

CATHOLICISM IN ENUGU DIOCESE: ITS STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

Johnmacartan Abuchi Atukosi
Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka
abuchiatukosi@gmail.com
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Abstract

Through the great adventure and sacrifices of the Catholic early missionaries under the episcopate of Bishop Joseph Shanahan, Catholicism was planted in Enugu Diocese in 1912. The new faith gradually blossomed and made an astronomical growth; from being a religion of Chief Onyema of Eke's household, it has become the belief of thousands of household in Enugu. By and large, this faith in the diocese is now being challenged by the problems of grave moral decadence, secularism and the loss of pastoral zeal of its pastors which have adversely affected the values of the early missionaries and dissuaded the prospective converts from belonging to the faith. The aforesaid problems are the burden of this write up, and the writer firmly believes that the solutions lie on the re-discovery of the values of the church founding fathers. Imploring the tools of historical and phenomenological methods of data analysis, the writer finds out that the outcome goes a long way in proffering solution to myriad of vices bedeviling not only the Catholic Diocese of Enugu but also other Christian denominations.

Keywords: Catholic Diocese, Enugu, Missionary, Zeal, Belief

Introduction

The emergence of the modern Catholic missionary activities was as a result of the post *Tridentine* spiritual renewal. This wind of renewal reached Igboland in 1885 through the missionary adventure of Rev. Fr. Joseph Lutz and his companions who opened the path for Catholicism in Igboland. The exit of Joseph Lutz and companion brought in the prefecture of Frs. Reling, Bubendorf, Rene Pawlas, and Alexander Lejeune who like Fr Lutz could not make a serious head way into planting Catholicism in Igboland. It was the emergence of Fr. Joseph Shanahan in 1902 that firmly planted Catholicism in Igboland. Through his school apostolate and Christian village methods of evangelization, Shanahan recorded astronomical growth and took Catholic faith to the interiors of Igboland.

From Onitsha to Enugu Mission

Catholic missionaries made several attempts from Aguleri and Igbariam to penetrate Enugu and Northern part of Igbo land. Jordan (1971) noted that Catholic missionaries undertook several exploratory tours of Agbaja and Nkanu districts of Enugu from 1908. The first trek was carried out by Father Shanahan and Father Bubendoff in which they stationed at Amagunze in Nkanu in 1908. Jordan, cited by (Omenka, 2012), stated that continuous search for viable mission centre in Enugu, brought the Catholic missionaries to Emene in Nike. This place as corroborated by Enem (2012) was where missionaries made some brick for building their headquarters, but because of attacks by the traditionalists, they abandoned the project and shifted to Eke. Though Catholic missionaries had visited Eke in 1910, but in 1912 they officially approved the sending of Father Alloye Muller to open Eke (Enugu) mission. Through the persistent request of Chief Onyeama Onwusi, a paramount ruler of Eke in Agbaja Land, Father Joseph Corria, a Portuguese Holy Ghost Father, was appointed the first residence priest in Eke (Enugu) mission in 1917. This mission was notable for its vastness, and the Fathers had enormous distance to contend in their ministry. Kanife (2012) observed that from Eke to Makurdi in the North was about 130 miles; from Eke to Mmaku Awgu in the south was 50 miles. In all, missionary territory in Eke encompassed about 10,000 square miles. Eke became the mother house and largest missionary centre after Onitsha. The biggest priests' residence in the vicariate was built in Eke. It served as where many priests took off to their missions. From there, the missionaries evangelized the neighbouring tribes and the Northern Igboland which included: Markudi, Kogi, Adamawa, Ogoja, Abakiliki, Nsukka, Oturpo and Idah. In corroboration, Omenka & Anijelo (2012) averred that by 1930, Eke mission had opened 8 central stations and 87 out stations which included: Enugu, Iwollo, Akama, Nsukka and Mmaku. As the growth of urbanization continued in Enugu as a result of the discovery of coal in 1908, the attention of Bishop Shanahan gradually shifted to Enugu. Jordan (1971) noted that Shanahan mandated the missionaries at Eke to undertake a survey of Enugu to know where to cite his centre. This tour, Father Marcel Grandin started, reaching Iji Nike in 1917 and opening St. Patrick Station there. However, because of hostility of the people, he left Iji Nike to Emene and opened the same St. Patrick Station there in 1919. The hostility of the traditionalists equally sent him parking and he left Emene in 1924 and arrived in Ogbete Udi Coal Camp and opened the same St. Patrick Station. Because of the mixture of people from different tribes

and the literacy of the coal workers there, mission center was finally established, thus becoming the St. Patrick station Ogbete Enugu. Kanife (2012) noted that in 1926, Enugu was with the population of about 40,000 and with the largest assisted Catholic schools, and with the residence of colonial lieutenant governor. As a result of these, Bishop Shanahan started making plans to shift his headquarters from Eke to Enugu. According to Omenka (2012), by 1930, as the population of the Catholics in Enugu continued to rise, the mother house was shifted to St. Patrick Outstation Ogbete, Enugu. By 1933, St. Patrick Ogbete Enugu was made a parish with residence priest and it became the seat of Catholicism in the northern Igboland and Rev. Father Herbert White became the first parish priest.

The Birth of Enugu Diocese

As St. Patrick Ogbete Enugu continued to grow and beget other parishes, the population of Enugu region rapidly continued to increase. Obi (1985) noted that from 40,000 inhabitants recorded in Enugu in 1926, the region astronomically rose to 169,905 in 1961. Sharing in the same view, Pope John XXIII saw the mission of Southern Nigeria which Bishop Shanahan handed over to Bishop Charles Heerey as the most beautiful flower of the missionary world. Kanife (2012) noted that the Pope in 1962 sent a Vatican Diplomat, Montini, Archbishop of Milan to Southern Nigeria to have an assessment of the mission. At Enugu, the capital of Southeastern Nigeria, the papal envoy was welcomed by a great crowd of Catholics who gave him a befitting welcomed equal to that of the pope himself. For years, the papal envoy for British East and West Africa tried in vain to implement the indigenization process in the Archdiocese of Onitsha, a move which the white priests and Bishop Heerey resisted with the argument that it would lead to grave mistakes and damage. Cardinal Montini after the tour of Southeastern Nigeria did not share in this view. The Cardinal saw that the main requirements for creation of diocese had been met. These included large people of God, a good number of priests who are capable of handling some sensitive posts, capability of the region in providing for the welfare of the bishop and his priests and urban centre where the cathedral and the residence of the bishop will be cited. Byrnel (1997) wrote that as soon as the cardinal returned to Rome, Enugu Diocese was created; this happened in November, 1962. The first Igbo bishop, Bishop John Cross Anyogu who after his ordination in 1957 had been serving as an assistant to Bishop Heerey in Onitsha, was named the bishop of Enugu Diocese. He was installed, and he took possession of the diocese on January 15th

1963. As the rumour of civil war began to spread in Nigeria, on July 5th 1967 a day before the civil war, Bishop Anyogu died at the age of 69.

Enugu as the capital of Biafra was hit hardest during the war. In September 1967, the diocese totally evacuated after the capture of Nigeria army. It was during this war year that the leadership of the diocese in *exiled* fell on Monsignor Stephen Ezeanya. At the end of the civil war in 1970, Bishop G.M.P. Okoye was transferred from Port Harcourt and was made bishop of Enugu Diocese. His tenure saw to the establishment of Daughters of Divine Love Congregation (D.D.L.) and the creation of Nsukka and Awgu deaneries which prepared the ground for the creation of Nsukka and Awgu Dioceses. After his death on March 7, 1977, Bishop Michael Eneja became the bishop of Enugu Diocese. To further the effective spread of Good News, he increased the deaneries to six, these included: Enugu, Awgu, Nsukka, Udi, Agbani, Abakpa and Uwani. With the retirement of Bishop Eneja on 8 November, 1996, the mantle of leadership fell on Bishop Anthony Okonkwo Gbuji. With his 30 years' experiences as a bishop in Isselu Ukwu, he engaged into full time grass root evangelism, creating parishes and establishing institutions. It was during his tenure that Awgu diocese was created. After the retirement of Bishop Gbuji on February 9, 2009, Most Rev. Dr. C.V.C. Onaga became the bishop of Enugu Diocese. As a young and dynamic bishop, he based his line of action and policy on consolidation and sanctification while "going back to the root".

The Growth of Pious Societies

The people of God in Enugu Diocese expressed uncommon zeal and determination to soar in spiritual things. This growth was greatly occasioned by the declaration on the apostolate of the laity made at the Second Vatican Council in which Flannery (1975) wrote:

The laity lives in the world. They live in the ordinary condition of life in the family and in society from which the web of their existence is woven. They are called there by God so that by their proper role and being led by the spirit of the Gospel, they can work for the sanctification of the world from within, in the manner of heaven. In this way they can make Christ known to others, especially on a life resplendent in faith, hope and charity. (L.G. p.31).

The Second Vatican Council finalized the decree on lay apostolate in December 1965 and thus gave rise to the astronomical growth in pious societies (lay

apostolate). According to Nwosu (1985), the first pious society that was established in Igboland was Legion of Mary. It was started in Ikot Ekpene in 1933 by Father James Moynagh, and from there it came to Aba in 1948. It was officially established in Enugu Diocese in 1962. The Legion of Mary blazed the trail among all other pious societies and has become one of the most powerful vehicles of evangelization throughout the parishes and out stations in the diocese. There is scarcely any parish in the diocese without at least a presidium of Legion of Mary. Members are deeply committed and involved in group work, visiting homes and doing other pious work of charity. They have particularly instilled into the faithful the cardinal role of Mary as the *Mediatrix* of all graces.

Presently the diocese has 55 pious societies. These aided greatly in sanctification and solidification of the spiritual life of the people and spread of the Good News in the diocese. These pious societies in the diocese according to Nwoye (2012) are: Purgatorian Societies, Sacred Heart of Jesus (SHJ), Miraculous Medal, St Vincent De Paul, St. Jude, St. Anthony, Blue Army, Slave of Love, Our Lady of Perpetual Succour, Total Abstinence, Holy Ghost Confraternity, Holy Family Prayer Group, Mary League, Altar Knight, Block Rosary Crusade, Maria Goretti, Father Tansi Solidarity, Catholic Charismatic Renewal (CCR), Catholic Bible Movement (CBM), Catholic Biblical Instructors' Union(CBIU), Catechism of Christian Doctrine (CCD), Altar Girls' Association, Holy Childhood Association, Marian Movement of Priests, Association of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, Infant Jesus Society and Divine Mercy Society.

Apart from the 55 vibrant pious societies flourishing in the diocese, there are other popular prayer points which haul thousands of the faithful together weekly or monthly for spiritual rejuvenation and sanctification. Nwoye further wrote that these include: Adoration Prayer Ministry manned by Father Ejike Mbaka, the Upper Room Ministry Established by Father Stephen Njoku, Holy Family Prayer Group organized by Sister Kate, Pilgrimage to the Marian National Shrine in the Diocese, camping at Ugwu-Di-Nso and Adoration to the Blessed Sacrament organized daily in the parishes by the parish priests.

The Growth of Social Organizations

Apart from the growth of spiritual societies, there has been tremendous growth in social organizations. The diocese presently has 8 social organizations which include: Catholic Men Organization (C.M.O.), Catholic Women Organization (C.W.O.), Catholic Young Men Organization (C.Y.M.O.), Catholic Young Girls'

Organization (C.Y.W.O.), Knight of St Mulumba, Knight of St. John, Men of Order and Scout Organization. The first organization in the Diocese is Catholic Women Organization. According to Agu (2012) C.W.O. in Igboland started with what was known as Council of Catholic Women and later Catholic Mothers Solidarity Front which was founded in Aba in early 1950. This led to the establishment of C.W.O. in Onitsha Province in 1960. However, C.W.O. in Enugu Diocese fully came into being in 1962 after the formal inauguration by Bishop JohnCross Anyogu. They championed the fight for women's rights, care of the priests and development of the parishes. The second organization that was established in the diocese was the Order of St. Mulumba. It was founded in 1953 by Abraham Ojefua, a Benedictine monk from the old Bendel State. This order came to Enugu Diocese in 1962. Their objective was to use the group of literary men and women to fight secret societies and cults, and to defend the Church. The third organization was the Order of the Knight of St, John. According to Enem (2010), Col. Kelvin Ejiogu brought the order from Liberia and established it in Enugu Diocese in 1974 during the episcopate of Bishop Okoye. Through their objectives which include respect for hierarchy of the Church and the defense of the Catholic Church, the order added their quota in the spread of Catholicism in the dioceses and beyond. Then, came the Catholic Men Organization. According to Arinze (2010), C.M.O. was born in the diocese on 10 October, 1987 at the meeting of Catholic Men at Uwani which included members from 19 parishes in the diocese. From inception, the organization has engaged itself in many developmental projects, and promoting the spiritual and marital life of the men. It has been established in the parishes, deaneries and diocesan level. In general, the social organizations greatly assisted in the spread and development of Catholicism in Enugu Diocese.

Establishment of Seminaries and Religious Congregations

After the establishment of the first seminary, St. Paul's Major Seminary Igbariam in 1924, the move for the establishment of both junior and major seminaries was ushered in, in Enugu Diocese as the need to indigenize the church continued. And then came the establishment of Bigard Memorial Seminary 1956, followed closely by that of the Sacred Heart Seminary and St. John Cross Seminary.

In 1989, another seminary came up with the name, Queen of the Apostle's Seminary (QAS) and followed later by St. Bernard Seminary. The diocese also has Spiritan International Theological Seminary. These seminaries help in the formation and the spread of Catholic faith. From the ordination of the only one Igbo priest (Father JohnCross Anyogu) in 1930, Amadi (2012) posits that the

Catholic Diocese of Enugu alone has ordained 428 priests as her own, with many seminarians in various seminaries undergoing formation for priestly ordination. There are also religious and formation houses scattered throughout the diocese, comprising both male and female religious. The male religious according to Chilota (2012) are: Cistercian monastery, Holy Ghost Congregation, Redemptorists Congregation, Claretian Fathers, The Marist Brothers, Brothers of St Stephen, The Vincentians, The Dominicans, The Consolers Brothers and Fathers, The Conceptionists', The Discalced Carmelites, The Capuchin Franciscans, The Saviorite Fathers and Monks, The Pauline, Somascan Fathers and The Augustinians' Fathers and Monks.

Then the female religious working in Enugu Diocese as equally recorded by Chilota (2012) include:

Missionary Sisters of Holy Rosary (MSHR), Immaculate Heart of Mary Sisters (IHMS), Handmaid of Holy Child Jesus, Daughters of Mary Mother of Mercy (DMMM), Daughters of Divine Love (DDL), Benedictine Nuns of the Word Incarnate, Sisters of Notre Dame, Sisters of Jesus the Saviour, Carmelite Missionary Sisters, Little Sisters of the Poor, Religious Venerini Sisters, The Miles Jesu Sisters, The New Evangelization of Sisters, The Little Sisters of Jesus, Missionary Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament, Trinitarian Sisters of the Divine Providence, University Sisters of Assumption, Secular Institute of Raphael the Archangel and Secular institute of Sisters of Christian Services. (pp. 52-57).

All these religious congregations actively participate in the spread of the Good news in the diocese, ranging from pastoral ministry as priests, holistic education of the youth and children at various levels, care of the sick and the aged, care of the children and the abandoned in the orphanages, catechetical apostolate in the parishes; social care work in the different social outfits of the diocese. The clerical congregations run their formation houses and seminaries along side with diocesan seminaries. These seminaries and religious congregations tremendously helped in the growth and solidification of Catholicism in Enugu Diocese.

Growth of Catholic Faithful and Parishes

After the creation of Enugu Diocese on November 12, 1962, the diocese has astronomically continued to grow and expand in all ramifications. Apart from the great growth recorded in the areas of priestly ordination, seminaries and religious congregations, there has also been phenomenal growth in the number of

practicing Catholics and established parishes and outstations. Citing Heerey, Omenka (2012) averred that in 1930, the population of Catholics in Enugu was about 3,000 with only one parish at Eke and out stations at Mmaku, Iwollo, Akama, Mgbabu Owa and Ogbete Enugu. Then, at the creation of the diocese in 1962, the population of Catholic was pegged at about 169,905 and with 16 parishes. With the exclusion of Nsukka and Awgu dioceses which were carved out of Enugu diocese, Agu (2020) stated that the population of Catholic Diocese of Enugu in 2020 stands at about 1,500,000 and with two hundred and twenty established parishes and many out stations. The number of the faithful on daily basis continues to increase and new parishes being created. This growth could be attributed to the commitment and missionaries' zeal of the early missionaries and indigenous successors.

Establishment of Colleges and Tertiary Institutions

Schools served as the secrets behind the great success recorded by the Catholic missionaries of the old. However, after the civil war in 1970, Eastern Regional Government of Nigeria took over all the mission schools. Through the dogged effort made by the Catholics in Enugu Diocese, the Governor Sullivan Chime of Enugu State during his reign handed over mission schools to their owners on 29th May, 2007. According to Ome (2012), this act led the Diocese to re-establish: Holy Rosary College (HRC), College of the Immaculate Conception (CIC), St Joseph College and St. Paul's College Eke and many Catholic schools. The standard in these colleges are very high and both moral and academic life are greatly extolled. There are equally many primary and secondary schools scattered in all Catholic parishes.

From inception, the Catholic Church had been nursing the idea of establishing a Catholic university. According to Onwubiko (1985), this idea which started in 1937 was rekindled in 1948 at the opening of University College at Ibadan. The Catholics of Eastern Nigeria had it in mind to establish a university and affiliating it with the University College Ibadan. However, the idea was temporary dropped in 1948 when the then government of Eastern Region started putting structures for the establishment of university of Nigeria, Nsukka. This plan was shelved in order to cooperate with the region in this grand project. According to Ani (2012), in 1981, the diocese founded the Institute of Ecumenical Studies to Offer NCE, PCE and BE certificates. The quest to have a private university was never extinguished it later gave birth to Geoffrey Okoye University in 2005. Presently the diocese has: Caritas University, OSISATECH Polytechnic, African Thinkers

Community of Inquiry College of Education and also Coal City University. Through the diocesan involvement in tertiary institutions, the evangelization is expanded to embrace spiritual, academic and social development of men and women.

Weaknesses of Catholicism in Enugu Diocese

As the diocese grows from strength to strength, it is also being confronted by a lot of difficulties and challenges. Some of these challenges in a bid to assert themselves in the life of the Church almost questioned the authenticity and veracity of Catholic doctrines. These challenges centre of church school missionary apostolate.

Discordant Religious Groups - As the church in the diocese grows, a lot of religious groups—orthodox and contemporary started coming up and teaching the doctrines which negate initially known and the accepted practices of religious groups in the church. At the early 80s, new religious groups like Catholic Bible Society, and Catholic Charismatic Renewal came up. Then, in the beginning of 90s another two religious groups called Catholic Biblical Instructors Union, Precious Blood of Jesus and Old Latin appeared. Some of the tenets of these religious groups run contrary to the teaching of the church. For instance, CCRN which is tagged “Pentecostalism in Catholic Church” is characterized by new doctrines and liturgy, Nmah (2008), noted that they are factored on: false prophecy, personality clash, constitutional matter, clamour for miracles, signs and wonders, false religious experience, ecclesiastical mal-administration, religious fanaticism, and quest for identity” (p.41). These new religious group, in the diocese sometimes operate a parallel teachings and morality. For instance, Old Latin group teaches the use of the contents of Vatican I Council which forbids the priest celebrating mass in local languages except in Latin, the priest facing the faithful while celebrating mass and the kiss of peace. Precious Blood of Jesus group forbids receiving Holy Communion from any other person except priests and deacons. As Pentecostalism grows in the diocese, many lay people and clerics started opening personal ministries, thus challenging the stand of the hierarchy on orthodoxy and Pentecostalism. However, to checkmate the rise of the activities of these new religious groups, a commission should be set up to supervise their affairs and to give feedback to the bishop who has the power to close any group or to establish one. Though there is a chaplain for each of these

religious group; these chaplains should be active to their roles and insist in knowing and following the day to day activities of the group and through this curb some of their excesses.

Diminishing Prestige and Reverence for the Ordained - As the age of modernism and secularism is being experienced by the church, the reverence and respect being accorded to the Catholic Priests started reducing. Anti-clericalism becomes the order of the day. Before then, priests are regarded as demi-Gods whose statement or opinions were taken as sacrosanct (holy) and divine. If a priest would scold on one, beats or barks on any, the person was seen as cursed and doomed and urgent reparation was done. But presently, there are many cases of a priest being beaten up and stripped naked in the diocese; priest houses burnt up, priests set up, robbed and kidnapped and priest arraigned in the court of law. These acts against the priests were un-heard of before. Thus there is a need to revisit the position of priest during the early missionary era. They closely identified with the people and they were cherished by the people. Though there may be some atom of anticlericalism because of the age we live in, however, if priests live by missionary spirit of the early missionaries, facing their priestly roles squarely and refraining from competing and compromising with the *world*, their prestige and reverence would be restored.

Contempt to the Vows of Celibacy, Poverty and Obedience - Catholic priests take vows of celibacy, poverty and obedience. The above vows are in most cases violated by the priests of today as they are trying to dance to the tune of secularism and modernism. Some priests secretly lived under concubinage with women, acquired huge wealth and openly disobey the bishop and flout the church teachings. These have constituted a great set back in the practice of evangelical virtues and the growth of the diocese. The diocese is being called to look into her seminary system where the future priests are being formed. Formators and lecturers in the seminary should be people of impeccable moral endowment who would whole heartedly believe in and live by the vows of celibacy, poverty and obedience. Seminaries should include in their curriculum lectures on the vows of celibacy, poverty and obedience. Through this the-would be priests would know the full contents and requirements of these three vows they will take at their ordination and thus freely resolve to take the vows or not to take them.

Holy Rosary Sisters (1995) narrated how Bishop Shanahan one of the Catholic early missionary lived out these three vows. Shanahan right from his seminary days had informed his superiors his desire to go to West Africa for mission. Contrary to his wish, he was sent to teach at Holy Ghost College in Ireland after his ordination; this he obediently accepted. He equally happily lived among the Igbos in a total lack and absence of necessity for living. He never regretted his celibate state, he even encouraged the Igbo boys to embrace it. One of the fruit of this, is Blessed Iwene Tansi. Contemporary priests should toe this foot print of Shanahan.

Loss of Priestly Identity - The diocese of Enugu is blessed with great number of priests, religious men and women. Some of these men and women wrongly perceived the priesthood and religious life. Because of this, they become sad and in crisis when their motive of becoming priests or religious were not met. They run into identity crisis and become a problem to the church. Oburota (2011) stated that:

Such priests have been described in various ways as: wayward, possessive, perverse, disgraceful, unhappy and shameless. People believe that they use their clerical state as well as their supposed spirituality as cover for crime; the priesthood becomes an afforded opportunity to abuse, extorts and engage in indecent assault (p.29).

However, these vices and loss of priestly identity are not common to Enugu diocesan priests alone, in America and European countries, priests have peculiar challenges. According to Iheanacho (2012), “their loss of identity ushered in problem of pedophilia, homosexuality, abuse of alcohol, lack of pastoral zeal, racism, disobedience to the hierarchy and exit of the vow of celibacy” (pp.609-618).

Priests however ought to engage themselves in those acts that would promote their identity such as constant prayers, self-denial and sacrifice, attending religious conferences and retreats, daily celebration of Holy Mass and love for pastoral work. To keep from identity crisis, priests should avoid all the occasions and the relationship that would expose them to identity crisis or compromising their values.

Marriage Cases and Divorce on the Rise - Marriage during the era of early missionaries was taken as sacred and rigorous preparation was taken by missionaries to keep it holy. Nwosu (1997) noted that Fr. Tansi tried very much to uphold the sanctity of marriage that he opened a six month course for the

would be married men and women. Here, the would-be married would not stay together, have carnal knowledge of each other till the end of the course which terminated with their wedding. No divorce or separation after the wedding. Presently this missionary view on marriage has been jettisoned by many contemporary Christians. It is difficult to see a would-be wedded couple who are not pregnant or who had not had sexual act with his or her partner before wedding. This has contributed to large cases of divorce and request for nullification of marriage at Enugu Diocesan marriage tribunal.

Thus to curtail the occurrence of these marital ill, those whose call it is to contract marriage should make adequate preparation, and also undergo seminar or lectures on marriage. This would expose the couple on what is demanded of them in marital life. The compulsory three months of marriage course stipulated by the Catholic Diocese of Enugu should be taken seriously. To curtail and checkmate frequent cases of marriage crisis, periodic retreat and seminar should be organize for the married to refresh their minds on what marital state demands, and also to provide solutions to marital problem being encountered by the participants. Sanctity of marriage should be encouraged with reference to marriage during missionary's era, where couples were not allowed to live together till after church wedding. Only those who were virgins were allowed to cover their face with veil. Those who were pregnant or have given birth before wedding were not allowed to wear wedding gown.

Slide to Neo-Paganism - The diocese as it progresses, at a point started experiencing spiritual recession. The baptized Catholic started going back to the practice of paganism and that of Christianity at the same time. Young men and women spare-head the worship of evil deities and pagan idols. "Men of God" and priest healers have also fuelled these practices through their cultural radicalism, false healings and prophecies. The so called traditional gods allegedly Svanquished in the missionary evangelization have largely made a comeback to our day-to-day life. People are now more afraid of deity and pagan shrines than Catholic religious objects. This was where people were when Christian missionaries met them at the dusk of the 19th century. Many of the Catholics in the diocese have returned to the 19th century mindset of fear of malignant spirit from invisible world. Ihenacho (2012) quickly noted that:

The Catholics have lost a lot of grounds to the rampaging neo-paganism masquerading as spiritual churches, prosperity churches and "man of God", who in their claim to solving all spiritual and material problems lured the faithful into the practice of neo-

paganism and family deliverance, and have heavily duped them.
(p.616)

These problems often arise as a result of inadequate catechesis before the reception of the sacrament of initiation. The catechumen because of lack of knowledge of what it entails to be a Christian easily relapsed and compromises the Christian values with Igbo traditional religion's values. However, as an Igbo brought up in Igbo culture, there is always natural inclination towards traditional Igbo beliefs. Constant preaching and seminar on purging Christianity of pagan belief would be of good help. Like Bishop Shanahan, the preachers of good news should vehemently denounce idolatry and fetish beliefs. Because of the need to purge the church of all forms of pagan practices, Shanahan zealously generalized all forms of masquerades, title-taking, new yam festival, traditional marriage, pagan funeral ceremonies as fetish and evil. The church should carefully engage herself in inculturization and Christianizing these cultures.

Decline of Pastoral Zeal and Sacrifice - The zeal the early missionaries used as they discharged their mandate has drastically gone down in the diocese. Unlike the early missionaries who with missionary zeal pleaded to be sent to Igboland where they would suffer and win souls for Christ. The missionaries braved their ways into the heart of Igboland where they risked their lives from the diabolical traditionalists and wild animals. They travelled many kilometers on foot. But as the church in Enugu Diocese grows, the missionary workers and preachers of the good news started seeking for places of comfort and material gain to work. The sacrifice and zeal becomes weak while personal gain and comfort grow. This ugly situation would be addressed through going down to the root of priestly formation which is the junior seminary. Here, thorough examination of one's intention of becoming a priest should be carried out. A lot of factors can trigger in one the desire to become a priest. One may be attracted by the kind of cars priests drive, the cassock they wear, the *comfort* they enjoy, the prestige, power, authority the priests possess. One who was attracted only to the above would not be comfortable with pains and sacrifices in the ministry. Thus, through the re-orientation of candidates for priesthood, seminarians with poor pastoral zeal and aversion for pastoral sacrifice would be shown the way out before they become priests and constitute pastoral problem to the church.

Conclusion

Like a mustard seed which is the smallest of all the seeds, but germinated to become the largest tree, so is the story of Catholicism in Enugu Diocese. This mustard seed was sown in the ground through the formal planting of Catholicism in Eke, Enugu in 1912 by the missionaries. Today, Catholicism has spread in all the nooks and crannies of Enugu Diocese. From one parish, St. Patrick Ogbete in 1933, the diocese has given birth to two dioceses and still has 210 parishes, 415 priests and the population of 1.5 million Catholic faithful. Though the diocese has recorded this astronomical growth in all facets, she is equally bedeviled with many challenges and weaknesses which if not quickly nip in the bud could congregate to destroy the success song of the diocese.

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