang. First President was Bro Dominic Evughere while the following were members of the choir executives at the parish.

- 1st Vice President- Bro Bryan Dominic.
- 1st Organist- Bro Alphonsus Linus.
- 2nd elected president- Bro Charles Enyia.
- Vice President- Bro Prince O Ejims.
- 3rd president- Bro Prince O Ejims
- Vice President- Sis Victoria Piah who was succeeded by Sis Lilian Udoh.

4th President-Bro Alphonsus Linus.

Vice President-Bro Chukwuemeka Ezeh.

5th President- Bro Johnkennedy Anyanwu

Vice President- Sis Calista Ezeani.

Current President- Sis Calista Ezeani is the current President of Salve Regina Choir formerly known as St. Mary's Choir.

LANDMARK ACHIEVEMENTS

1. First diocesan choral Competition: In the year 2006, choristers from the St. Mary's choir formed a part of the Choir that sang and won the PH Diocesan competition with the St. Cecilia's Choir of St. John's Catholic Church Rumuokwurushi.

2. Second Competition: In 2008, the St. Mary's Choir sang in the then Rumuokoro Deanery Competition choral competition and won the first position in Group B. Bro JBC Madu was the Choir Master who led and conducted the choir.

3. Third Competition: In 2010, Based on the above strength, the choir gained experience and prominence and so, proceeded for the next diocesan competition the following year and came out second in group B. This feat led to the choir gaining promotion to group A.

4. Fourth competition: In 2014, the President Bro Alphonsus Ekwere, the Choir Master - Bro Michael Obiefuna, the organist/xylophonist - Bro Peter Onwuzurigbo. This team of determined young leaders led the choir to their first competition in group A. This was in the then Rumuokwurushi Deanery. The St. Mary's Choir emerged first position beating all the big choirs in group A.

It is worthy of note that the Choir had also taken part in about two Diocesan competitions after the aforementioned and came 7th and 8th positions respectively.

There are two choir groups in the Parish. These were formed by Msgr Cyprian. Onwuli to ensure adequate coverage for the three Masses celebrated in the parish This reason gave birth to a second choir - the St. Rita's Choir now known as the Angelic Voice Choir.

In 2018, the then Parish Priest, Msgr Cyprian Onwuli wanted a central leadership for the parish choir and an election was conducted with the following emerging as parish choir leaders:

Bro Alphonsus Linus Ekwere - President;

Bro Jude Durunwa - VP
Sis Ifunanya Atunwa - Sec Gen.;
Bro Anthony Christopher - Asst. Sec;
Bro Victor Nwafor - PRO;
Sis Lucia Obunseli - Treasurer; and
Sis Juliana Agada - Fin. Sec..

These positions are made up of members from both the Salve Regina and Angelic Voice Choirs.

The Choir masters

The parish, church of the Nativity is blessed with good vibrant choir masters with various diversities and strengths. They are Bro JBC Madu, Bro Kenneth Ogbonna, Bro Jude Durunwa, Bro Alphonsus Linus and Bro Obinna Ezeh .

The Parish Organists are Bro Cyprian Ledum Giadom, Bro Johnkennedy Anyanwu, and Bro Enebeli Justine Olisa.

Other Achievements:

1. The Parish choir partook in the 2018 deanery competition and emerged 2nd position and took 7th position in the Diocesan competition later that year.
2. The Parish choir organized Voice Training and soloing for all the Parish choristers.
3. Conducted a Leadership Seminar for the choristers.
4. Planned and hosted Community songs service for the whole Parish.
5. Have sustained annual Christmas carols for the Parish and individual parishioners at various times.
6. The Nativity Parish Choir constitution and bank account opening are near completion.
7. Support the Parish in the purchase and maintenance of musical equipment.

As at this year 2022, the Salve Regina choir group has membership strength of 86 choristers.

THE ANGELIC VOICES CHOIR (FORMERLY CALLED ST RITA'S CHOIR)



The angelic choir started as St Rita's choir some 12 years ago. At the beginning it was mainly responsible for the 6am mass. They first started with a combined group of members from Legion of Mary and association of Sacred Heart of Jesus and Immaculate Heart of Mary and had Sister Gertrude Onwukwe and sister Jacinta as coordinators.. Today the Angelic voices choir group is a leading team of children, teenagers, youth and adult choristers. They are supported by their patrons and patroness. These are: Mr /Mrs Getrude and Emeka Onwukwe, Sir Henry Agbai, Dr/and Mrs Patrick's Chinemerem, Mr/Mrs Victor Anagboso, Engr Berth Ugwu, Hon /Mrs Uba Anyanka, Sir/Lady Charles Egwabor, Mr/Mrs Joshua Thompson . Today, they sing both 6am and 8am masses. The following are the leaders of the choir

Sister Juliana Agada Secretary
Bro Anthony Christopher Assistant library, and provost
Bro Victor Nwafor Financial secretary
Sister Akra Magdalene Welfare officer
Sister Benedicta Moses Assistant Secretary
Sister Courage Egwabor Vice president
Sis Justina Williams James Asst welfare
Sis Obunseli Lucy Nneka Treasurer
Bro Basil Inyang Technical /Band Engineer
Sis Vivian Nneka Durunwa Band team Assistant leader

Bro John Mary Onwukwe Internal affairs chairman.
Bro Cyprian Giadom Ledum, Choirmaster/Chief organist
Bro Jude Durunwa Choir master/president.

Achievements:

1. Developing of new choristers and choir masters
2. Supported the establishment of St John the Baptist Church choir group
3. Supported to set up the Church of the Divine Mercy Parish choir group
4. Supported the church of Visitation Atali, choir
5. Supported the choir at the out station Mater Eclasia
6. Organization of the first ever parish family Christmas carols of Nine lessons and concert.
7. Represented the parish Church of the Nativity at the first maiden Oroigwe deanary choir carol of nine lessons which took place at St James Eneka on the 18th day December 2021.
8. Angelic voice Choir became the first choir in the parish to sing the first ever mass wedding organized by Church of the Nativity parish Oroigwe where many couple where joined in holy matrimony,
9. Angelic Voice choir was also the first choir in the parish to sing the holy mass of the gathering of Brigade 97 priest and bishops at the pastoral center Igwurita on January 2018.

CHAPTER 5

PARISH ADMINISTRATION AND GOVERNANCE

The parish is governed by the three councils- Pastoral, laity and financial with the parish priest overseeing all parish pastoral affairs and the spiritual needs of the lay-faithful. The CMO, CWO and CYON in their various capacities support the councils and the parish priest.

PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL

The first pastoral council vice chairman was Sir Mike Obinor
At the early days of Church of the Nativity, Mr. Benedict Ekwujuruonye was appointed station council coordinator. He functioned in this role until the pastoral council and CMO executives were officially formed.



Plate 5a: cross section of pastoral council members

Succession of Pastoral Council Vice Chairmen

1. Sir Mike Obinor was appointed the first pastoral council vice chairman from 2007-2009.
2. Sir Ben Adim became the second pastoral council vice chairman from 2009 to 2018.
3. Late Sir Alex James Illah was the parish pastoral council vice chairman from July 2018 - Dec 2020.
4. Sir Felix-Acata Orunwa is the current serving pastoral council vice chairman - June 2021- till date.

LANDMARK ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL:

The Parish pastoral council has successfully supervised all the parish developmental projects starting from:

1. Expansion of the old church Building which was demolished in 2021.
2. Purchase of power generating sets.
3. Building of the parish presbytery
4. Fencing of the entire Church premises.
5. Building of a 2 storey Church hall.
6. Establishment of a Nativity nursery/primary school.
7. Inherited Church of the visitation Atali from St. John's Rumuokwurusi; nurtured it to parish level with the purchase of 22 plots of land for them.
8. Established St. John the Baptist out station, Mgbesilaru (Now a Parish)
9. Established Church of Divine Mercy out station, Rumuosunwo, Eneka(now a parish)
10. Also Mater Ecclesia Church Eneka was handed over to our parish by the Bishop for administrative reasons. It was nurtured from scratch to a parish status too.
11. Built the new church building currently in use
12. Collaborated with the CWO to build a Marian Grotto of our Lady of Perpetual Help.
14. Currently following up the acquisition a one plot of land near the church to make room for further expansion and space.
15. Have supported the spiritual growth of parish and parishioners by organizing crusades and annual parish events.

PARISH LAITY COUNCIL

The Laity council came into existence in September 2009 following its inauguration by the then parish priest Rev. Fr. Charles Berebon. The following members emerged as pioneer Laity council executives.

1. Late Sir Alex Illah – Chairman
2. Sis Marilyn Etomi – Vice Chairman
3. Late Mrs. Agnes Adimelechi - General Secretary
4. Mr. Powerful Onuh – Asst. Secretary
5. Mrs. Gertrude Onwukwe – Fin. Secretary
6. Mrs Maryann Udoh – Treasurer
7. Mr. Victor Anagboso – PRO
8. Mr. Emeka Anyanwu – Provost

The second Laity council was inaugurated in August 2013 by Msgr. Cyprian Onwuli. They resumed work in 2014. For this second council Late Sir Alex Illah was retained as the chairman while Mrs. Gertrude Onwukwe took over as the General Secretary.

The current laity council was inaugurated in June 2018 by the immediate past Parish Priest Monsignor Cyprian Onwuli. The election of officers was conducted in line with the CBCN stipulations of 4-year single term for all offices on 30th October, 2018. The current executive members are:

1. Sir Mike Obinor- Chairman
2. Engr. Kevin Nwankwo - Secretary
3. David Atsa- Assist. Secretary
4. Bro. Tunde Samuel- Fin. Secretary
5. Mrs Christiana Ejechi - Treasurer
6. Bro. Stephen Eze - PRO:
7. Mrs Chioma Joshua- Welfare:

From its inception in September 2009, till date, the laity council has supported the development of the parish.

Some of the remarkable achievements are:

1. Expansion and reorganization of the Children Mass Centre
2. Production and improvement of the quality of the weekly bulletin.
3. Organization of Mass Wedding in the years 2012, 2013, 2016 and 2018
4. Supervision of elections for new officers and executives of various pious societies in the parish.
5. Yearly planning and organization of Nativity week celebrations.
6. Organization of the annual Laity week and Lenten charity activities
7. Regular representation of the parish at the Deanery and Diocesan Meetings.

The laity council has over the years experienced the following challenges.

1. Poor Attitude of Society delegates to attend council meetings.
2. Delegate's inability to adequately represent their societies in meetings.
3. Lack of Funds to run the council.
4. Weak numerical strength of Pious Societies.

CATHOLIC MEN ORGANIZATION (CMO) OF CHURCH OF THE NATIVITY, OROIGWE



The CMO of Church of the Nativity was inaugurated in June 2004 following an election. Before this election, the activities of the CMO were coordinated by Mr. Benedict Ekwujuruonye who then was the pioneer coordinator. At inauguration, the membership strength was about 30 members. In the year 2020, the membership of CMO grew to 300 and following a membership audit and review exercise conducted in 2021,, today the numerical strength of CMO is about 100. Sir Chris Okosodo was the first elected CMO chairman of the Parish.



Plate 5b: Cross section of member of the CMO, Church of the Nativity

THE FIRST CMO EXECUTIVES - 2004 to 2006

At inauguration in June 2004, the following persons stood elected:

1. Chairman- Sir. Chris Okododo
2. Vice chairman- Sir Cyril Ogumba
3. Gen. Secretary- Late Desmond Eluwa
4. Asst. Secretary- Charles Uba Anyanka
5. Fin. Secretary- Dominic Udo
6. Asst. Fin Secretary/ Registrar- Augustine Ewelike
7. Treasurer- Joseph Okonkwo
8. Welfare- Lazarus Ogbenna
9. P. R. O- Sunny Ugorji
10. Provost- Prince C. Alozie
11. Ex-Officio- Sir. Mike Obinor.

THE SECOND CMO EXECUTIVES - 2006 to 2009

1. Chairman: Chris Okosodo (re-elected)
2. Vice chairman: Emeka Anyanwu
3. Secretary: Uba C. Anyanka
4. Asst. Secretary: Tony Emereuwa
5. Financial secretary: Austin Ewelike
6. Registrar: Dominic Udo
7. Treasurer: Joseph Okonkwo
8. Welfare 1: Victor Anagboso
9. Welfare 2: Laz Ogbenna
10. P. R. O: Sunny Ugorji
11. Provost 1: Prince Alozie
12. Provost 2: Christopher Onyegbula.

THE THIRD CMO EXECUTIVES - 2009 to 2015

1. Chairman: Emeka Anyanwu
2. Vice chairman: Uba C. Anyanka
3. Secretary: Tony Emereuwa
4. Asst. Secretary: Tony Okwudishi
5. Treasurer: Henry Adimelechi
6. Fin. Secretary: Ifeanyi Nweke
7. Registrar: Francis Adikea
8. Welfare 1: Obinda Amadi
9. Welfare 2: Prince Alozie
10. P. R. O: Austin Ewelike

- 11. Provost 1: Christopher Onyegbula
- 12. Provost 2: Monday Njemanze.
- Group A leader: Francis Adikea
- Group B leader: Cyril Ogumba
- Group C leader: Chinedu Okafor

THE FOURTH CMO EXECUTIVES - 2015

- 1. Chairman: Emeka Anyanwu
- 2. Vice Chairman: Innocent Michael
- 3. Secretary: Tony Emereuwa
- 4. Asst. Secretary: Felix-Acata Orunwa
- 5. Treasurer: Henry Adimelechi
- 6. Fin. Secretary: Ifeanyi Nweke
- 7. Registrar: Celestine Olumba
- 8. PRO: Kenneth Akota
- 9. Welfare 1: Obinda Amadi
- 10. Welfare 2: Damian Nwachukwu
- 11. Provost 1. Ben Onwe
- 12. Provost 2: Monday Njemanze
- Group A leader: Emma Anonye
- Group B leader: Cyril Ogumba
- Group C leader: Audu Williams
- Ex officio 1: Sir Chris Okosodo
- Ex officio 2: Sir Ben Adim

THE FIFTH CMO EXECUTIVES – 2016

Mr. Emeka Anyanwu who was chairman resigned when he was about to relocate out of Port Harcourt. Then his vice chairman assumed office.

- 1. Chairman: Innocent Michael
- 2. Vice Chairman: Ambrose Anokwuru

THE SIXTH CMO EXECUTIVES – August 2017

The chairman Mr. Innocent Michael resigned due to job mobility. Hence the following emerged as sixth CMO executives to lead the parish

- 1. Chairman: Ambrose Anokwuru
- 2. Vice chairman: Tony Emereuwa
- 3. Secretary: Felix-Acata Orunwa
- 4. Asst. Secretary: Ifeanyi Onyeukwu
- 5. Treasurer: Paul Wopara.

THE SEVENTH AND CURRENT CMO EXECUTIVES – May 2018 till date

1. Chairman: Ambrose Anokwuru
2. Vice chairman: Tony Emereuwa
3. Secretary: Sir. Felix-Acata Orunwa
4. Asst. Secretary: Audu Williams
5. Fin. Secretary: Kevin Nwankwo.
6. Registrar: Jude Durunwa
7. Treasurer: Paul Wopara.
- 8 PRO: Nicholas Osi
9. Welfare 1: Frederick Chioke
10. Welfare 2: Fred Umbuo
11. Provost 1. Ben Onwe
12. Provost 2: Monday Njemanze
13. Ex officio 1: Sir Chris Okosodo
14. Ex officio 2: Sir Ben Adim
15. Group A leader: Emma Anonye
16. Group B leader: Cyril Ogumba
17. Group C leader: Audu Williams

LAND MARK ACHIEVEMENTS:

1. Built offertory boxes and provided the first gold plated Taurable & incense boat for celebration of Holy Mass in Church of the Nativity.
2. Supported in the construction of Pews for the parish.
3. CMO Constitution written and adopted in June 2006 as a working document to guide in administering the affairs of the organization.
4. CMO bank account opened in October 2009.
5. Contributed to the building and furnishing of the presbytery.
6. Supported in various charity works for the good and welfare of members and parishioners
7. Priest training project was launched in July 2008 and the CMO has successfully contributed to the training of one priest in fulfilment of the promise made before the then Bishop, M. O. Makozi of blessed memory.
8. Supported CYON to procure some musical equipment.
9. Bought loud speakers for St. Mary's Choir (now Salve Regina choir) and supported immensely in procurement of choir robes.
10. Set up CMO football team to partake in tournaments at all levels in the diocese.
11. Made financial contribution and support towards the building and roofing of the new Church building.

12. CMO Education trust fund was established to give scholarship and assist indigent members' children in their education and studies between 2018 and 2021.

19. Investment program was launched in 2020 to make available fund to members who wished to improve or startup some business at a low interest rate.

20. To cushion the effect of COVID-19 pandemic, palliative packages were given to some selected members in 2020.

CATHOLIC WOMEN ORGANIZATION (CWO) OF CHURCH OF THE NATIVITY, OROIGWE



In February 2004, through the approval and directive of Msgr. Cyprian Onwuli, the Catholic Women Organization was introduced and inaugurated in Church of the Nativity, then an outstation of St. John's Parish, Rumuokwurushi. The membership of the CWO at that time was about 48 members. Today, the numerical strength of the CWO in the parish is above 250 members.



Plate 5b: Cross section of members of CWO, Church of the Nativity

The motto of the CWO is: To Conquer the World with the Power of Humility and Fire of Purity. Our meeting days is on the 1st Saturday of Every Month except January.

Our Vision: To evangelize the world for holistic development.

Our Mission: To further propagate the mission of Christ here on earth and world after, through the help of God and intercession of our Blessed Mother Mary.

Following its inauguration in 2004, the parish CWO was coordinated by Lady Juliet Obinor as the President with Mrs. Angela Nwosu as the Secretary while Mrs. Philomena Probunu served as its first Treasurer with Mrs. Felicia Ikwuegbu as the Financial Secretary. These were the pioneer executive members of CWO who were appointed from 1st February 2004 – 23rd May 2004.

On the 23rd of May 2004, elections were conducted and the following were officially elected as new officials and executives of the CWO for Church of the Nativity.



Plate 5c: Cross section of members of CWO, Church of the Nativity

THE PIONEER ELECTED OFFICERS OF CWO

1. Lady Juliet Obinor – President
2. Lady Theresa Ogumba – Vice President, she took over from Mrs. Philomena Probunu when she left
3. Lady Angela Nwosu – Secretary
4. Late Mrs. Agnes Adimelechi – Asst. Secretary
5. Mrs. Maureen Osuagwu – Financial Secretary

6. Lolo Toyin Madufor – Treasurer
7. Mrs. Ugochi Anyanka – Welfare Officer
8. Mrs. Joy Chukwumati Nwakanma – Provost
9. Mrs. Prisca Okechukwu – PRO/Publicity Secretary
10. Mrs. Late. Chinwe Okagbue – Registrar
11. Mrs. Angela Kwamina and Mrs. Felicia Ikwuegbu – Ex – Officials

After a while Mrs. Philomena Probonu left and Lady Theresa Ogumba took over from her as the Vice President of CWO while Mrs. Ugochi Anyankah became the welfare officer. On the 6th of March 2005, two groups were created Group A (Seat of Wisdom) and Group B (Morning Star). Each group had about 24 members with separate group leaders.

GROUP A: SEAT OF WISDOM GROUP

1. Mrs. Christiana Ejechi – Group Leader
2. Mrs. Rose Okonkwo – Asst. Group Leader
3. Mrs. Tuma Okwudiafor - Reporter
4. Mrs. Josephine Mary Ugwu – Collector

GROUP B: MORNING STAR GROUP

1. Mrs. Kwamina Angela - Group Leader
2. Mrs. Linda Amhenrior – Asst. Group Leader & Later became the Group Leader
3. Mrs. Ugochi Anyanka – Reporter
4. Mrs. Toyin Madufor – Collector

CWO grew in numerical strength in May with about 63 members and after a while the groups had about 82 members each. There was need to create another group to help facilitate the coordination of women in the church. The third group was Queen of Peace, created on the 5th of July 2008.

GROUP C: QUEEN OF PEACE GROUP

1. Mrs. Florence Nwaogwugwu – Group Leader
2. Mrs. Nkechi Nwanedo – Asst. Group Leader
3. Mrs. Benedicta Ederehor – Treasures
4. Mrs. Nkechi Ugorji – Secretary
5. Mrs. Francisca Onyenemezu - Financial Secretary
6. Mrs. Pricillia Osita – Provost
7. Mrs. Franca Nwogu – Welfare

On the 5th of September 2009 the second set of CWO executives were elected to resume work following their inauguration on the 6th of September by the then parish priest Rev. Fr. Charles Berebon. They are

1. Mrs. Calista Ezeaku – President
2. Mrs. Late Agnes Adimelechi – Vice President
3. Mrs. Gertrude Onwukwe – Secretary
4. Mrs. Augusta Anyanwu – Asst. Secretary
5. Mrs. Maureen Osuagwu – Financial Secretary
6. Mrs. MaryAnn Udo – Treasurer
7. Mrs. Rose Okonkwo – PRO 1
8. Mrs. Nkechi Nwanedo – PRO 2
9. Mrs. Hope Obieze – Provost 1
10. Mrs. Florence Nwaogwugwu – Provost 2
11. Mrs. Ugochi Anyanka – Welfare

GROUP A: SEAT OF WISDOM

1. Mrs. Christiana Ejechi – Group Leader
2. Mrs. Joy Adun – Asst. Group leader
3. Mrs. Stella Ariagiegbe – Secretary
4. Mrs. Estina Emelie - Asst. Secretary
5. Mrs. Josephiene Mary Ugwu – Treasurer
6. Mrs. Nkiru Otutu - Financial Secretary
7. Mrs. Late Rose Edet – Provost 1
8. Mrs. Nnenna Nwanua – Provost 2

GROUP B: MORNING STAR

1. Lady Gloria Adim – Group Leader
2. Mrs. Blesing Michael – Asst. Group Leader
3. Mrs. Amaka Isikaku – Secretary
4. Mrs. Cecilia Anyanwu – Financial Secretary
5. Mrs. Ogechi Ndu – Asst. Secretary
6. Mrs. Juliet Njoku – Treasurer
7. Mrs. Nkiru Otutu – Welfare 1
8. Mrs. Ify Okeyia – Welfare 2
9. Mrs. Josephine – Provost 1
10. Mrs. Maria Ogele – Provost 2

GROUP C: QUEEN OF PEACE

1. Mrs. Nkechi Ugorji – Group Leader
2. Mrs. Chinyere Nweke – Asst. Group Leader
3. Mrs. Casandra Anagboso – Secretary
4. Mrs. Regina Onwuka – Asst. Secretary
5. Mrs. Francisca Onyenemezu – Financial Secretary
6. Mrs. Patience Madu – Treasurer
7. Mrs. Ogechi Sylvester – PRO
8. Mrs. Maureen Onyebuchi – Provost
9. Mrs. Rose Adikea – Welfare Officer

On the 5th of November, 2011 Rev. Sr. (Prof) Caroline Mbonu of the Handmaid of the Holy Child Jesus became the spiritual director for the CWO members of Church of the Nativity.

The Third CWO executives emerged following the elections conducted in 2012. There was also an additional sub-group called group Queen of Ange. The new executives include:

1. Late Mrs. Agnes Adimelechi – President
2. Mrs. Gertrude Onwukwe – Vice President
3. Mrs. Nkechi Ugorji – Secretary
4. Mrs. Ugochi Anyanka – Asst. Secretary
5. Mrs. MaryAnn Udo – Financial Secretary
6. Mrs. Christabel Obiekwe – Treasurer
7. Mrs. Nkechi Nwanedo – PRO
8. Late Mrs. Rose Edet – Provost 1
9. Mrs. Priscillia Osita – Provost 2
10. Mrs. Nkiruka Anonye – Welfare

Group A: SEAT OF WISDOM

1. Mrs. Joyce Akotah – Group Leader
2. Late Mrs. Onyeka Iyere – Asst. Group Leader
3. Mrs. Nweke Ifeoma – Secretary
4. Late Mrs Orunwa Nkolika Acata – Financial Secretary
5. Late Mrs. Okam Iyke Ifeoma – Treasurer
6. Mrs. Myriam Utchay – PRO 1
7. Mrs. Uju Odili – Provost 1
8. Mrs. Emmanuel Chinaza – Welfare
9. Mrs. Joy Kayode – Welfare

Group B: MORNING STAR

1. Mrs. Florence Nwaogwugwu – Group Leader
2. Mrs. Amaka Isikaku – Asst. Group Leader
3. Late Ijeoma Numa – Onokpite – Secretary
4. Mrs. Angela Edafiaga – Financial Secretary

Group C: QUEEN OF PEACE

1. Mrs. Joy Williams – Group Leader
2. Mrs. Chikodi Ohuru – Asst. Group Leader
3. Mrs. Francisca Onyenemezu – Secretary
4. Mrs. Calista Nwachukwu – Asst. Secretary
5. Mrs. Faustina Iwuchukwu – Financial Secretary
6. Mrs. Hope Obieze – Treasurer

QUEEN OF ANGEL (the new group created on the 2nd of June 2012)

1. Mrs. Juliet Njoku – Group Leader
2. Mrs. Onojaife Susan – Asst. Group Leader
3. Mrs. Chioma Asen – Secretary
4. Mrs. Agu Catherine – Financial Secretary
5. Mrs. Ifeyinwa Mmorah – Treasurer
6. Mrs. Laretta Olumba – Asst. Secretary
7. Mrs. Ngozi Agwulmu – PRO 1
8. Mrs. Mary Ogedengbe – PRO 2
9. Mrs. Nancy Anokwuru – Welfare 1
10. Mrs. Rose Obiekwugo – Welfare 2
11. Mrs. Christiana Amaliri – Provost 1
12. Mrs. Chioma Jolly – Provost 2

AS a result of the demise of the president, Mrs. Agnes Adimelechi on the 11th September 2014, the Vice President, Mrs. Gertrude Onwukwe took over the affairs of the women till 2016.

The fourth CWO executives: A new administration for the CWO resumed office after the election held on 4th of June 2016. The new executives include:

1. Mrs. Ugochi Anyanka – President
2. Mrs. Maureen Osuagwu - Vice President
3. Mrs. Nkechi Ugorji – Secretary
4. Mrs. Joy Williams – Asst. Secretary
5. Mrs. MaryAnn Udo – Financial Secretary

6. Mrs. Chikaodi Uwhuru – Treasurer
7. Mrs. Laretta Olumba - PRO 1
8. Mrs. Joy Kayode – PRO 2
9. Mrs. Nkiruka Anonye – Provost
10. Mrs. Hope Obieze – Welfare

AUDITORS

Mrs. Amaka Okojie
Mrs. Chidinma Chinazom

GROUP Executives are:

SEAT OF WISDOM GROUP

1. Mrs. Joyce Akotah – Group Leader
2. Mrs. Virginia Adikwe – Asst. Group Leader
3. Mrs. Constance Ifedi – Secretary
4. Late Mrs. Okam Iyke Ijeoma – Financial Secretary
5. Mrs. Angela Onwusi – Treasurer
6. Mrs. Sandra Isama – PRO
7. Mrs. Joy Cliff Onyemachi – Provost
8. Late Mrs. Orunwa Nkolita Acata – Welfare 1
9. Mrs. Peace Enebeli – Welfare 2

MORNING STAR GROUP

1. Mrs. Florence Nwaogwugwu – Group Leader
2. Mrs. Angela Edafiaga -- SecretarEy

3. QUEEN OF PEACE GROUP

1. Mrs. Marilyn Etomi – Group Leader
2. Mrs. Ogechi Chioke – Asst. Group Leader
3. Mrs. Francisca Onyegemezu – Secretary
4. Mrs. Calista Nwachukwu – Financial Secretary
5. Mrs. Chioma Joshua – Welfare 1
6. Mrs. Stella Mathew – Welfare 2

QUEEN OF ANGELS GROUP

1. Mrs. Onojaife Susan – Group Leader
2. Mrs. Juliet Njoku – Asst. Group Leader
3. Mrs. Chioma Asen – Secretary
4. Mrs. Anulika Azu – Ossau – Assistant Secretary

5. Mrs. Catherine Agu – Financial Secretary
6. Mrs. Ifeyinwa Mmorah – Treasurer
7. Mrs. Mary Ogedengbe – PRO 1
8. Mrs. Ngozi Agwulonu – PRO 2
9. Mrs. Agnes Agada - Welfare 1
10. Mrs. Victoria Otunkeoma – Welfare 2
11. Mrs. Geraldine Ezinwa – Provost 1
12. Mrs. Amaka Mgbodile – Provost 2

The fifth CWO executives emerged following an election conducted on the 5th of May 2018 . This is the current serving parish CWO leadership in the parish.

1. Lady Veronica Illah – President
2. Mrs. Joy Williams – Vice President
3. Mrs. Onojaiife Susan – Secretary
4. Mrs. Joyce Akotah – Asst. Secretary
5. Mrs. Ogechi Chioke – Fin. Secretary
6. Mrs. Nkechi Nwanedo – Treasure
7. Mrs. Laretta Olumba – PRO 1
8. Mrs. Virginia Adikwu – PRO 2
9. Mrs. Faith Abu – Provost 1
10. Mrs. Chidinma Eke – Provost 2
11. Mrs. Joy Kayode – Welfare 1
12. Mrs. Agnes Agada – Welfare 2

New group executives also emerged after the internal elections conducted on 14th of August 2018.

SEAT OF WISDOM GROUP

1. Mrs. Myrian Utchay – Group Leader
2. Mrs. Constance Ifedi – Asst. Group Leader
3. Mrs. Ugochi Obival – Secretary
4. Mrs. Maris Igbadume – Asst. Secretary
5. Mrs. Vivian Eyinnaya – Financial Secretary
6. Mrs. Comfort Egemonu – Treasurer
7. Mrs. Joy Cliff Onyemachi – PRO
8. Mrs. Peace Enebeli – Welfare 1
9. Mrs. Angela Onwusi – Welfare 2
10. Lady Florence Umeh – Provost

MORNING STAR GROUP

1. Mrs. Chioma Iwuala – Group Leader
2. Mrs. Edafiaga Angela – Asst. Group Leader
3. Mrs. Uzoamaka Eze – Secretary
4. Late Mrs. Ijeoma Numa Onokpite – Assistant Secretary
5. Mrs. Angela Okoye – Financial Secretary
6. Mrs. Martina Nwankwo – Treasurer
7. Mrs. Angelina Iheanacho – PRO
8. Mrs. Mary Umbuo – Welfare 1
9. Mrs. Onyejekwe Mary – Welfare 2

QUEEN OF PEACE GROUP

1. Mrs. Marilyn Etomi – Group Leader
2. Mrs. Chioma Ozumba – Asst. Group Leader
3. Lady Blessing Obiejesi – Secretary
4. Mrs. Agatha Okojie – Financial Secretary
5. Mrs. Precious Christopher – PRO
6. Mrs. Judith Ameachi – Treasurer
7. Mrs. Chioma Joshua – Welfare 1
8. Mrs. Felicia Abraham – Welfare 2
9. Mrs. Comfort Augustine – Welfare 3

QUEEN OF ANGLES GROUP

1. Mrs. Regina Johnson – Group Leader
2. Mrs. Anulika Azu – Ossai – Asst. Group Leader
3. Mrs. Ifeyinwa Mmorah – Secretary
4. Mrs. Mary Ogedengbe – Asst. Secretary
5. Mrs. Catherine Agu – Financial Secretary
6. Lady Esther Ozurumba – Treasurer
7. Mrs. Ngozi Agwulonu – PRO 1
8. Mrs. Amaka Mgbodile – PRO2
9. Mrs. Nancy Anokwuru – Provost 1
10. Lady Ijeoma Akpovili – Provost 2
11. Mrs. Christiana Amaliri – Welfare 1
12. Mrs. Chioma Jolly – Welfare 2

Today, the parish CWO has 5 new existing groups, created by the parish priest rev. Fr. Ambrose Bani

THE NEW GROUPS AND THE EXCOS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

GROUP 1: OUR LADY MOTHER OF DIVINE GRACE

1. Mrs. Martina Nwankwo – Group Leader
2. Mrs. Maria Ugwueze – Asst. Group leader
3. Mrs. Kelechi Ogbonna – Secretary
4. Mrs. Virginia Okpom - Asst. Secretary
5. Mrs. Ifeyinwa Mmorah – Financial Secretary
6. Mrs. Ngozi Wopara – Treasurer
7. Mrs. Ifeoma Okolo – PRO 1
8. Mrs. Anthonia Ekhasomi – PRO2
9. Mrs. Patricia Onolemhmem – Asst. Financial Secretary
10. Mrs. Christiana Amaliri – Welfare 1
11. Mrs. Uche Onyia – Welfare 2

GROUP 2: OUR LADY GATE OF HEAVEN

1. Mrs. Glory Okoye – Group Leader
2. Mrs. Rose Obiekwugo – Asst. Group Leader
3. Mrs. Vera Alphonsus – Secretary
4. Mrs. Chinwe Onuoha – Asst. Secretary
5. Mrs. Jovita Nnanna – Financial Secretary
6. Mrs. Asumptha Michael – Treasurer
7. Mrs. Constance Ifedi – PRO 1
8. Mrs. Vivian Moujekwu – Welfare 1
9. Mrs. Ngozi Enwere – Welfare 2

GROUP 3: OUR LADY QUEEN OF ALL SAINTS

1. Mrs. Ngozi Akumonye – Group Leader
2. Mrs. Comfort Egemonu – Asst. Group Leader
3. Mrs. Anulika Chidozie – Secretary
4. Mrs. Margaret Okwori – Asst. Secretary
5. Mrs. Gladys Onah – Fin. Secretary
6. Mrs. Akukwe Ifeoma – Treasurer
7. Mrs. Evelyn Chinasa – PRO
8. Mrs. Angela Okoye – Welfare 1
9. Mrs. Ebere Unanka – Welfare 2

GROUP 4: OUR LADY MOTHER OF CHRIST

1. Lady Esther Ozurumba – Group Leader
2. Mrs. Ngozi Aitsebaomo – Assistant Group leader

3. Mrs. Nnenna Osi – Secretary
4. Mrs. Agatha Okojie – Treasurer
5. Mrs. Chiamaka Okafor – Financial Secretary
6. Mrs. Angela Okam – PRO
7. Mrs. Chioma Joshua – Welfare 1
8. Mrs. Mary Umbuo – Welfare 2
9. Mrs. Orlu Felix Sandra – Provost 1

GROUP 5: ST MONICA

1. Mrs. Calista Nwachukwu – Group Leader
2. Mrs. Francisca Nzeaku – Asst. Group Leader
3. Mrs. Philomena Donald – Secretary
4. Mrs. Vivian Enyinnaya – Financial Secretary
5. Mrs. Uloma Okparaji – Treasurer
6. Mrs. Chioma Jolly – Welfare Officer 1
7. Mrs. Ugochi Emmanuel – Welfare Officer 2

Contributions and achievements of CWO to the parish

The parish CWO has supported the parish by equipping the Priest's Kitchen, bought altar materials, made altar clothes for mass servers (Boys), donated children and adult plastic chairs, contributed towards the building of the priest's house, church hall, building and roofing of the new church building, contributes to the monthly upkeep of the priest, most especially their feeding. The CWO donated kneeler and the Marian Statue inside the church. The CWO also funded the building of a Marian grotto of Our Lady of Perpetual Help.

The CWO supported the two outstations, St. John de Baptist and church of the Divine Mercy by donating new altar material and other things to them. The CWO bought an evangelical bus. The CWO provides charity funds and loan supports to indigent members at zero interest.

The CWO made altar uniforms for women and CWO altar cloth. The CWO also supports general cleaning and housekeeping of the entire church premises. The parish CWO has also embarked in several empowerment and skill acquisition programmes for its members and parishioners. The parish CWO have also played active roles at the deanery and diocesan level and today prides its self to have produced the first Rumuokwurushi deanery CWO Secretary and the Oroigwe Deanery CWO President in persons of Mrs. Calista Ezeaku and Mrs. Ugochi Anyanka respectively.

Challenges: The key challenges bothers on membership, their commitment to attending meetings and performing their financial obligations.

CATHOLIC YOUTH ORGANIZATION OF NIGERIA (CYON)

The catholic Youth Organization of Nigeria (CYON) started in the church of Nativity in the year 2004. To commence its mission to evangelize the catholic young men and women, a formal meeting of the Catholic Youth Organization of Nigeria, (CYON) was held on May 21, 2004 under the coordination of Bro. Francis Onwuchekwa who later handed over to Bro. Mike Osuagwu as acting President. As a growing out station, Bro. Mike embarked on an intensive membership drive campaigns and initiated the maiden Almanac committee project.



Plate 5d: Cross section of members of CYON, Church of the Nativity

In 2005, Bro. Mike paved way for the emergence of the first elected executive council under the leadership of Bro. Obival Uche. His administration produced and launched an Almanac initiated by Bro. Mike under the Committee chairmanship of Onyeka Ikedbudu. The proceeds from this helped in building a strong financial base and to set up a revenue generating unit for the Association through the purchase of shares and video/photo cameras.

Upon pronouncement of the Out Station as an autonomous Community on November 26, 2006, the Association was formally introduced into the Rumuokoro deanery on November 18, 2007 by Bro. Patrick Ahmed, the then deanery president. The Association was successfully inaugurated on March 30, 2008 after completing the constitutional requirements.

In 2008, another election was conducted. The good works and positive contributions of the serving executives earned them a second tenure with Bro. Obival Uche as the president.

Some of the achievements of the parish CYON include: formation and of the Obinwanne cultural dance and gospel band group on December 7, 2008. This was the first laudable achievement after the proclamation of Church of the Nativity as a Parish by the late Most Rev.(Dr.)A.O Makozi, the then Bishop of Port Harcourt Diocese.

Upon the expiration of the administration led by Bro. Obival Uche another election was conducted on November 7, 2010. This election brought in the third executives led by Engr. Hilary Ezeh. The elected members were later inaugurated on March 6, 2011. Engr. Hilary Ezeh led administration consolidated on the achievements of his predecessors and made additional efforts on membership drive.

In other to foster uniformity in the Parish leadership, the Parish Priest, Msgr. Cyprian Onwuli nullified all elections of officers getting over a year and mandated for a fresh election. On July 3, 2012, another election in obedience to the Parish priest declaration was conducted. The leadership ingenuity of the Executive members within the few months led to the re-election of many with Engr. Hilary Ezeh as the President. The elected officers were later inaugurated on September 2, 2012.

Engr. Hilary Ezeh led administration championed the purchase of a Toyota Hummer bus, and funded the publication of 1st and 2nd editions of "Hidden Treasure Magazine", This fourth administration also reformed the youth cultural dance group and included a sports team which improved members sporting skills in volleyball and table tennis. This administration also initiated and executed cultural fiesta for the parish during which the CYON King and Queen were crowned. They also initiated the yearly children quiz tagged "Children, how much you know" as well as the married couples quiz called "Couples, how much do you know". This administration equipped the associations secretariat with laptop and printer. It also grouped the association into St. Charles Lwanga and St. John Bosco and established a youth musical and sound systems team.

To ensure the spiritual growth of members and to sustain sound catholic faith across its members, the administration introduced the SEE programme which means- Spiritual Enhancement, Evangelization and Empowerment (SEE).

Sequel to the creation of Rumuokwursi deanery from Rumuokoro on December

3, 2011, by His Lordship, Most. Rev. Dr. Camillus Etokudoh and the subsequent appointment of Rev. Fr. Theophilus Nwosu as the new deanery Chaplain, a five man committee led by Engr. Hilary Ezeh was constituted and inaugurated on March 18, 2012, at Sacred Heart Seminary, Rumuibekwe.

This committee was led by the church of the nativity youth president and they successfully coordinated all the Parishes under the new deanery and established a great foundation by drafting the deanery constitution. This committee successfully conducted a maiden deanery election on October 28, 2012, at St. Raphael Catholic Church, Rukpoku under the supervision of the deanery chaplain and Diocesan executives.

The parish CYON at its 10th Anniversary on August 16- 24, 2014 organized a week program with varieties of activities which was climaxed by the Anniversary Calendar Unveiling, Installation of Grand Patron, Grand Patroness, Ambassadors, and presentation of reviewed Constitution.

The parish CYON had its challenges which bothered on membership and their willingness to make active participation in the CYON parish and deanery level activities. Most often, only a few members were always available to participate in most deanery and diocesan activities.

The current CYON executive is led by Brother Nze Greg Elliot.

SN	NAME	POSITION
1	Nzeh Elliot Greg	President
2	Egeonu Perpectua	Vice president
3	Anthony Christopher	General Secretary
4	Uwaezuoke Eunice	Assistant secretary
5	Okey Saviour	Financial Secretary
6	Ifedigbuo Anayo	Treasurer
7	Ezenjoku Nnaemeka	Provost I
8	James Kanahanga	Provost II
9	Nwalor Ikenna	PRO I
10	Tekuru Anthonia	PRO II
11	Faustina Emmanuel	welfare I
12	Okoro Chidera	Welfare II
13	Ejesieme Anthony	Pastoral I
14	Okam Joseph Christopher	Pastoral II



Plates 5e: CYON members with first parish priest (Rev Fr. Charles Berebon) and cross section of first CYON cultural dance and theatre performance groups.

CHAPTER 6:

CHURCH OF THE NATIVITY OF TODAY AND FOR THE FUTURE

The young shall grow is a popular saying. It is a fact that in the past two decades, “Church of the Nativity” has experienced tremendous growth and development. Thanks to the succession of priests that have pastored the parish and the ever generous parishioners.

Today, the parish that was once known and addressed as an out station of St John's parish, Rumuokrushi is a full-fledged parish that have given birth to another two parishes- (St John the Baptist parish, Mgbuesilaru and Church of the Divine Mercy, Eneka).

The parish, Church of the Nativity, Oroigwe is today playing a key and visible role in the Catholic Diocese of Port Harcourt as the pioneer deanery Centre for the Oroigwe Deanery.

It is important to recognize that the parish is at its peak of building and completing its main Church building and other important infrastructures. Some of the projects recently completed in the last seven months are the Parish Grotto of our Lady of Perpetual Help, the ultra-modern toilet facility, the completion of tile works at the new church Altar and the completion of Altar rails. Additional works that are awaiting completion are the top floor gallery of the new church building, windows, doors and floor tiles. The basement part of the new church building is yet to be completed and the outside walls are still yet to be completed.

As at today the parish has commenced the process to acquire an adjoining piece of land about one plot in size. This land will contribute to future expansion needs of the parish.

It is expected that in the future the parish would embark on sustainable income generation ventures that will help to maintain and sustain general upkeep and maintenance of parish and its administrative staff/personnel.

The Church of the Nativity is envisaged to be a more vibrant, more self financially sustaining and more spiritually bonded parish where love of God and love for one another drives and unites the parishioners.

Keeping pace with the giant strides already achieved in developing the parish, we

hope to reach our expected vision and desire for a completed parish church building ready for dedication before Christmas of 2022.

An Architectural design and projection of the future looks of Church of the Nativity, Rumuewhara, Oroigwe



Plates 6: Architectural design model of the Church of the Nativity new building

For today and for the future, the Parish have commenced skill acquisition and employability development programmes for the Parishioners to help self sustenance, poverty alleviation and livelihood income generation.

The Parish have also started a music institute called “Gregorian Music Institute” to build young talents in music.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Most of the data and information used to prepare this documentary were sourced from interviews with parishioners, excerpts from minutes of meeting and proceedings from parish societies and organizations, from documented unpublished addresses and speeches delivered by CWO, CMO and Pastoral council presidents. Others were taken from data available from Church of the Nativity Parish office archives and records and from voluntary stories and articles by parishioners.

Madufor Chidi (2003). Photo screenshot from a video of the first Holy Mass at Church of the Nativity on December 25th, 2003

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Okosodo Chris (2008). An address delivered to the Bishop by the CMO chairman, Church of the Nativity

Onwuli Cyprian (2022). Voice excerpts from an interview granted to Monsignor Cyprian Onwuli by the documentary preparation committee members.

LIST OF ACRONYMS & ABBREVIATIONS

ASHJIHM	Association of Sacred heart of Jesus and immaculate heart of Mary
BCC	Basic Christian Community
CBCN	Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria
CBIU	Catholic Biblical Instructors Union
CCRN	Catholic Charismatic Renewal of Nigeria
CIWA	Catholic Institute of West Africa
CKC	Christ the king church
CLAN	Catholic Lectors Association of Nigeria
CMO	Catholic Men organization
CWO	Catholic Women Organization
CYON	Catholic Youth Organization of Nigeria
HHCJ	Handmaids of the Holy Child Jesus
IFTDO	International Federation of Training and Development Organizations
MOD	Men of Order and Discipline
NEPA	National Electric Power Authority
PRO	Public Relations Officer