

**NARAC - Nigerian Association of Religious and Clergy**



**Minutes of the NARAC meeting held on the**

**27th of September 2013**

**at St. Kilian's Church Schötmar-Bad Salzuflen**

**&**

**The paper presented at the meeting**

**Minutes of the 22nd Meeting of NARAC**  
**on 27th September 2013**

**Top 1: Opening prayer and presentation of kola nut**

Opening prayer was said by Sr. Justina Nda at 12.05pm. Kola nut was presented by the host, Fr. Dr. Victor Anoka, who took the opportunity to welcome those who attended the meeting. In attendance were 4 Sisters and 9 Priests.

**Top 2: Opening remarks**

The president, Fr. Uchenna Aba, welcomed all of us and excused himself for his few minutes' lateness, which he attributed to the traffic jam he encountered on the way. He thanked all members for their sacrifice in coming. He then introduced the paper presenter, Fr. Dr. Brendan Nwodo, and the Sr. Moderator, Sr. Oluoma Enebeli. Fr. Dr. Nwodo, who belongs to the Catholic Diocese of Nsukka, was on sabbatical leave. The president expressed our gratitude to him for humbly accepting our request to talk to us on the topic: *The History of NARAC: what can unite us*.

**Top 3: Paper Presentation**

After the presentation, Sr. Oluoma Enebeli thanked the presenter for his sacrifice in preparing the paper. Echoing the words of the paper presenter, she emphasized the need for us to be part of NARAC which gives us the opportunity to be together, laugh together and learn from the experiences of each other. Because we need each other, there is need to remain committed to the aims and objectives of NARAC.

**Top 4: Discussions on the paper**

Discussions on the paper were lively and intensive. Fr. Dr. John Nwaogaidu expressed the opinion that the sisters in our midst can unite us. He once more made the call for a sister president. He equally encouraged the sisters to work on their congregations in order to make attending the gatherings of NARAC a priority.

Sr. Justina Nda pointed out that a sister president will not function effectively if she is not the superior of the congregation.

She equally insisted that it is very difficult to make NARAC meetings a priority if the sister superior is not a member of the association.

Fr. Thaddeus Eze explained that the aura of celebration makes Easter party a more successful gathering than that of the meeting. He suggested that we have one gathering in a year and combine the meeting with the party.

Sr. Odinakachi Chude mentioned a practice in the past when names were shared out to members to call and remind others of meetings and NARAC gatherings. She encouraged all to introduce the personal touch which seems to be slipping away. She was equally of the opinion that the regions should be revived. It would not be a bad idea if regions hire a bus and come together.

Fr. Dr. Matthew Ezea pointed out that the card was attractive enough to bring people out. He went on to support the idea of having NARAC gathering once a year but emphasized the need to concentrate on the celebration part rather than on the paper presentation. He was of the opinion that nothing much is gained through the paper presentations.

Fr. Dr. Brendan Nwodo emphasized on the need for priests to pick up the sisters from the convents when attending the NARAC gatherings. This was the practice in the past.

Fr. Edwin Ozioko congratulated the paper presenter while identifying the problem of members as that of attitude. If our attitude to each other is not friendly, respectful and concerning, we lose a lot of members. He reiterated the need to be sympathetic to others' situations. He encouraged the new leadership to concentrate on this area.

Sr. Oluoma Enebeli advised us to get the birthdays of our members and visit them when they are celebrating or when they are mourning. The idea was welcomed by all. She also encouraged members to take NARAC to the diocesan meetings. Many who attend the diocesan meetings do not attend NARAC meetings.

The president, Fr. Uchenna Aba, hammered on the need to get in touch even with those who do not belong to NARAC.

Sr. Bernadette Chime mentioned the need to get at the superiors and establish contacts with them. We should call them and appeal to them to allow their sisters attend the meetings.

She equally appealed to those who could to pick up people when going for the meetings.

At the end of the discussions, members present agreed that the gathering of NARAC should be once a year.

### **Top 5: Minutes of the last meeting**

The minutes of the last meeting on the 28<sup>th</sup> September 2012 was read. It was adopted by Sr. Oluoma Enebeli and supported by Sr. Odinakachi Chude.

### **Top 6: NARAC website**

Fr. Dr. John Nwaogaidu was asked about the website. He said he has tried to contact Fr. Dr. Theo Ejeh regarding this issue all to no avail. He promised to contact him before the next meeting.

### **Top 7: Update of members' list**

The need to update members' list was once more reiterated. Some of the addresses and phone numbers on the list are no longer current and this makes it hard to get at such members when the need arises. Members were advised to indicate those on our list who are no longer in Germany or who have new addresses.

### **Top 8: Financial Report**

The financial report could not be given due to some logistic problems. The financial secretary, Fr. Dr. Matthew Ezea, promised to give the report in the next meeting.

### **Top 9: General**

Fr. Uchenna Aba announced that Fr. Josephat Ndubuisi Obodo donated 300,00€ for the organization of the meeting. Still on donations, Fr. Dr. Patrick Asomugha gave the association 30,00 € after paying for his registration. The entire members expressed their gratitude to them and the secretary was instructed to write an official letter of gratitude to them.

An invitation card from Sr. M. Asiegbu for the silver jubilee celebration of her first profession was presented to members.

The names of those who excused themselves were men-

tioned by the president.

Sr. Chibuzo Ogu thanked the members of NARAC for the condolence extended to her. This she did through Fr. Dr. Matthew Ezea, since she could not attend the meeting because of her work.

Members took the opportunity to condole with Sr. Janet Ayim whose father was been buried on the day of the meeting.

Introductions were made by all the members present.

### **Top 10: Vote of thanks**

Sr. Josephine Anagor was asked to thank Fr. Dr. Brendan Nwodo for the paper presented. This she did marvelously well and also presented a gift from NARAC to him.

Fr. Thaddeus Ejiofor was invited to extend our gratitude to Sr. Oluoma Enebeli for the work well done as moderator of the paper presentation. Sr. Justina Nda was asked to extend the gratitude of the members to Fr. Victor for hosting the meeting. She did that and used the opportunity to appreciate the work done on the invitation card. Following suit, Sr. Odinaka appreciated the efforts of the president, Fr. Uchenna Aba, and assured him that his efforts will not be in vain.

### **Top 11; Announcement**

The next hosting of Easter party will be done by Enugu Diocese. The secretary was asked to contact Fr. John Madubuko in that regard.

Fr. Dr. Brendan Nwodo was asked to bless us and what we were to eat and drink. Lunch was then served and the meeting officially came to a close.

## **Paper presented at NARAC meeting on 27th September 2013**

**History of NARAC (What can unite us)**

**Aims and Objectives**

**Analysis and Conclusion**

Nigerian Association of Religious and Clergy was born out of necessity to have an umbrella organization. The idea came when one of us in the person of Late

Rev. Fr. Dr. Norbert Ngozi Madu invited us for a birthday party. As we ate and drank, we all unanimously agreed to the need for all the religious and priests in Germany to have a forum, where we can meet and exchange ideas.

The first meeting was sponsored by Rev. Fr. Dr. Anthony Ifeanyi Ezugwu. This inaugural meeting took place in Wesseling, on the 9<sup>th</sup> of March 1990 by 10 a. m. prompt. In attendance were the host Rev. Frs. Drs. Anthony Ezugwu, Raphael Eguwu, Gerald Ohaeri, Chuks Ogbuene, Boniface Amu, Cletus Okorie, Ignatius Oko, Brendan Nwodo, sisters Anansthasia Njoku, Leonie Okaraga HHCJ Fidelma, Chima and Franklin DDL.

Some could not attend the inaugural meeting because of the distance. (Rev. Fr. Dr. Sonde Okwor, Regensburg, Bad Abach.) In this inaugural meeting in Wesseling, Late Rev. Dr. Norbert Ngozi Madu was elected as the first executive President. The chief host Rev. Fr. Anthony Ezugwu was made the secretary. I gave the name "NARAC" to the organization We employed rotary system for the meeting based on volunteers. We usually meet once a year, but there are other occasions like birthday, or death of parents or relations or academic prowess.

#### **Aims and objectives**

Our major aim was to create a forum where we can meet each other, to build a bridge for communication and social interaction, solidarity and sustainability To unit and support each other in case of problems. To help in integrations and orientation of members.

After the inaugural meeting in 1990, all the Nigerians, sisters and priests that arrived afterwards were received under the umbrella of NARAC immediately. they arrived in Germany.

Our first uphill task came, when our president in the name of Rev. Fr. Dr. Norbert Ngozi Madu (Late) left Germany on the 9<sup>th</sup> July 1995. The handover to Rev. Fr. Dr. Gerald Ohaeri was a smooth one. In February 7<sup>th</sup> 1997 Fr. Norbert visited us in Germany and put up with a German family in Neubruck, Familie Spahl. Three days later, we heard that Fr. Norbert was sick and on 10<sup>th</sup> of February 1997, he gave up the ghost. The Authenticity of NARAC was put under probe. We were faced with three possibilities!!

1. To burn the corpse and fly the ash to Nigeria
2. To bury Fr. Norbert here in Germany
3. To fly the corpse to Nigeria as our tradition demands.

We had little or no money in our purse.

We rose up to this Herculean task. We organized a requiem mass for him in DOW (Deutschordens Wohnstift). NARAC delegated now Bishop Callistus Onaga and Fr. Dr. Anthony Ifeanyi Ezugwu to accompany the corpse t Nigeria. I know the question will be how did NARAC raise the fund? I will simply put the answer in a proverb:

#### **UNITED WILL STAND AND DIVIDED WILL FALL!**

Remember the aim is to gain from each other's talent, to help and support one another. The way we handled this onerous task became a moral booster for NARAC. When I lost my dear father in 1995 NARAC was there for me, likewise Fr.

Sonde Okwar. We drove from Cologne to Regensburg- Bad Abach, celebrated a holy mass for the repose of his father's soul and came back the same day. NARAC helped us to love and cherish each other's talent. We lived like brothers and sisters. In fact it was like one family. We were very disposed towards each other. In the words of Martin Luther King: "If you are not a part of the problem, definitely you are a part of the solution."

We all became a part of the solution then. everything went according to plan. Most of us became fulfilled each time we attended our meeting. We moved freely without the fear of being misunderstood. One thing is to start well and another challenge is to keep the spirit of the foundation going. As time went on we increased in number, and many of us came with varied interests. The majority of the foundation members came to learn or study and help out at home. As the number of religious and clergies increased, we were confronted with conflicting interests.

### **Analysis and conclusion**

An igbo proverb tells us that a man who does not know where the rain began to beat him cannot say where he dried his body. (Chinua Achebe. There was a country.) The rain that beat NARAC began with increase in number of religious and clergies in Germany. Most of us lost orientation and concern for each other. Most of us came in conflict with what we heard about Europe and what we are experiencing. The frustration that came from German language and the cold environment. The false impression that followed the pressure from home. Mind set and disappointment. All these contributed to less enthusiasm experienced in some of our members. The major set back came from the transfer of culture.

The transfer of culture of poverty from home to Germany. According to President J. F. Kennedy: "Do not always ask what your country can do for you rather ask what you can do for your country." I will put this idea thus: "Do not always ask what your friend can do for you, rather ask what you can do for your friend." Things really changed, there were so much demands on both sides. Some members developed "what can I gain attitude". This led to lack of love or concern and exploitation. Some got frustrated and retired.

My dear sisters and brothers, "alles ist nicht verloren". I foresee a very strong NARAC in future when, only when the executives do their job. First we have to nurture and strengthen one another. We have to develop positive attitude towards this umbrella organization NARAC. Go home and tell the rest who are not here to get up – stand up and come to the forum. If we are sincere to each other, there is no other place you will find more interaction and love as in NARAC.

I sincerely believe that the future of NARAC is bright.  
God bless Nigeria.  
God bless NARAC.

Thank you and God bless you.

Rev. Fr. Dr. Brendan Oyogu Nwodo

## Programme for NARAC Easter Party/Gathering 2014

- Holy Mass
- Opening prayer
- Welcome speech by the Host/Presentation of colanuts
- Opening remarks by the president
- Welcoming of new members
- Introduction of the new NARAC Format
- Lunch
- Report on September meeting
- Election of new Vice President/Gratitude to former officers
- NARAC Website/members' data update
- Financial Report
- Play and Dance
- Riddles and jokes
- General
- Vote of thanks/Announcement
- Closing prayer