

# CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF IJEBU-ODE

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## MESSAGE OF MOST REV. FRANCIS OBAFEMI ADESINA FOR WORLD MISSION SUNDAY 2022

***YOU SHALL BE MY WITNESSES.*** (Acts 1:8)<sup>1</sup>

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

It is exactly ninety-six years ago, (in 1926), that the celebration of the World Mission Sunday was instituted by Pope Pius XI, for the purpose of praying and supporting missionaries and missionary activities across the globe, as well as, to support pastoral activities in the Churches, especially those in mission territories.

“From God’s love for all men, the Church in every age receives both obligation and the vigour of her missionary dynamism.” (CCC #851). It is this love of God that urges us on as a people of God in Ijebu-Ode Diocese to participate in the missionary mandate of Christ, to make disciples of all nations. (Matt. 28:19)

The theme for this year’s Mission Sunday celebration: “You shall be my witnesses” (Act 1:8), reminds us as Christians that, we are all missionary disciples called upon to spread “The Word.” This is the call of all Christians, to bear witness to Christ. Today, the words of Pope Paul VI resonate emphatically that; “Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than teachers, if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses.”<sup>2</sup>

As a Diocese, this celebration should encourage and instill in us missionary zeal and consciousness to contribute our quota to the work of evangelization. We have a role to play in the missionary activity of the Church. Like the popular slogan; ***“some give to the mission by going: others go, by giving.”*** This expression highlights the fact that in the work of missionary enterprise, nobody is to be left out. We all have something to contribute towards the building of the kingdom of God on earth. Everyone is invited to bear witness to Christ in his/her state; Clergy, Religious or Laity. It is our collective responsibility as Christians to bear witness to Christ to the ends of the earth. ***“If one does not bear witness, one remains sterile, without bearing the life one has received from Jesus Christ.”***<sup>3</sup>

After two thousand years ago that our Lord Jesus Christ gave us the missionary mandate, “Go out to the whole world and proclaim the Good News to all creation” (Mk. 15:16), there are still many people, who have not heard about the Good News of Jesus Christ even in Ijebu and Remo lands. Indeed, “the harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few” (Matt. 9:37). Beyond praying to the

<sup>1</sup> Theme for 2022 World Mission Sunday chosen by His Holiness, Pope Francis

<sup>2</sup> Pope Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (December 8, 1975)

<sup>3</sup> Pope Francis, *Bearing witness to Christ*, (Morning Meditation at *Domus Sanctae Marthae*: Tuesday, 6May, 2014)

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**Caritas Christi urget nos - The love of Christ urges us**

Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest, is our readiness to answer the call of God to be labourers who would make themselves available to work in the Lord's vineyard.

On this special day of mission, we have the opportunity to sincerely recognize and appreciate all our Pastoral Agents – Priests, Religious, Catechists, Evangelizers, and the entire Lay Faithful working in the Diocese as missionary collaborators. Priests and religious working tirelessly night and day across the different parts of Ijebu-Ode Diocese for the one mission of Christ, those faced with difficulties and challenges in their mission, yet have embraced it with joy, happiness and total trust in God. We also recognize the sacrifices of our priests who are on mission outside the Diocese (USA and U.K). Thank you all for the work you do and we pray that God whose mission we have committed ourselves will always be there to support us to carry out our mission fruitfully. Amen

We equally remember and pray for missionaries, who have worked in the Diocese in the past. The Church in Ijebu-Ode Diocese was built by the sacrifices and hard labours of many Priests, Religious and Laity, many of whom have gone to the great beyond and their legacy lives on. May the souls of our heroes past and the souls of the faithful departed rest in peace. Amen

May God whose will it is, that all should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth, send numerous labourers, who will proclaim the Gospel to every creature, so that all of us gathered by the word of life and sustained by the power of the Sacraments, may advance in the path of salvation and love. Amen

Happy Mission Sunday!

Given on this day, 23<sup>rd</sup> October, 2022 (World Mission Sunday)

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Most Rev. Francis Obafemi ADESINA  
Bishop of Ijebu-ode

