



# CONGREGATION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, PROVINCE OF NIGERIA NORTH-EAST. **Pentecost Newsletter, 2025**

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## THE NEW PENTECOST IN OUR PROVINCE



### *From the* **Editor**

In the wake of a new era marked by the end of activities celebrating 100 years of Spiritan Presence in the Province of Nigeria North-East, Confreres and Associates of the Province, reshaped from the reflections on the legacies left behind by their Founders and Predecessors are all out forging ahead with a new commitment to the principles that define them. I dare to say that the Centenary Celebration brought the Confreres back to their roots and since then as I feel, an atmosphere reawakening a new disposition and commitment in the lives of confreres is gradually taking the center stage.

We shall see in this fresh edition of our 2025 Provincial Newsletter, an invigorating Pentecost Piece from the Provincial, Revd Fr Ortese Jude Ortese, C.S.Sp., followed by

captivating reports of some of the activities that have taken place within the province recalibrating us through new waves of encouragement to a fresh direction of focus on mission. It is our desire that this edition continues to bring us all on a page matching on as a united force to the future that is now left in our hands at the beginning of this new era in the history of our province.



**Fr. Daniel Ugande, C.S.Sp.**

# THE NEW PENTECOST IN OUR PROVINCE

**M**y Dear Confrères and Spiritan Friends, Pentecost greetings to you all.

The narrative of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, as recorded in Acts 2, marked a turning point in the early Christian community. It was at this moment of Pentecost that the apostles were empowered to proclaim the Gospel and emboldened in their mission amidst challenges. It is also significant for us as a Congregation as 322 years ago, our founder, Claude François Poullart des Places together with his community of brothers consecrated themselves to the Holy Spirit on the Feast of Pentecost, in 1703, thus marking the birth of the Congregation. Today, as we reflect upon the profound implication of this event within our Congregation and province, we must consider it not merely as a historical account but as a living reality that continues to urge our religious vocation towards rebirth, transformation, and a deeper commitment to our mission in the contemporary world.

As a result of the Pentecost event, things changed: the disciples changed, the lives of people changed. Remember the disciples hiding after the crucifixion because they were afraid that they might also be crucified like Jesus? Remember Peter who, on Good Friday, denied that he was a follower of Jesus or that he even knew him? Well, Pentecost changed things. Those disciples, who fifty days before, were hiding in Jerusalem out of fear for their lives, were now suddenly given the power to continue what Jesus had

begun. And Peter, who had previously been afraid to admit that he was a follower of Jesus, stood up alongside the other disciples and boldly preached a sermon concerning the risen Christ. Peter and the disciples were changed. It was, in turn, the birth of the Church as missionary. This is a testament of how the Holy Spirit can change fear into confidence and cowardice into courage.

Pentecost represents the culmination of Jesus' promise to His disciples: "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8). This empowerment is central to understanding our mission. At its core, it urges us to embody a spirit of openness to the transformative work of the Holy Spirit. This openness calls for a deeper understanding of the charisms of our Congregation, encouraging a renewal that echoes the pressing needs of our time. In this light, Pentecost serves as a reminder of the dynamic interplay between our history as a province and the contemporary mission realities.

Our province, marked by rich cultural diversity and spiritual heritage, stands at a pivotal moment in her history. The call for a New Pentecost resonates deeply within the local church and especially, our Congregation. It invites us, in the spirit of Bagamoyol II, to seek a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit, one that inspires new missionary endeavours, fosters genuine community, and revitalizes the



**Fr Jude Ortese, CSSp**  
Provincial Superior, NNE

commitment to our respective apostolates. Embracing the vision of a New Pentecost in our province is an open invitation for each of us to awaken to God's movement in our lives and communities. As we reflect on our individual and collective roles in the unfolding of God's plan, let us respond with courage and compassion. The Holy Spirit remains a constant source of strength and inspiration that empowers us to bear witness to the Gospel in ways that are relevant and impactful, especially as the entire Congregation seeks new ways of responding to the needs of Spiritan Mission today.

The concept of a "New Pentecost" invites us as a province to seek a revitalization of our mission and communal engagements. In the words of Pope Saint John XXIII, during the convocation of the Second Vatican Council, "the Church is called to experience a new outpouring of the Holy Spirit." This call resounds powerfully today, particularly as we traverse contemporary societal realities, such as secularization, interfaith dialogue and



ecumenism, JPIC, inculturation, etc. The first step towards a New Pentecost is cultivating an attitude of receptivity to the Holy Spirit. This openness may manifest as embracing new forms of apostolates even amidst the challenges of insecurity, community engagement with those directly affected by violence, diplomatic collaboration with the local church, synergy with the Spiritan Associates and other faith traditions. We must foster an environment where the Spirit can inspire innovation while remaining deeply rooted in our Spiritan heritage.

The New Pentecost encourages us not merely to seek renewal in our missions but to experience a life changing encounter with the Holy Spirit that shapes our thoughts, actions, and communal life. Similarly, the essence of a New Pentecost demands that we not only engage with one another within our Congregation and province but also extend our purview into the wider society. This requires an intentional and humble engagement with those on the margins, where the Spirit often works in unexpected ways. In our province, diverse cultures, languages, and backgrounds converge, providing us with a plethora of experiences and narratives that can enhance our communal life and mission. As we listen and learn from one another, we create opportunities for collaboration that are essential to building a vibrant province of our dreams.

The Pentecost event enabled the apostles to speak boldly and prophetically. Similarly, in our own time and as a province, we must find our voices in a world yearning for hope and clarity. The prophetic call implies a commitment to social justice and

advocacy for the marginalized, echoing the radical inclusivity demonstrated by the early Church and the synodal church which Pope Francis emphasized. Likewise, a New Pentecost requires an updated approach to formation and education within our province. The way forward necessitates a holistic formation that integrates spiritual, intellectual, human, psychological and practical dimensions. In this regard, nurturing an understanding of contemporary issues, such as ecological sustainability, social equity, and globalization, equips us to engage meaningfully with the world around us.

Interestingly, our community life reflects the communal dimension of the Pentecost event. Just as unity was evident in the diverse manifestations of the Spirit, so too should our communities celebrate and draw upon the collective gifts of confrères (SRL 34). Also, fostering a culture of mutual support and accountability in the province can enable a renewed commitment to personal and provincial sustainability. Such a culture not only leads to greater resilience amidst challenges but also serves as a powerful witness to the renewing power of God's love amongst us. In addition, central to experiencing a New Pentecost is a deep commitment to prayer. Throughout the history of Christianity, fervent prayer has often preceded moments of significant renewal. As we seek the presence of the Holy Spirit, we must cultivate a spirit of prayer that is persistent and united. Such practice deepens our personal faith and also unites us as a province in collective supplication to God. It is in this sacred moment of stillness and receptiveness that we become attuned to the nudges and guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Dear confrères and friends, the

New Pentecost beckons us as a province to reclaim the essence of our mission amidst an ever-changing societal landscape. It challenges us to embody the gifts of the Holy Spirit as we engage in the mission of the Church. This fascinating albeit challenging journey, demands courage and a willingness to step beyond the familiar while trusting that the same Spirit that empowered the apostles and our Spiritan forbears continues to inspire and guide us today.

As we move forward, let us heed the call of Pentecost by embracing renewal not for its own sake, but as a means to fulfil our ultimate vocation; to be authentic witnesses of Christ in a world longing for love, peace, and hope, which echoes the Jubilee Year of Hope that we are celebrating. This is our moment to rise and, strengthened by the Holy Spirit, to usher in a new era of exponential growth, collaboration, and transformative action in our province.

Let us pray for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit that invigorates our mission, cultivates a spirit of unity, and equips us with the boldness to be agents of change in our world. Let us pray for our animators at different levels; the GC, especially as we prepare for the General Assembly in Chevilly, France later this month, and for the Provincial Leadership Team as she continues to further the cause of Spiritan Mission in our dear province.

May the New Pentecost transform our province and also lead us to a deeper understanding of our call to live the Gospel in every dimension of our lives. And may the Blessed Virgin Mary under whose protection we are dedicated continue to intercede for us.

Happy Pentecost and Feast Day!

**Fr Jude Ortese, CSSp**  
**Provincial Superior, NNE**

# FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP, PROVINCE OF NIGERIA NORTH-EAST.

In keeping with the 2022 Chapter Decision on Finance and Self-Reliance (Chap; 6 Pg, 18), a Financial Management Workshop was organized for the province from 18<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> March, 2025 at the Provincial House in Makurdi. The workshop was especially mandatory for Council Members, Zonal Superiors and Heads of Spiritan Apostolate Units.

During his Keynote Address titled: *Towards a more Self-Reliant Province, the Challenge before Confreres in the Post-Centenary Celebration Era*, the Provincial Superior, Fr Ortese Jude Ortese, C.S.Sp., averred that the idea to have the workshop was not conceived overnight or in a hurry but a “*result of a protracted gestation with the design to have a workable system that will transcend several years, administrations and generations.*”

Speaking further on the importance of the workshop, the Provincial maintained that self-reliance makes it possible for financial stability, independence, unlimited economic opportunities,

adequate support system and empowerment. These in the long run lead to a brighter economic future that will help the Province and the Congregation at large to fulfil its vision and mission in serving her members and the communities within her outreach.

Among the many resource persons employed for the workshop was Revd Fr Gabriel Akumba, C.S.Sp., the

resources, managing cash flow and achieving long-term financial goals. Fr Gabriel Akumba, C.S.Sp., pointed out that the workshop was designed to *help the confreres of the province to renew and build themselves more in the areas of timely decision making, risk mitigation, adherence to regulatory compliance, budgeting, saving and investing*



Provincial Bursar. His paper presentation centered on, “*Aims and Objectives of the Financial Management Workshop.*” He maintained that financial management objectives are essential for ensuring an organization or individual's financial stability, growth, and sustainability providing a roadmap for effective utilization of

*operational efficiency.* Summarily, his emphasis was on the fact that financial decisions must be aligned with strategic goals backed by optimal resource allocation if any stability in terms of finance is ever desired.

Other presentations during the workshop were; *Access to Government Loans and Grants ; The*





mission assignments.

The confreres described the exercise which was the first of its kind as entirely enriching. They extended appreciations to the Provincial Administration for the initiative which according to them was in line with the recommendations of the Chapter Decisions of the Province. They promised to ensure an infective implementation of the knowledge gained during the workshop at the various assignments as required for the good of the Province and the Congregation at large. It was also a moment of reunion for most of the confreres who had not seen each other for some time giving the distances of their mission from one another.

*Opportunities Before the Province by Mrs Patricia Goja, (Md/Ceo, Novus Microfinance Bank, Nigeria). The Need for Budgeting in Spiritan Apostolate Units and Institutions.* Dr Kenneth Johnson, Phd, CAN, ACTI (Managing Partner, Keda Consulting Limited, Abia State).

*The Need to Adopt a Defined Accounting Policy and Template for the Province, the Responsibility for all Confreres by: Igba Harris Tavershima, Fca, Acti, (Founding Partner Fiduciary Consulting Limited, Garki 2, Abuja.).*

*Towards a Safeguarding Policy for the Province and Spiritan Apostolate Units* was featured by Revd Fr David Terna Pember, CSSp from the *Institute of Anthropology, Human Dignity and Care, PONTIFICAL GREGORIAN UNIVERSITY, ROME.*

The workshop also featured a group discussion on the topic: *Practical Ways of Implementing Financial Accountability within the Province* leading to resolutions building up to a financial policy for the province. The workshop came to its climax with a Holy Mass and inauguration of the *Provincial Finance Committee* by 12:00 noon. There was lunch afterwards before the final departure of the confreres to the various





# 2025 PROVINCIAL PENTECOST CELEBRATION

## HELD AT ST PETER CLAVER'S PARISH, UJAMATYU, MAKURDI.

This year's Annual Provincial Pentecost Celebration was held at St Peter Claver's parish, Ujamatyu, Makurdi. The celebration commenced with a solemn and spiritually enriching Holy Mass, beautifully presided over by our Provincial Superior, Very Revd Fr Jude Ortese, C.S.Sp. This year's theme, "The New Pentecost in our Province," echoed deeply with the Bagamoyo II, reminding us of the empowering and ever renewing presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives. As part of the Introductory Rite, the Provincial Superior welcomed all who traveled from the different pastoral units, both within and outside the state to be part of this year's celebration. He implored the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon all.

In his homily, Revd Fr Nyihemba Raphael, C.S.Sp. emphasized the



significance of Pentecost as a time of transformation and renewal. His reflection on the gifts of the Holy Spirit inspired all present to embrace their roles as active members of the Church and collaborators in building a formidable province. He stressed that a common language communicated by the Holy Spirit and understood by all irrespective of tribe, culture, language or race is the "Language of Love." This language is what the society needs

for peaceful coexistence and mutual upbuilding. As a province, this language is needed amongst confrères in order to witness exponential growth in our communities and the province at large.

The liturgy was marked by poignant rites and rituals, uplifting hymns, and heartfelt prayers which created an atmosphere of reverence and demonstrated the beauty of our diversity, reminding us of our shared mission to spread the joy of the Gospel in our world today.

The success of this year's Provincial Pentecost Celebration was significantly bolstered by the enthusiastic support of various pastoral units, schools and chaplaincies, who came out en masse to support the Provincial Leadership Team in her task of animating the province, especially in the training of scholastics for







the mission of the Congregation. Many pastoral units were present and well represented, while those who could not make physical presence at the celebration sent in their support.

Within the context of the Eucharistic celebration, the host, Very Revd Fr Dzever Moses, C.S.Sp. in his speech of welcome, acknowledged and welcomed all present. He assured them to feel at home, eat, drink, and get the best of the day. The vicar provincial, Very Revd Fr John Vershima, C.S.Sp. in his vote of thanks, appreciated the superior and his Council for their tireless efforts in moving the province forward. He thanked all the confrères for their presence and support. He also recognized and appreciated the Spiritan Vocations Support for their availability and willingness to offer support, both financial and otherwise to further the cause of the province. He finally thanked all who were present and prayed for journey mercies upon them.

After the celebration of the Holy

Mass, attendees were invited to partake in a joyful reception that celebrated our shared faith and cultural diversity. The reception showcased an array of delightful activities, including traditional cultural dances and performances that highlighted the unique heritages within our province. The lively performances were not only a feast for the eyes but also a testament to the unity within our diversity.

In his closing remarks, the Provincial Superior thanked the host and all those who made concerted effort towards the success of this year's Pentecost

Celebration. He expressed delight on the participation of confrères and the different pastoral units. He appreciated all the attendees and urged all to pray for the success of the forthcoming General Assembly in France and for the growth of the province. Finally, he said the closing prayer and impacted God's blessings upon all present.

Present during this year's Pentecost Celebration were different dignitaries, clergy and faithful from different walks of life; Confrères – priests, Deacons and scholastics, the chairman of diocesan Priests' Association, Makurdi diocese, Revd Fr Joseph Beba, the Mother General of the Nativity Sisters with the General Bursar, Sisters of the Holy Rosary, Claretian Fathers, other religious, Spiritan Associates, Spiritan Vocations Support, and the faithful in their numbers.





# REPORT OF THE 2025 PROVINCIAL ANNUAL RETREAT.



**Fr. Peter Maigari OSA.,**

*“Catch back that fire and sustain the momentum of that fire. If you lose sight or track of the fire, then, it is most unfortunate. Don't dampen it or let it go out.”*

**A**s slated in the 2025 Provincial Year Planner, the Provincial Annual Retreat was to hold from Tuesday 22nd to Friday 25th April 2025 with the Venue at St John-Paul Pastoral Centre, Makurdi. This arrangement was however rescheduled to Monday 28<sup>th</sup> April to Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2025, (2nd Week of Easter).

This shift in the arrangement was necessitated because of some unforeseen Diocesan events that came up and as a result of bereavements arising from the loss of the relatives of some of our confreres.

At the Center of his message was a call to rejuvenate or reignite the fire or charism that is particular to the Spiritan Congregation namely, that special

consecration to the Holy Spirit in Radical Service to the most marginalized marked by the insignia of the flame of fire. *Fr Peter Maigari OSA., reminded the confreres that as they* try to live out their vocation in the various missions assigned to them, there would be occasions arisings from time to time to kill their zeal or initial enthusiasm and it is in such respect that retreats are organized from time to time and specially designed to help confreres to enkindle their fire and sustain the momentum in order to forge ahead.

He encouraged them to fix their eyes always on the heroic models of faith enshrined in Sacred Scripture/Tradition and the ancestors or forebears of their Congregation to receive hope and sustenance. Like the Prophet Elijah who got to such discouraging moments in his prophetic ministry but never gave in to compromise, confreres must with every

amount of energy in them, backed by God's grace received through prayer, sustain their calling to the Spiritan Religious life. Fr Peter Maigari also admonished the confreres to run away from the temptations against the vow of obedience describing it as pivotal point among the three Evangelical Counsels. According to him, a positive and sincere recognition of the vow of obedience goes a long way to enhance the religious in his efforts to keep the other two, namely, poverty and chastity.

In a nutshell, the retreat charged confreres to ensure that nothing dampens their fire as Spiritans stating categorically that no matter the situation, *“to end up losing one's fire or track is the most unfortunate thing to happen to a religious.”*







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Congregation of the Holy Spirit, ( Spiritans)  
North-East Province,  
Holy Ghost Provincialte, N0 5, Fr. Alia Street, New GRA,  
Makurdi, Benue State, Nigeria**

**Tel: 08066555628,  
DesignedL Fr, Ugande, CSSp, Sesugh**