

MINUTES OF THE 27TH ANNUAL MEETING OF NIGERIAN ASSOCIATION OF RELIGIOUS AND CLERGY, (NARAC) HELD ON 17TH APRIL 2017 AT ST PETER AND PAUL BAD HÖNNINGEN

PART ONE

EUCCHARISTIC CELEBRATION

The annual get-together began at 11am with the Eucharistic celebration chaired by the President, Rev. Fr Gerald Eze. The homilist was Rev. Fr. Kingsley Anagolu. There were more than ten priests and many religious present at the Holy Mass.

PART TWO

OPENING PRAYER

After the Master of Ceremonies of the day, Rev. Fr. Stanley Ekwugha, was introduced, the meeting continued with an opening prayer led by Rev. Fr Temple Nwaneri at 1.30PM. Thereafter, the Nigerian National Anthem was sung in honour to the nation we all represent.

OPENING REMARKS

The president heartily welcomed all who could make it to the meeting, remarking that the turn-out was eventually impressive. He apologised for the inability of the organisers to provide the musical instruments at the Holy Mass, promising the avoidance of such oversight in the future. He further expressed his astonishment at the depth of treasures laid down by the founding fathers in the constitution of the Association – the constitution he had only for the first time discovered. That was why, according to him, the executive body, after careful perusal of the constitution, considered reading of the constitution the central item of the day's meeting. The president was of the conviction that the rediscovery of the root of the association through the constitution could contribute immensely to the mutual disposition of members towards readily assisting one another in the common challenges of living in foreign land. In conclusion, he emphasized the need for us, through the activities of the association, to turn our stay in Germany into a "temporal home away from home".

PRESENTATION AND ADOPTION OF AGENDA

After the items -

2.2 Nigerian National Anthem

7.2 An Address by the pioneer chairman of the Association

- were added to the agenda, Sr Justina Ndah moved the motion for its adoption, which was unanimously accepted. She was seconded by Sr Bernadette Chime.

PRESENTING AND BREAKING OF KOLA-NUT

The hosting priest, Rev. Fr Valentine Okafor and his colleagues from Schoenstatt Congregation, presented us with "Kola-nut", with which they expressed their hearty welcome to the association. At the invitation of the president, Fr Okafor blessed the kola-nut.

WELCOME OF NEW MEMBERS

The following persons introduced themselves as new members:

1. Valentine Ede (Post-theology Seminary – Enugu Diocese – Mainz)
2. Francis Ozochi (Post-theology Seminary – Enugu Diocese – Mainz)
3. Louis Odidi (Ida Diocese – Duisburg)
4. Fr Tempo Nwaneri (Owerri – Kreuzberg Bonn)
5. Fr Kenneth Onuoha (Umuahia – Kreuzberg Bonn)
6. Fr Innocent Madunwuba (Imo State, CSSp – Koeln)
7. Fr Ezekiel Ifeanyichukwu Oko (Enugu Diocese – Bonn)
8. Fr Anthony Ezekwu (Enugu Diocese – Akademie Klausenhof)
9. Fr Edmund Onah (Nsukka Diocese – Akademie Klausenhof)
10. Fr Sylvester Ozioko (Nsukka Diocese – Essen)

After their registration with 20 Euro each, the new members were officially welcomed to the association by Sr Odinaka Chude, who advised them to feel at home and to endeavor to associate with their brothers and sisters who had stayed long before them in Germany. Such connectedness with others, she reiterated, would help them learn better and faster how to adapt and overcome challenges.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION BY OLD MEMBERS

A general introduction of all members was organised. Members whose postal address had changed since after the previous meeting were requested to update their data with the association for proper documentation and easier communication. On this note, the secretary, Fr Kingsley Anagolu decried the fact that more than twenty of the invitation sent to members for the day's meeting were returned to him because of wrong addresses.

READING OF THE CONSTITUTION

The six-paged constitution was read by the secretary to the hearing of all; after which, copies were made available to the members for further reading and personal reflection. The president hoped that, at the next meeting, a thorough discussion would be held on the constitution and necessary decisions made.

ADDRESS BY THE PIONEER PRESIDENT

Rev. Fr Ohaeri, the pioneer president of the association, who was presently in Germany on sabbatical leave, was given the opportunity to address the members. His introductory remark was in praise of the effort of the hosting priest at mobilising an impressive number of parishioners who attended the opening Eucharistic celebration, and the sacrifice of members to attend from far and wide across Germany. He was also happy that some foundational members were still active in the association. Pointing out that the read constitution was a product of the lived experiences of the time it was constructed, he emphasised that the spirit of brotherhood, which brought the association into being in the first place, should be the guiding principle for the progress of the association. He admonished members to get interested in the affairs of one another, indicating that that was the only thing that could enhance the possibility of brotherhood/sisterhood. In conclusion, he invited members to the celebration of the 35th anniversary of his priestly ordination on ... at ...

The vice president, Sr Oluoma Enebeli, thanked him on behalf of the association for his interest in the progress of the association, and especially for reminding us of the necessity of the spirit of brotherhood to the flourishing of the association.

AN INTERVENTION BY THE BUERGERMEISTER

At this juncture, the mayor of the town (Buergermeister), Mr Guido Job, made an intervention. He welcomed the members, praising the depth of the homily given by one of the members at the Mass. Acknowledging that the situation in Nigeria as well as other countries of the world was not at its best regarding governance, and that hatred and clash of cultures were on the rise, he encouraged members to always respond with the disposition of forgiveness and love, just like Jesus did on the cross.

The immediate out-gone president, Fr Uche Aba, thanked him immensely on behalf of the association not only for sparing his time to be with us, but also for encouraging us as priests and religious on pastoral matters.

LUNCH AND REFRESHMENT

A lunch-break was given for members to take lunch and to refresh.

RECOGNITION OF THE IMMEDIATE OUT-GONE EXECUTIVE MEMBERS

A certificate of service and a 20-Euro Voucher (Gutschein) were presented to each of the following members of the immediate outgone executive:

1. Fr Uchenna Aba (former President)

2. Sr Scholastica Ugboaja (former Vice President)
3. Fr Victor Anoka (former Secretary)
4. Fr Matthew Ezea (former financial Secretary)
5. Sr Veronica Ahamefuna (former treasurer)
6. Fr kingsley Aniagolu (former P.R.O)

They accepted this constitution-based appreciation of the association with heart-felt gratitude.

A.O.B.

1. **On financial contribution for the internally displaced:** Sr Justina Ndah suggested that a free will financial contribution be made for the internally displaced in the Northern Nigeria, especially the children who were dying of hunger. Fr Wilfred Agubuchie, however, adduced the fact that the association NARAC had no legal status and could not actually make any officially recognised contribution to such a situation. He, therefore, suggested that the requirements for the acquisition of a legal status be investigated, so that the association could decide whether or not she should go for it. This idea was accepted and further emphasised by many other members.
2. **On keeping members aware of how old the association is:** Sr Theresa Ede was of the view that, as a way of reminding members of how long the association had been in existence, it could be helpful if the secretary attached the ordinal number of the meeting to the invitation for the annual meeting. She cited, as an example, the day's meeting to be identified as "the 27th annual meeting of NARAC", and the 2018 meeting, as the 28th.

DANCING COMPETITIONS

Two phases of dancing competitions were organised for members. In the first phase, out of the 8 members who participated, Sr Assumpta ... won the first prize, followed by Fr. ..., who won the second. In the second phase overseen by a four-man panel of judges led by Fr Wilfred Agubuchie, Fr ... won the first prize, while Valentine Ede won the second. In each of the phases, the winner received a travelling electric iron, while the second person got a bottle of wine.

FINANCIAL REPORT

According to the financial report given by Fr Thaddaeus Eze, the financial secretary, the sum of 3,928 Euro was received at the point of handover from the past executive, a total sum of 539.20 Euro was spent, and the sum of 900 Euro was realised from the 2017 annual dues. Hence, the sum of 4.288.08 Euro was the balance in the treasury of the association at the after the day's meeting.

ANNOUNCEMENT

1. **Fr Asomugha's silver Jubilee:** Members were invited to the silver Jubilee of the priestly ordination of Rev. Fr Dr Patrick Asomugha on 1st October 2017 at St Antonius Kirche, Kirchestrasse 2, 66851 Queidersbach.
2. **2018 NARAC Annual Meeting:** Following the order of hosting of annual meetings, Nsukka Diocese was due to host the 2018 meeting. The date for the meeting was to be 2nd of April 2018 and the venue would be communicated to members after the hosting diocese should have informed the Executive of the chosen venue.

VOTE OF THANKS

On behalf of the association, Sr Justina Ndah thanked the Schoenstatt Congregation who hosted the meeting, while Sr Bernadette Chime appreciated the sacrificial effort of the cooks and all the parishioners who contributed to the success of the meeting. It was, all in all, a perfect arrangement.

CLOSING PRAYER

With the closing prayer led by Fr Marcel Uzoigwe at 6.24 PM the meeting rose successfully.