

Minute of the NARAC meeting which took place on the 30th of September 2011 at Essen

Opening prayers: The opening prayer was said by Fr John Nwaogaidu at 11.30 am.

Opening Remarks: The president Fr Theophilus Ejeh welcomed everyone who was present at the meeting especially Mr. Eddy Duru and his companion who came to deliver a paper for us. He acknowledged the difficulties and sacrifices required for attending our meetings and gatherings and encouraged everyone to keep up the effort. He also mentioned the effort made for Mr. Duru to be able to be with us.

Welcome Message: Fr Matthew Ezea welcomed all of us on behalf of the Nsukka Diocesan priests in Germany. He reminded us of the fact that the meeting was being hosted by his Diocesan priests though in his community.

Excuses: Fr Stephen Ani was excused as he lost his father and could not come. Sr. Justina Nda, Fr Samuel Rapu, Sr. Rose Carmel Umah and Sr. Rose Obasi were also excused for one reason or the other.

The Paper of the day: The paper 'Europe a mission misunderstood' was presented by Mr. Eddy Duru who using his own example and citing many pathetic incidents encouraged us to join hands in educating our people on the need to have plans before embarking on missions abroad. He was convinced and he tried to win us over with the task of preventing our brothers and sisters from untold hardship. He emphasized that coming abroad may not really be the issue since some have good reasons to make the journey but that those who are not prepared for it should be discouraged. Our attention was also drawn to what is happening in our embassy here in Germany where little or no attention is paid to the welfare of the citizens; he mentioned that a couple of concerned citizens are already taking up the fight to various levels so as to make sure that people are treated right and given due attention when the situation arises.

The humiliating experiences and bastardization of the institutional marriage for the sake of survival was also raised. The plight of our people in asylum houses, prisons, and the condition of children who are abandoned here and there either because of failed marriages or absconded parents were brought to the fore. The lost of identity and confusion that follow being swallowed up in a foreign and hostile environment calls for our attention. Most especially is the crisis of faith since the environment does not create a good atmosphere for our peculiar brand of religious worship and piety. People therefore easily put God aside and subject their dignity to ridicule in the contest of making it in life and survival. Unfortunately, by the time some realize what is happening to them it becomes too late, that going back is even not an option. Many are, therefore, stranded over here. At the end of the talk which came from a review of the book written by Eddy Duru on this topic, his other experiences and contacts collaborated by his companion, we were fed with a lot of useful information on what is happening around us.

The moderator for the day Fr Uchenna Abba did a good job by giving us a summary of the highlights of the presentation backing them up with his own personal experiences too.

He thanked Eddy Duru for the depth of information made available to us and put it to us that every one of us must also act according to personal experiences since we have our own individual encounters with the situation under discussion. He therefore set the scene for discussion, contributions and asking of questions. Many people contributed in the discussion. We agreed that there is a need for groups to put pressure on the issue of corruption in the embassy so as to get things done the right way. The cause of Nigerian citizens should be taken by the relevant authorities and not leaving individuals at their own fate. The Government must be brought to intervene on the situation of those who suffer unwarranted injustice in the hands of the foreign government or their cronies.

Again, the spiritual life and pastoral need of our people should attract our attention since many are lost here and seem to have forgotten our roots and Christian values due to circumstances at times beyond their control. We are encouraged to visit asylum houses and prisons and see more for ourselves and above all, help in speaking with those who have lost hope both in God and in themselves. She was wondering “who knows whether God can grant them back their lives through our ministering to them?” The children of forced and contract marriages should also be a responsibility of all of us. This is because some of our men do not care about what happens to these children who are caught up in the pathetic circumstances. Many suffer discrimination since they are neither Nigerians nor Germans. The culture and environment muddles up everything. The school system even denies them choice of their own future since their teachers decide who goes where. Through questions and more explanations, some of the issues that arose during the course of the paper presentation were cleared.

There was an expression of gratitude and a token of 200 Euros extended to Mr. Duru in support of his good work of enlightening and empowering our youths in Nigeria. With this gesture, the first section was brought to a conclusion.

The second section started with the minute of the last meeting held at Wurzburg. This was read by Fr Donatus Asomugha. There was an observation that names were so confusing since they were mentioned in bits or without surnames. It was agreed that names should be written in full. Also it was pointed out that NARAC was 20 years in 2010 not in 2011.

The adoption of the minute of the meeting was then moved by Fr Jude Okocha and supported by Fr Donatus Onuigbo.

On matters arising from the minute, it was agreed that the date for Easter party should not be discussed again.

The brief report of the Easter party which took place in Trier was read out by the secretary. The highlight of the report was the dissolution of the executive committee and election of new members. The president Fr Theophilus Ejeh was re-elected. Others were Sr. Rose Carmel Umah (DMMM) vice president, Fr Jude Okocha – Financial secretary, Sr. Chukwuebuka Ozoka(DMMM) treasurer and Fr Stephen Oranuba – secretary.

There was need to appoint a P.R.O to help in coordinating the affairs of NARAC and Fr Uchenna Abah was chosen.

Zonal reports: We did not get much report from the zones since most coordinators were absent. It was pointed out that the circular should be sent to individual members as against communities or through superiors of communities.

Our website is now fully functional thanks to the efforts of the president and his friend who offered to help out. More hands were requested to help keep the website going. People were encouraged to write articles or post valuable information as way of reaching out and educating ourselves and others. The amount to be paid for the website is yet to be communicated.

Financial Record: According to our financial report, we have 2,682.06 brought forward and after the business of the day we had a total balance of 3,572.61.

New members of NARAC were officially welcomed among whom were Fr Edwin Ik. Ozioko, and Sr. Philomena Ogbuh who back in Germany for a second time. They were received by Fr Donatus Onuigbo. It was reported that Fr Stephen Ani lost his mother while Sr. Philomena Ogbuh lost a brother. We prayed for their eternal repose.

During the A. O. B, Fr Stephen Oranuba mentioned that a situation whereby our religious sisters or brothers live together in communities and they cannot discuss something about NARAC for instance is not acceptable. He thought that the essence of NARAC should also be a means of fostering fraternity among all priests, religious and seminarians here in Deutschland. It should not be a situation whereby people live together and feel alone. He frowned at the suggestion that individual circulars should be sent to communities instead of sharing information together.

The next issue was how to implement our talks or put across the papers we deliver during the meetings. It was agreed that delivering the papers and not sharing the fruitful deliberations and presentations with others could amount to a wasted effort. Fr Donatus Onuigbo and Fr John Nwaogaidu were appointed to take care of the website. Fr Robert Okongwu, Sr. Odinaka Chude and Fr Stephen were asked to think about how best to make the talks and papers beneficial to us and reach out to others who may need them. In addition to this, there is also need to create more awareness among us and about NARAC association. We mentioned a lot of possibilities but decided to begin with production of NARAC T-shirts.

Finally Fr Jude Okocha was asked to give a vote of thanks to the chief host Fr Matthew Ezea and Nsukka Diocesan priests.

The closing prayer was said by Sr. Philomena Ogbu and the meeting came to a close at 5.00pm.

Fr Dr. Theophilus Ejeh
President N.A.R.A.C.

Fr Stephen Oranuba
Secretary N.A.R.A.C.

Attendance:

1. Uchenna Abah

2. Donatus Asomugha
3. Edwin Ik. Ozioko
4. Jude Okocha
5. Chidubem J. Nwaogaidu
6. Stephen Oranuba
7. Theophilus Ejeh
8. Matthew Ezea
9. Basil Okeke
10. Ekenedilinna Okagu D.D.L.
11. Odinakachukwu Chude D.D.L.
12. M. Philomina Ogbu D.D.L.
13. Monica Mbah D.D.L.
14. Maureen Francisca Urama I.H.M.
15. Chukwudi Onuigbo
16. Robert Okongwu