

CHRISTMAS MESSAGE 2020

Our dear friends in Christ, may the peace, love, and joy that Jesus Christ brings be with you all during this Christmas season.

We have been asked to give thanks in all circumstances. However, we realise that this has been a challenging year for most people due to the Covid-19 pandemic which has exacerbated the hunger situation in the world. The pandemic has led to lockdown of villages, towns, cities and countries, and the restricted movement of the populace. These necessary mitigatory measures have led to millions of people losing their jobs worldwide, due to some companies not being able to remain solvent due to low turnover and fewer customers who patronise them

In rural villages, where people live from “hand to mouth”, the closure of markets was tantamount to declaring death sentences on the populace because most villagers do not have savings. It is disheartening to watch about 2 – 3 kilometres of vehicles in a queue in the United States as their owners wait for food stamps.

We recall that at the “appointed time”, (Gal 4:4), God sent his only son to be our redeemer. He was born by the Virgin Mary. That “appointed time”, that moment of grace was set by God, hence, Jesus Christ intervened in our human history at God’s own time and way. May this period be an appointed time for you: a time of grace, wholeness, healing, and forgiveness.

May it be a time for you to end unruly behaviour such as living false lives, being revengeful, betraying the trust of a loved one, addiction to drugs, gambling, or excessive drinking. May it also be an appointed time for you to mend relationships; to say sorry from the heart to those whose trust you may have betrayed, and for you to accept apologies from those that may have wounded your heart. May your cheeks experience the tears of joy that come with family reconciliation. May this also be the appointed time for you to find God’s favour.

Our Parish Theme for 2021 is OUTREACH. We decided to repeat our 2020 theme because Covid restrictions prevented us from living out that theme.

We intend to implement our Parish theme by intensifying our ministry to the school families and young adults, increasing our visitations to our Parishioners, and supporting programmes which ameliorate the lives of the poor and marginalised. As a Parish, we will continue to be actively involved in the preparation of the Plenary Council.

As we celebrate Christmas this year, we recall that the first Christmas over two thousand years ago was joyous though uncomfortable. The baby Jesus was

born in a manger because there was no room in the inn. Our focus must remain on God's gift of Jesus to the world.

His Holiness, Pope Francis has placed 2021 under the patronage of St Joseph. We pray that through his intercession the world would be rid of the menace of Covid-19 pandemic.

We wish you all Merry Christmas and God's Blessing in the New Year.

Fr Chinua Okeke CSSp

Fr Jude Agorchukwu CSSp