

Minutes of NARAC Meeting held on 26. September, 2008 in Münster

The meeting commenced with the Angelus und an opening prayer said by Fr. John Madubuko at 12.00 noon. Thereafter, Fr. Sylvester Ihuoma, the chief host presented cola nuts to those present. Fr. Clement Akinseloyin prayed over the cola nuts and shared them to all present.

The President Speech

The president thanked all present for making the effort to attend the meeting. He said that apart from the discussions on normal issues that concern the association, the meeting has the main aim of engaging members in some important and intellectual topics. This accounts for why the association organises talks which are presented at the meetings. The one who gives the talk stings the others into thinking on matters that are presented in the talk. The major concern of the association in organising the talks is to provide forum for discussions that will help the growth of our country Nigeria. All are invited to make their contributions towards this aim.

The president made members to understand that talks were formerly delivered only by priests but that today sisters are also involved to make their own special contributions. The president, at this point, introduced Sr. Odinaka Chiude as the presenter of the day's paper which has the topic: "Healthy Life and Healthy Living". Fr. Stephen Oranuba was thereupon asked to be the moderator of the paper.

The Paper Presentation

Sr. Odinaka Chiude began by thanking all present for coming. She first cited Jn. 10:10 to point out the importance of the life that we have. Christ came for the sake of making us to have the gift of life in its fullness. Life is precious, she said, and must be taken good care of. It is our duty, therefore, to pay attention to our health and all that pertains to it. Sr. stressed the need for proper nutrition as this contributes greatly to the state of our health. She recommended the eating of fruits, vegetables, frequent intake of water, at least 1.5 to 2.5 litres daily and the avoidance of too fatty foods and to check excesses and addiction. Healthy living, according to her, also involves keeping our cloths clean and wearing the proper cloths at the proper time and season and the cleaning of our environment. She also made mention of the need for taking proper care of our minds, what she calls psycho hygiene. This, according to her, is the most forgotten aspect of our health. For one to be wholly healthy, his mind and all other parts of the body must function harmoniously. And to maintain a proper functioning of the mind frequent self examination is necessary. Problems and feelings like anger which

border our minds must be properly tackled. We must, as part of this, learn to forgive. We must also learn to tackle our low self esteem. On exercise, Sr. said regular sports, gymnastics, yoga, nodic walking etc. will help to keep us in good shape. As part of this, she said, is also relaxation. She recommended Aroma therapy for healthy living; this involves the use of proper oils on the body. In conclusion, Sr. used the popular adage “prevention is better than cure” to advice that we should always be at alert concerning our health.

The President thanked Sr. for the very educating paper delivered. He thereafter asked the moderator, Fr. Stephen Oranuba to summarise the paper. He did this by mentioning a good number of important points made by Sr. Odinaka which includes efforts on the part of members to take care of their health physically, psychologically and spiritually. He thereafter called on the members to make their contributions to the talk. The President, Fr. Donatus, shared a story of a sick priest who asked his doctor about what he should avoid in order to remain healthy. The Doctor told him that he can eat everything. The priest came home and told Fr. Donatus that they should go out and buy wine and meat and celebrate. Fr. Donatus shared the story with members to point out the misconceptions people have on what they should take and not take and in which quantity. He said that the paper delivered has helped us to know that we must make personal efforts to maintain our health. He later asked the question on how the topic delivered could be related to the state of our people in Nigeria. Sr. Odinaka responded to this, saying that we need to pass on the knowledge we have gained to our people at home, particularly as regards proper nutrition and the doing of exercises and gymnastics. She also said that we should educate the people on the fact that sickness is not always from the devil. Fr. Donatus lamented, at this point, on the gradual loss of traditional healing methods in Nigeria which is as a result of the herbalists dying without giving their knowledge further to others. He advised that the herbalists should be encouraged to pass on their knowledge to the next generation.

Sr. Bernadette Chime, making her own contribution, said that obesity for people in Nigeria is seen as evidence of good living; she advised that this wrong notion be corrected and that people should be educated on taking food or drinks in good measures. She also advised that members could help in establishing physiotherapy centres at home to help the people get the proper treatment of their body. Fr. John Madubuko, on his part, shared his experience on the wrong use of oils and the likes by people at home. He said that he has seen people drinking large portion of oil and sometimes mixed with some sand. He advised that people should be educated on this abuse of oil and be critically questioned on certain abnormal practices. Talking on psycho hygiene, Fr. J. Madubuko also said that the beliefs and practices of people

in various places differ and that this affects the level at which they own up to their feelings. He also said that our psycho hygiene depends on the dependence and the over dependence on the transcendental.

Fr. Diego Anyanwu introduced himself at this point, saying that he had a surgery, but still decided to come to the meeting to greet members. Fr. John Nwaogaidu thanked the presenter of the paper, thereafter, and observed that doctors rarely prescribe tablets here in Germany unlike the case in Nigeria. He advised that members should educate the people at home on how not to believe in many tablets. Sr. Odinaka responding to this, said that a lot of people stay long at home when sick and only go to see the doctor when the case is very serious and that in such a situation they will need more tablets. And to this regard, she advised that people should be educated on going regularly for check up. Fr. Clement Akinseloyin at this point, complained of loosing two of his fellow diocesan priests. One was a young priest who was yet to celebrate his one year anniversary, he had high blood pressure and claimed to have been taking galic; and the other had cholesterol problem which eventually led to his death. Fr. Theophilus Ejeh, making his own contribution, advised that people need not be driving to every distance. Going on foot or by bycircle can be of great help to our health. Sr. Odinaka also recommended “nodic walking” as one of the things we can do to help ourselves.

Sr. Odinaka responding to Fr. Matthew Ezea’s request to be put through on cholesterol levels in human body, said that exercise can always help to reduce much cholesterol in the body as long as it is not an inherited problem. Sr. Ekenedilinna Okagu, making her own contribution, advised on the drinking of water to keep ourselves healthy and that members should educate the people at home (Nigeria) to do the same. She also advised on proper relaxation during holidays, on proper mode of walking with head raised and on frequent reading; she also advised that members should educate their people at home to do the same. The moderator of the talk brought the session to an end by thanking Sr. Odinaka once again for the talk and all who made their special contributions towards the maintenance of good health which is very important, for without good health we cannot function properly as human beings.

On the whole, the talk delivered and the contributions made helped to enlighten members on how to take care of their general health, and particularly on how to prevent various sicknesses by doing the right thing at the right time. And with the knowledge gained, members are expected to also enlighten their people back home in Nigeria on health, on what to do and not to do and what to believe and not to believe concerning their health.

Lunch: During the lunch, Fr. Sylvester Ihuoma’s dad came in to greet members. He was welcomed by members and congratulated on the birth of a grandchild. He wished members

God's assistance in all their endeavours here in Germany. Fr. Donatus Onuigbo who had his priestly anniversary on this day was also congratulated.

The Minutes of last meeting: The minutes of the last meeting held On 29th Sept. 2006 in Wachtberg-Fritzdorf was read to members. Fr John Madubuko observed that the gift that was presented to bishop Martin Olorunmolun of Lokoja was not mentioned in the minutes; this was noted. Thereafter, Sr. Emmanuela Umunna moved the motion for adoption of the minutes and Fr. John Madubuko supported her.

Matters Arising

1. **Reports from Regions:** The president observed that some regions are not functioning properly. He announced the names of the coordinators of the various regions to members: Münster Area: Fr. Sylvester Ihuoma, Bonn Area: Fr. Michael Okoh, München Area: Sr. Rose Carmel Umah and Frankfurt Area: Fr. Samuel Rapu. The president mentioned a few of the duties of the coordinator. The coordinator, he said, is to note the bereavement of any of the members, particularly when it has to do with the parents of a member and organise prayer for the deceased. He is also to note who is to be sent-off from his region and see to it that it is done.
2. **NARAC Website:** The president said that Srs. Scholastica Ugbaja and Cathrine Nnamonu were the ones elected to take care of the association's website but that Sr. Cathrine Nnamonu is now back home in Nigeria and some other person needed to replace her. Sr. Chiazoka was unanimously nominated to take her place.
3. **Reports on Easter Party:** The secretary gave brief reports on the two past Easter parties of 2007 and 2008. The Hand Maid sisters hosted the 2007 Party at Siegburg, while Idah diocese hosted that of 2008 in Paderborn. The president commented that those who will like to host the party or meeting at various times should indicate their interest. Noted in the report of the 2007 party is a complaint made by Sr. Miriam Ukawilu, who said that the day (last Friday of the month of September) fixed for meetings is most times unfavourable for many members. The president responded by saying that Fridays are for now the only option since many priests are usually engaged on Saturdays and Sundays.
4. **Hosting of Parties:** The president narrated how the Germans were initially part of the Easter party. In this regard, he asked the opinion of members on whether Germans and other friends of members could still be invited sometime to parties. Fr. Clement Akinsoleyin suggested that the Germans could be invited yearly to the Easter Party. This was supported by Sr. Odinaka, but F. Livinus Maduadichie suggested that it

should be once in two years. Fr. Victor Anoka, however advised that the invitation to none members be done with care. Fr. Theophilus Ejeh advised that members must prepare well for the party if outsiders are to be invited, the liturgy, in particular, has to be well planned. Sr. Benedette Chime suggested that the openness of the party to none members must be limited: both to Germans and Nigerians, and that it should be once in two years. The conclusion arrived at was that the association shall invite some Germans and Africans every other year to our party. Those to be invited are to be known and selected to avoid some unhealthy experiences of the past. The reason for this agreement is that we wish to sell our cultural heritage to the German society in which we live and for this reason we insisted that on such parties we have to prepare for the events very well.

Correspondence: Those excused from meeting: Sr. Lotach Asiegbu (sick), Fr. Martin Ibe, Sr. Justina Nda, Sr. Emelda Chiwetalu, Fr. Hubert Okpara, Sr. Andrea Okonkwo, Sr. Prisca Ezeji, Sr. Helen Mary Ifacho, Fr. Felix Agbara, Sr. Miriam Ukawilu, Fr. Pius Benson, Sr. Emmanuela Akong, and Fr. Jude Okocha.

New members: Sr. Lovina Chibuko (DDL) and Ekenedilinna Okagu were officially welcomed into the association and presented with a German-English dictionary each.

Financial Report: The report was given by Sr. Odinaka, the financial secretary. The Total income is 4,269.77 Euros; the total expenditure is 1,209.63 Euros and the balance in the treasury is 3,060.14 Euros.

Vote of Thanks: In the absence of AOB, Sr. Julitta Okeke was asked by the president to give a vote of thanks to the hosts. She thanked Fr. Sylvester Ihuoma, the chief host and all from his dioceses (Ahiara) and those who assisted him to make the day a success. Fr. Clement Akinseloyin said the final prayer and gave the final blessing. The meeting came to a close at about 5.00 pm.

Those in attendance: Odinaka Chude, Chijioke John Madubuko, Ekenedilinna Okagu, Chiazoka Obasi, Clement Akinseloyin, Lovina Chibuko, Bernadette Chime, Stephen Oranuba, Emmanuela Umunna, Fidel-Valens Anoruo, Ezea Mathew, Donatus Chukwudi Onuigbo, John Nwaogaidu, Diego Anyanwu (priest on sick leave), Sylvester Ihuoma, Victor Anoka, Livinus Maduadichie, Julitta Okeke and Theophilus Ejeh.

Sign: _____

The president

The Secretary