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**Moral Implications of Divine Mercy in Individual, Ecclesial and
Social Life of Nigerians**

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Written under the supervision of

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AG	<i>Ad Gentes Divinitus</i>
AM	<i>Africae Munus</i>
ATRs	African Traditional Religions
BIM	Biafra Independence Movement
CA	<i>Centesimus Annus</i>
CAN	Christian Association of Nigeria
CBCN	Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria
CCC	Catechism of the Catholic Church
CCCC	Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church
CMS	Church Missionary Society
CSDC	Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church
CSN	Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria
CV	<i>Caritas in Veritate</i>
DC	<i>Dum Canoniarum</i>
DCE	<i>Deus Caritas Est</i>
DM	<i>Dives in Misericordia</i>
DMA	Divine Mercy Application
DMD	Divine Mercy Devotion
DV	<i>Dominum et Vivificantem</i>
EAf	<i>Ecclesia in Africa</i>
EAm	<i>Ecclesia in America</i>
EAs	<i>Ecclesia in Asia</i>
EE	<i>Ecclesia in Europa</i>

EN	<i>Evangelii Nutiandi</i>
EO	<i>Ecclesia in Oceania</i>
ET	<i>Evangelica Testificatio</i>
EV	<i>Evangelium Vitae</i>
FC	<i>Familiaris Consortio</i>
FoI	Freedom of Information
GE	<i>Gravissimum Educationis</i>
HV	<i>Humanae Vitae</i>
IB	<i>Ibakkanafication</i>
IM	<i>Inter Mirifica</i>
IPoB	Indigenous People of Biafra
JNI	Jamalat-ul-Nasril Islam
KJV	King James Version
LE	<i>Laborem Exercens</i>
LS	<i>Laudato Si</i>
MASSOB	Movement for the Actualization of Sovereign State of Biafra
MEND	Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta
MM	<i>Mater et Magistra</i>
MV	<i>Misericordiae Vultus</i>
NA	<i>Nostra Aetate</i>
NCDMD	National Centre for Divine Mercy Devotion
NMNR	No Mercy, No Redemption
NSCIA	Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs
NT	New Testament
OPC	Oodua People's Congress
OT	Old Testament
PAN	Pro-African Nationalist
PP	<i>Populorum Progressio</i>
RH	<i>Redemptor Hominis</i>
RN	<i>Rerum Novarum</i>
RP	<i>Reconciliatio et Paenitentia</i>
S.C.D.S	Sacred Congregation for the Discipline of the Sacraments
S.C.R.S.I	Sacred Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes
SC	<i>Sacrosanctum Concilium</i>
SD	<i>Salvifici Doloris</i>

SRS	<i>Sollicitudo Rei Socialis</i>
UMBC	United Middle Belt Congress
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization
VS	<i>Veritas Splendor</i>
WACOM	World Apostolic Congress on Mercy
WMF	World Monuments Fund
WZB	<i>Wazobianification</i>

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The dissertation will be a new instrument and a long-awaited tool in the history of Nigeria. Analogically, this dissertation will be like God searching for man in the Garden of Eden, through the Church, through people and through the dissertation as a tool carrying God's love and mercy to Nigerians. In the general introduction I will give a brief summary of my motivation of the dissertation, description of the topic of the dissertation, the research problem, scope, relevance of my research, sources which I will visit and use, principal methods, originality, destination, prospects, ethical recommendations and the structure of the thesis.

The importance of the Divine Mercy, is sacrosanct not only to Nigerians but also to the human person as a creature of God. My research is primarily motivated by six factors: Firstly, the dissertation is a cry for love instead of vengeance as a consequence of the moral implications of Divine Mercy. Secondly, in 1987, I watched my former school (Minor Seminary, Zaria, Nigeria) and churches being burnt by Muslims and many people were killed. Thirdly, with the introduction of Sharia Law in Northern Nigeria in 2000, there has been consecutive violence that claimed thousands of lives and property worth billions of Naira. Fourthly, *Ibakkanafication* of the Divine Mercy. *Ibakkanafication* (IB), means a recognition of a fundamental moral duty, which presupposed grave consequences if not observed. Fifthly, *Wazobianification* of the Divine Mercy. „*Wazobia*” is a three-word combination of three national languages in Nigeria. In the Yoruba language „*Wa*” means come; in the Hausa language „*Zo*” means come and in the Igbo language „*Bia*” means come. Thus, „*Wazobianification*” (WZB) of the Divine Mercy means, recognizing and inviting God's presence in the three major languages as a point of contact to three hundred and seventy-one (371) languages in Nigeria. Sixthly, the dissertation will serve as an anti-dote against moral collapse, artificial intelligence and godlessness in

Nigeria. I will focus on the benefits of mercy in the spiritual, moral, physical and social life of Nigerians. This recognition will serve as an urgent moral obligation to examine the loss of lives and properties in Nigeria as a result of the political instability, activities of *Boko Haram*, Herdsmen, kidnapping, social and psychological tensions. I will explore (WZB) consciously and appeal to reason, to make Nigerians to accept the inculturation of the (WZB) of the Divine Mercy knowingly and willingly in the overall national interest and social integration. Finally, I am inspired by the sense of the common good, mercy, justice, equity, and peace, which are connected to moral virtue suitable for man's nature.

Indeed, man bears in himself the seed of eternity, which cannot be reduced to mere matter. Thus, he rebels against injustice, dehumanization, discomfort, pain and death¹. Man is a material creation, and thus limited, but infinite in that his immortal soul has an indefinite capacity to grow closer to the divine². Analogically, Nigerians' dominion and transcendence over the natural and human resources, will constitute the priority of morality over technology, the primacy of the human person over things and the superiority of soul over matter. Morality and instinct are two forces. On one hand, an instinct is a blind impulse of nature, which prompts an animal to conduct itself in a determined manner, and thus to perform complex acts, without understanding their further ethical implications which, may affect the good of the individual and of the species. On the other hand, morality is acquiring the objective quality of life at the existential level, which creates possibility to tend towards good and to avoid evil as the consequence of morality.

The Moral Implications of Divine Mercy in Individual, Ecclesial and Social Life of Nigerians will serve as a helpful resource, moral, pastoral and practical tool for understanding the essence of mercy and human existence. Divine Mercy is not only the very essence of Jesus' good news, which will indicate that God is not a vindictive, bloodthirsty, punishing judge but he is the Father who forgives his children when they sin, on which the theology of Divine Mercy will be built. Moreover, forgiveness of sin constituted the core of Jesus' Good News but not a license to sin. However, I do not argue that political instability, are timeless, unchanging or absolute. But that the idea of „The Moral Implications of Divine Mercy...” itself-is historically specific and contingent to the human nature. This work will demonstrate the historical contingency and particularity of „The Moral Implications of Divine Mercy...”, as fundamental for conversion as a basis and structure for transformation and national development in Nigeria.

¹ *GS*, no. 18

² K. Corrigan, *Evagrius and Gregory, Mind, Soul and Body in the 4th century*, England: Ashgate Publishing Limited 2009, p. 37.

The destination of my dissertation will be to awaken and influence the consciousness of the individual Nigerian, family, community and institutions to the redemptive power of mercy. To raise their understanding from a passive to an active recognition of the missing link of mercy between Nigerians and God. The intention of this dissertation will be to save Nigerians from the dangers of moral collapse, artificial intelligence and godlessness. With my investigations, research, expositions and conscious analyses developed in this thesis, I will highlight the priority of morality over technology, the primacy of the human person over things and superiority of the soul over matter. This dissertation will not only contribute to the building of a just, equitable, peaceful, distress free, progressive and stable Nigeria but that it will respond to the demand and call of the Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria (CBCN) for justice, mercy, peace and unity in diversity for the common good and national integration.

At the end of this research, I will present this dissertation to Nigerians as a reliable and credible instrument, with which they will formulate, reconstruct and sustain a national culture of the common good in justice and objective principle for political integration. The envisaged culture of mercy, targeting at practicing mercy, promoting mercy, exercising mercy, which will lead to the creation of the Divine Mercy legacy, changing mind-sets and empowering Nigerians. Thus, families and communities will form a network of social justice anchored in the Social Teachings of the Church that will build the shattered economy, infrastructures, to reconstruct widespread distrust of political authority, to reconcile religious and social institutions at all levels. Furthermore, I will underline that the presentation and the content of this dissertation will put into perspective that the moral implication of the Divine Mercy in Nigeria is an issue that is not only a moral, political, juridical but also a theological problem, caused by Nigerians, which violated the personhood of innocent citizens. I believe and I am convinced that the Divine Mercy will remedy the difficult situations of Nigerians.

This dissertation will be concerned with the role of moral choices and the Divine Mercy, in the social transformation of Nigerians, galvanizing all the resources, human and natural to re-establish the attitude of mercy, common good, peace, unity and national integration, which will be a moral responsibility for all Nigerians.

This dissertation will offer a set of ethical recommendations, as a patriotic contribution to the pot of knowledge about the dignity of the human life, moral implications of the Divine Mercy, principles of subsidiaries and common good, the idea of paradigm-identity that may speed-up objective understanding and dignity of Nigerians as prerequisites of national developments. To reach these recommendations, the dissertation will analyze the theology of the Divine Mercy, moral and pastoral message, conversion as transformation and God rich in mercy who will order a new just order of social and political life of Nigerians. The dissertation

will present the Divine mercy as inherent in the human nature, which inspire conversion and to renew the once corrupt political and social life of Nigerians.

The dimension of the sources will be theological, ethical and anthropological. I will have a wide range of sources which will include: the teachings of St. John Paul II during his two Apostolic Visits to Nigeria 1982 and 1998 respectively, Church Documents; Vatican II Documents; Papal Documents; Pastoral Letters and Communiques/Addresses of the Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria (CBCN), oral interviews; questionnaire; authors of books; dictionaries; journals; magazines; articles; addresses; internet web-sites; related themes on mercy and morality. The teachings and addresses of St. John Paul II to Nigerians were very informative, significant and relevant to my dissertation. Furthermore, the CBCN teachings in its communiques and letters were also relevant as it affects Nigerians. I will be relying, leaning and standing in their teachings to survey and discern the moral implications of the Divine Mercy in Nigeria.

The methodology that I will use in the dissertation will be analytical, comparison, case study, description and synthesis. Contextually, storytelling and proverbs will be used to help Nigerians to understand the impact of mercy. Every civilization has a historical and cultural heritage, which people hold dear and transmitting history and cultural heritage through the oral tradition of storytelling. As an instructional approach, storytelling will have a broad application in the Nigerian society especially in learning for both children and adults. Personal experience that is incorporated into storytelling also makes it an appealing method in adult learning and instructional challenge. It promotes brain-based learning and reflective thinking, which develop the codes of attitude formation and formulate meaning-making in their lives³. I will explore and identify some root causes of the current problems and conflicts in Nigeria. In the methodology, I will try to evaluate the deteriorating inhuman situation, where constitutional laws and the moral obligations of Nigerians rarely being respected.

The originality of the dissertation lies in the title: *The Moral Implications of Divine Mercy in Individual, Ecclesial and Social Life of Nigerians*. This will be the product of thoughtful topics as found in appendix: 4. There will be no one known in the past to have written on this topic.

The dissertation will be presented in a cataphatic style, with emphasis on a clear and practical presentation of the Catholic faith and dogma, which formed the foundation of Moral Theology. However, the historical development of Moral Theology will not be ignored but speculative theology without losing sight of Catholic Tradition. Moral Theology studies the

³ C. N. Adichie, *Americanah: A novel*, New York: Anchor Books 2013, p. 10.

implications of our faith for the type of persons we become, and the kind of actions that we are to do.

The research problem of this dissertation will identify a disconnection between mercy and Nigerians in the face of political instability and devaluation of human life. The scope and limits of the dissertation will be described and presented in the words of Bishop Joseph Gasi Abangite of Tombura, when he said: „We send you here to specialize in certain areas of knowledge, deepen your spiritual life in order to be better equipped for meeting the spiritual needs of your people back home in their various life situations. You do not study politics, for example, in order to be like the politicians, you rather study those disciplines for learning how to help your country’s leaders lead their life of politics in union with God. So, it is for all other courses you take, which have some secular nature; you need to help your people find God”⁴.

I will undertake this research not to become a politician or party official, rather the dissertation will present my three convictions about Nigerians: Firstly, that there is a disconnection (a missing link) of the Divine Mercy between Nigerians and God, the Father. Second, that Nigerians sum-up the meaning and purpose of Nigeria’s existence. Thirdly, I am strongly convinced that the dissertation will be all about discerning moral implications of the Divine Mercy as clearly stated in the title. Moreover, the task of Moral Theology that I will survey and present will be to discern and recognize the presence of the Divine Mercy and challenge Nigerians to participate in the process of revealing the Divine Mercy not only in their language but to evaluate the ethics of politics and social life of Nigerians as it affects individual, family and social life of Nigerians. The relevance of my dissertation will be moral, pastoral and practical moral implications of the Divine Mercy in the Nigerian context. I will stand on the teachings of the Church to focus on institutions and social life of Nigerians.

However, due to the richness and wealth of the theme of Divine Mercy, the „status questionis” of this dissertation will be considered in the conclusion of the dissertation due to the relevance of the issues specific to Nigerian context. The scope of the dissertation will not cover all the theological themes about moral implications of Divine Mercy, personal and the social life of Nigerians. But the dissertation will serve as a theological framework and basis for further research and thus help to uncover other theological themes that have not be researched. The dissertation will be considered as the first theological instrument in the Moral Theology to research on the theme of the „Moral Implications of Divine Mercy...”. It is meant to shape the climate for working out a greater Nigerian family and social life of Nigerians. Moreover, the Incarnation of Jesus Christ has made God’s presence permanent in the human nature. The

⁴ J. G. Abangite, *Address to the Sudanese Clergy and Religious in the Eur Comboni House*, (typescript, Rome, Italy, 23.11.2002).

permanent presence of God's image and likeness in the human person will make further research sacrosanct for the human transcendence and fulfilments.

The structure of this dissertation will have five chapters. In order to ensure the theological content of the dissertation, the first and the last quotations (citations) of each chapter will be from the Church documents. My writing principle approach in all the chapters will be anchored on: analyzing what is the subject matter, the causes, the benefits, recommendations and actions. In addition, the clarification of terms will include: when the words „Divine Mercy” are used, it is in reference to God the Father of Mercy to us. And when the words „The Divine Mercy”⁵ are used, it is in reference to the love of Jesus Christ to us.

Chapter one will present geographical location of Nigeria, the coming of Christianity to Nigeria, African Traditional Religions (ATRs) and Islam as a challenge and the history of the Divine Mercy Devotion in Nigeria as an outline of the history. For a better understanding of the background that is specific to the Nigerian context, a brief history, its antecedents, causes and effects will be discussed in some depth. The history of Nigeria is very interesting given the fact that there will be one hundred and eighty-one million eight hundred fifty-nine thousand three hundred and eleven (181, 859,311) Nigerians. Furthermore, there will be three hundred and seventy-one (371) languages in Nigeria. There are four National Languages, namely, English, Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba Languages. These factors will constitute the imagery of Nigeria. Each tribe will have its different tradition and culture from the others built on the traditional value system. The traditions and cultures will always be associated with religion. There will be three prominent religions in Nigeria, which will include: Christianity, Islam and ATRs. The brief description of Nigeria will be thus: in the North, Nigeria will be bordered with Niger Republic, in the East will be bordered with Cameroon and Chad, in the South it will be bordered with the Gulf of Guinea and in the West will be bordered with Benin. Nigeria will have 923,768skm.

In this chapter, I will argue that history is necessary because it makes Nigerians who they are as they share in the common humanity. But, when a history is ahistorical, this calls for urgent and irresistible link to the Divine Mercy for spiritual and physical purifications. The chapter will also highlight the fact that history is divine in origin. Moreover, the application of history as a universal subject is inescapable for Nigerians. It is difficult to avoid a human catastrophe, a political damnation and a historical disaster where history is not taken seriously. The conclusion of the chapter will propose that there will be the need of introducing the term, from *Wazobia* to *Wazobianification* of the Divine Mercy in Nigeria to invite in order to

⁵ S. Michalenko, *Interview with the author*, 7.12.2017.

welcome life, justice, mercy, equity, peace, happiness, prosperity and human dignity in both divine and human institutions.

In chapter two, I will examine the theology of Divine Mercy in the OT and NT as it relates to Nigerians. I will examine the Documents of the Church as sources of the teachings of the Church on mercy, Sacred Scripture, Saints, Doctors of the Church and Catholic Tradition. The chapter will contain the subjects, namely, Divine Mercy in the Biblical context and the Nigerian context, mercy: as an attribute of God, the Divine Mercy in the history of the Church and Divine Mercy and contemporary ideologies. I will have four reasons why I chose the title of this chapter: Firstly, „mercy” as an attribute of God is in the human nature and God’s mercy will be the very reason for Nigerians existence. Secondly, the theology of Divine Mercy is the „Revelation of Mercy” to man and Nigerians are not isolated from the „Incarnation of Mercy” through Jesus Christ. In this sense, Nigeria as a country and Nigerians as a people can morally participate in practicing, promoting, exercising the sense of mercy side by side with God. Since mercy as an attribute, it will be in the Nigerians’ nature, so that Nigerians will live and move in mercy in all their personal and collective activities. Thirdly, that Nigerians will take up their moral responsibility in being merciful by their attitudes. Fourthly, the superiority of mercy is present in man’s life in a special way in respect to Divine Justice. After all, mercy is not only the essence of the Gospel but man is constantly in dire need of renewal from the human condition to the divine grace. I will conclude the chapter with a strong ethical call: that to live and work without God, will be a call for bitterness and self-destruction. And I will recommend the recognition of the fact that the nature and existence of man will be the prerogative of Divine Mercy. Hence, Nigerians will be called in mercy to forgive sin on behalf of God both at personal, judicial and collective levels as a moral principle built on the theology of Divine Mercy, without which truth-seeking activities and worship of God will be baseless.

In chapter three, I will use the moral lens as an instrument to be the guiding principle to ex-ray, argue and determine the moral and pastoral message for Nigerians. In the chapter, I will highlight the sub-topics, which include: Divine Mercy: a gift and a task, the Divine Mercy: from St. Faustina to contemporary Popes, education as a task of the Church in Nigeria and the irony in society. I will articulate the fact that the Gospel of Matthew is about judgement, God’s grace and mercy. To be sensitive to the need of mercy among Nigerians constitutes moral compass for the poor-teeming youths, the vulnerable and defenceless will be guaranteed livelihood. I will identify the reasons why it will be possible to make mercy a principle and the way of life for Nigerians.

Furthermore, in chapter four I will address corruption as the „cancer”, which will express the absence of the attribute of mercy among Nigerians. I will dwell on these topics,

namely, corruption: the „cancer” of all generations, domestication of theological virtues, fundamental principles of transformation in Nigeria and the common value system. Thus, for transformation to take place in Nigeria and in Nigerians, conversion will become inevitable for Nigerians as it affects individual, family life and social life of Nigerians. My argument will be based on the original state of man in solitude with God in the Garden of Eden in his innocence as presented in the Book of Genesis. For transformation to begin and to stand, the attitude of mercy, the human life and its dignity will be inculturated in the individual Nigerians, the family life in Nigeria, the social life of Nigerians, the human and divine institutions. Conversion must be the guiding principle of measuring every feeling, thinking and action of Nigerians, institutions, communities at social and national life in Nigeria. After all, the aim of the Divine Mercy is creating legacy, changing mind-sets and empowering generations. The ethical evaluation is meant to acknowledge the moral values, which have been damaged, corroded and dumped on the table of corruption.

Finally, in chapter five I will consider the richness of God’s mercy and a new just order of social and social life of Nigerians. This consideration will be based on the following topics, namely, theocracy and democracy, theology of ecology, contemporary dialogue and Divine Mercy application. Nigerians need to accept not only (IB) of moral implications but the Divine Mercy—a recognition of a fundamental moral duty, which presupposed grave consequences if not observed (Lk 19:42-44).

Politically, Nigerians have reasons to accept the formation of the attitude of the Divine mercy. Nigeria as a nation has experienced tribal wars, farmers and herdsmen’s clashes for decades. These clashes at one time or the other, many victims of war as prisoners were taken into slavery. This was the ugliest period in the history of Nigeria. Consequently, many Nigerians were sold to slavery. However, the end of slavery was not the end of political and social problems in Nigeria. Although, Nigeria got political independence from the British Colony in 1960. But, the syndrome of marginalization will be seen to have been a demon bedeviling Nigerians without solution. There will be no part of Nigeria that will not propagate this myth of marginalization. And the issue of marginalization will be coming from different sections and quarters of Nigeria.

Economically, socially and religiously, Nigerians will be the victims of various effects of corrupt society. Nigeria will be seen to have suffered from spiritual, moral and social setbacks, which presupposed urgent need for conversion and the Divine Mercy as the result of the wasted blessings and gifts of God.

I will stand on the Documents of the Church, Doctors of the Church’s teachings, teachings of the CBCN to conclude the dissertation, not only with a strong moral affirmation

of the urgent need of conversion as supported by the CBCN in its calls, demands and prayers, defending the value of human life, reconstruction of moral and social justice but to recognize the fact that political instability, hatred, kidnapping, bad roads and poverty do not discriminate. Furthermore, to leave a moral message for Nigerians that the action of A will attract consequences on B regardless of any affiliation. Nigeria's priority should be on national and common interests of Nigerians. Nigerians should yearn and hunger for mercy to the point of saying: no more corruption in the history of Nigeria; no political instability in the political system in Nigeria; no insurgencies and terrorists activities in Nigeria; that the Divine Mercy is the way of our life; justice is our song and common good is our anthem.

CHAPTER ONE

1. An Outline of the History of Christianity in Nigeria

Introduction

When Nigeria got her Independence from the British Colony on 1st October 1960, the CBCN urged Nigerians to recognize the task of freedom when it said: „Freedom is going to mean a great deal to Nigeria. Only a free people can look other people in the face; only an atmosphere of freedom makes possible the blossoming of those social institutions and cultural efforts that express the genius of a people; only a free country can adequately develop its internal economic resources and make its contribution towards the building of world economy and social order”¹.

When a history is ahistorical, this calls for urgent and irresistible link to the Divine Mercy for alignments. In the Books of the Gospels, Jesus taught that man not only receives and experiences the mercy of God from generation to generation (Lk 1:50), but that he is also called „to practice mercy” towards others: „Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy”². Every history is only possible because God in his mercy has allowed it in order to express his love to man. It was Pope Celestine VI who said: „Every history is sacred history... Every history

¹ P. Schineller, ed., *Pastoral Letters and Communiqués of the Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria 1960-2002: The Voice of the Voiceless*, p. 1.

² *DM*, no. 14.

is a gospel...Eliminate God from history and you will not be able to understand even the history of man, which is just an episode, a chapter, a reflection of the history of God”³.

In this chapter, I will briefly describe the geographical location of Nigeria, the coming of Christianity to Nigeria, the challenges posed by African Traditional Religions and Islam, and holy contradictions, which calls for unity in diversity. The fact of how Christianity was founded in Nigeria despite the challenges posed by African Traditional Religions (ATRs), Islam, and climate, which led to missionary activities within a historical context and place, left the Divine Mercy to be expressed. Essentially, the history of Christianity in Nigeria remains a voice of Divine Mercy, which is the reason for Nigeria’s existence.

History in this chapter, is the story of God’s mercy on Nigerians as a people and as a nation. Through Divine Mercy, history exists in a narrative of language. The fundamental function of a narrative is to constitute reality by setting it within a temporal framework⁴. Narratives order reality in a way without, which the communication of this reality would be impossible⁵.

I have two convictions about the history of Christianity in Nigeria: firstly, that the human person sums the meaning and purpose of Nigerian’s existence. (Thus, the moral implications of Divine Mercy is to seek the 55% of Nigerians who did not receive mercy as presented in the general conclusion). Secondly, that the task of moral theology is to discern and recognize the presence of the Divine Mercy and challenge Nigerians to participate in the process of revealing the Divine Mercy in languages.

A language is a great blessing, and „a revelation”⁶ perhaps the most distinctive moral and spiritual mark of our humanity, and it does many things well, but not without cost. A language creates stability in dialogue, communication and interpretation, which seems to be the only way, which experience can be perceived and interpreted while writing history⁷. „The writing of history is thus never an uncontaminated reproduction of ‘what happened’. Rather, each act of history-writing includes something of its own history, that is of its writer! It is therefore altogether inappropriate to describe historical understanding in terms of a contrast between ‘objectivity’ and ‘subjectivity’”⁸. The past event is not available to us in a language but in a narrative. However, things do not become what they are for us until we ascribe meaning to them. History is not constructed, but unavoidably and necessarily reconstructed.

³ C. A. Obi, ed., *A Hundred Years of the Catholic Church in Eastern Nigeria 1885-1985*, Onitsha: Africana Fep Publishers Limited 1985, p. 2.

⁴ Cf. S. Udo, *Theology of the New Testament*, transl. M. E. Boring, Michigan: Baker Academic 2009, p. 37.

⁵ Cf. Ibid.

⁶ F. Ryan, *The Body as Symbol*, Washington/Cleveland: Corpus Books 1970, p. 24.

⁷ Cf. Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

In the same vein, the history of Christianity in Nigerian is mediated to us in a narrative and language⁹. In this process, a language not only describes the object of thought accepted as reality, but also determines and places its stamp on all perceptions that are organized as history and reality. „For human beings, there is no path from language to an independent, extra-linguistic reality, since reality is present to us only in and through a language”¹⁰. A language itself, however, is conditioned by context, culture, information, study, history and experiences. Fundamentally, a language becomes a tool through, which as meaning-creating process that confers meaning on both the past and the present; such narrative provides the sense-making capacity that facilitates the individual’s orientation within the complex framework of life. Historical interpretation means the creation of a coherent narrative framework within the context of identity.

A historical event is not meaningful in and of itself, nor does it play a role in the formation of identity, until its meaning-potential has been inferred and established¹¹. Meaning-formation is always bound to the projection of identity and succeeds only by projecting a convincing identity. For instance, Nigerians attain their identity by their diverse cultures and beliefs, into a stable, coherent, and inter-subjectively defensible whole in history¹². An achievement of this approach defines the contextual identity where history is made and, in this case, the geographical location of Nigeria.

1.1. Geographical Location of Nigeria

Nigeria is located in the Western part of Africa. „Its coastal boundary is delimited by the Gulf of Guinea in the south and the land boundary is shared by Cameroon and Chad in the east, Niger in the north and Benin in the west. Nigeria covers a total area of 923, 768 square kilometers making it the thirty-second largest country of the world and the most populous in Africa”¹³.

⁹ Cf. F. Ryan, *The Body as Symbol*, p. 31.

¹⁰ Language is an important tool to either construct or destroy the central message, image or content of a reality. With the aid of a language, the mental visualization becomes possible, which facilitates the direction framework where such a reality can be placed. A language can create a good or bad message by twisting, distorting or changing the entire message, which nullifies its content. Every historical content is seen and viewed from original intention of the reader and what he/she wants to make out of the historical account. This also means that the historical content will be scrutinized from the subjective point of view in relation to the objective viewpoints to arrive at an acceptable meaning.

¹¹ Cf. S. Udo, *Theology of the New Testament*, p. 36; C.C. Madubuko, *Nigeria a Nation in Dilemma*, Enugu: His Glory Publications 2008, p. 10.

¹² Cf. *Ibid.*

¹³ A. Ratnikas, *Timeline Nigeria, Timeline of History*, in: http://timelines.ws/subjects/NL_ARCH2002.HTML; <http://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-14947363> (accessed 5.05.2017).

The history of Nigeria can be traced to the pre-historic people living in the area as early as 11,000 BC. Many ancient African civilizations settled in the region that is called „Nigeria” today. An example of one of such civilizations in Nigeria are Benin, Hausa and Nri¹⁴. „Baju supported this argument with the recent anthropological findings in Wamba, carbon dated to 500 BC. Those findings resemble in every material particularly to the earthenware being used by the *Rindre* in *Wamba*”¹⁵. Furthermore, archeological findings indicated that iron tools and cast bronze from *Wamba* and *Nok* cultures provided the earliest evidence of iron as human working tools and human existence in the area of *Wamba* Local Government in Nassarawa, in the central part of Nigeria. It also indicated the existence of *Kwararafa* Empire in 15th century within the Benue valley¹⁶.

Scholars have argued a lot as to the historical origin of Nigeria. In 2007, the *Ikom* monoliths in Nigeria, phallic-shaped pieces of volcanic rock largely ignored for centuries, were discovered and said to have dated back to about 2000 BC, which were added to the World Monuments Fund’s (WMF) list of sites in danger and are on the „tentative” list for a possible inclusion in the UNESCO’s World Heritage Site list. Nigeria had institutions and structures such as religious, linguistic, ethnic kingdoms, and empires that have been there since 1472¹⁷. Nigeria is better described as one nation in diversity.

In 1914, Nigeria was amalgamated by Fredrick Lord Lugard. Although, „Nigeria” has been viewed as a geographical expression rather than a one unified nation. Yet, Nigeria has experienced a steady economic growth and development based on agriculture, traditional industry and traditional technical formation centres. The formal system of education was introduced in 1842 and the introduction of Universal Primary Education in 1956 by Chief Obafemi Awolowo, when citizens were made to acquire Western Education, basic skills of traditional industry, agriculture, and proficiency in learning, which helped them to transfer knowledge from the previous generation to the new generation¹⁸. But it is also interesting to note that Herbert Macaulay was the first Nigerian to own a car. „Rules, regulations and laws guided the behavior, and activities of the various tribes that later became Nigeria”¹⁹.

The name „Nigeria” came about on 8 January 1897, when Flora Louisa Shaw, a British Journalist, wrote an essay, which appeared first in *The Times* of London, suggesting the name „Nigeria” for the British Protectorate instead of the official title, „Royal Niger Company

¹⁴ Cf. C.C. Madubuko, *Nigeria a Nation in Dilemma*, p. 10.

¹⁵ I. Baju, *Concerning the Question of Identity and Community* (typescript), 2008, p. 8.

¹⁶ Cf. J. Y. Dogara, *Pre-colonial Political and Socio-economic History of the Rindre*, in: <http://www.ipedr.com/vol64/007-ICHHS2013-W10018.pdf> (accessed 12.12.2016).

¹⁷ Cf. E. O. Oladimeji, *Latest Questions & Answers on Current Affairs: General Paper for Promotion, Interviews & Aptitude Test*, Masaka: Busco Limelight 2014, p. 62.

¹⁸ Cf. *Ibid.*

¹⁹ S. Sakaba, *A Clash of Political Identity in Nigeria*, Suleja: Ezvan Enterprises 2012, p. 10-11.

Territories” in the area²⁰. Her proposal was accepted, hence „Nigeria”. The coining of the name was the consequence of River Niger and the „Area”. She thought that the term „Royal Niger Company Territories”²¹ was too long. Consequently, in 1914, Lord Lugard, amalgamated the Northern and Southern parts of the „Royal Niger Company Territories” to form „One Nigeria”²². In 1916, Lugard formed the Nigerian Council, a consultative body that brought together six traditional leaders-including the Sultan of Sokoto, the Emir of Kano and King of Benin- to represent all parts of the colony to instruct the Governor-General. In practice, „Lugard used the annual sessions to inform the traditional leaders of British policies”²³ for the entire good of the geographical composition of Nigeria.

1.1.1. Geographical Composition

Due to the vast land mass and the complex nature of Nigeria, I will highlight the most important areas of interest to give an approximate and coherent view of the country. In 1963, Nigeria became a Federal Republic with 36 states as of today, 2018 including the Federal Capital Territory Abuja, which was proposed in 1976 and finally moved from Lagos to Abuja on 12 December 1991²⁴. Nigeria is inhabited with three hundred and seventy-one „371”²⁵ tribes with four national languages, namely, English, Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba.

Geographically, Nigeria is broadly divided into two major societies: The Northern and Southern societies. Firstly, the Northern Society of Nigeria is further sub-divided into two societies, namely the Northern and the North-Middle-Belt. The Northern Society is known as Hausa-Land and Borno, which is predominantly Muslim tribes of Hausa-Fulanis. While the North-Middle-Belt, which is predominantly Christian Minorities and ATRs, made up of largely non-Muslim tribes. Historically, the Northern Society had a central administrative, judicial and political systems, which were acquired after Islamic conquests, which raided central Sahara in 667, by Uqba ibn-Nafi, which opened a route to Kanem and Borno²⁶. Islam was both brought

²⁰ Cf. J. M. Ockerbloom, ed., *Naming Nigeria*, in: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flora_Shaw (accessed 22.02.2016).

²¹ C.C. Madubuko, *Nigeria a Nation in Dilemma*, p. 20.

²² J. M. Ockerbloom, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flora_Shaw...

²³ F. Shaw, *Early life of Flora Shaw* in: *History Review*, in: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flora_Shaw (accessed 22.02.2016).

²⁴ Cf. E. O. Oladimeji, *Latest Questions & Answers*, p. 3.

²⁵ Z. K. Sowunmi, *371 Tribes in Nigeria*, in:

<http://www.vanguardngr.com/2017/05/full-list-of-all-371-tribes-in-nigeria-states-where-they-originate/> (accessed 11.05. 2017). There are 371 tribes apart from dialects scattered all over Nigeria. Each of these tribes is known with its tradition, culture and religion.

²⁶ Cf. O. Osewa, *Trans-Saharan Trade opens the Way*, *Nairaland Forum*, in: <https://www.google.pl/webhp?sourceid=chrome-instant&ion=1&espv=2&ie=UTF-8#q=when%20did%20islam%20come%20to%20nigeria> (accessed 29.12.2016).

and spread in Northern Nigeria by traders, slaves and war, which led to the creation of Fulani Empire through Usman Dan Fodio Jihad in 1804 to 1903 with Sokoto as the Fulani Caliphate. The Middle-Belt, had no central system of government like the Muslim-North. Hence the only option for the minorities is to accept Islam or martyrdom for survival²⁷.

Secondly, the Southern part is also broadly sub-divided into two societies, namely, the Eastern and the Western Societies. The Eastern Society is made up of the Igbos, Efik, Ibibio, Anang etc. While the Western Society is predominantly Yoruba tribe with the Edo, Ijaw tribes etc. In the Western Society, the Islamic conquest of Usman Dan Fodio in 1804, made administrative system possible just like in the Northern Society of Hausa-Fulani in the North, which came under the powerful influence of traditional values. On the other hand, the Western Coast came under the European influence in the 15th century. Broadly speaking, the Hausa-Fulanis, Yoruba and Edo have centralized political and judicial systems. While the Eastern and the North-Middle-Belt Societies have no centralized political or judicial systems in their traditional values.

This historical and social background of the Nigerian society and the state, form the basis for understanding Nigeria's historical ethno-regional politics, cultural and religious conflicts, socio-political, moral and ethical problems²⁸. However, the paradox of Nigerian society and state have political, religious and social life consequences for the future of the minority tribes in the North-Middle-Belt and Eastern Societies, which can only be resolved by introducing administrative and judicial systems anchored by cultural and educational values.

1.1.2. The Political Paradox of the North-Middle-Belt and South-Eastern Nigeria

In every house, there are essential components such as foundation, pillars, structure and roofing, without which the building cannot stand. In the same vein, the North-Middle-Belt and Eastern Nigeria have been rooted and formed part of Nigeria. The Eastern and the North-Middle-Belt of Nigeria have no educational structures and administrative theory of society that anchors themselves on a solid system where every important aspect of a society is maintained for its functionality²⁹. Within the political and social systems of Nigeria, seemingly there is no place for the Eastern and North-Middle-Belt of Nigerians.

²⁷ Cf. J. Leemans, ed., *Martyrdom and Persecution in Late Antique Christianity*, Massachusetts: Uitgeverij Peeters, Leuven-Paris-Walpole 2010, p. 334.

²⁸ Cf. Y. Turaki, *Historical Roots of Crises and Conflicts in Nigeria with Reference to Northern Nigeria and Kaduna State*, (typescript, 2013,) p. 4.

²⁹ Cf. T. B. Umaru, *Christian-Muslim Dialogue in Northern Nigeria: A Socio-political and Theological Consideration*, USA: XLIBRIS LLC 2013, p. 201.

The systemic lacuna stands as a cultural deficiency to politically and socially administer Nigerian politics. Every system is governed by elements, namely, principle and policy. Principle is a fundamental truth or basis of something. And because it is a fundamental truth of something it does not change. On the other hand, policy is a principle of action adopted by corporate or individual organization to achieve a definite goal. However, policy changes to adopt a new policy or to restructure previous policy to achieve a specific goal within a tenure of administration³⁰.

Importantly, educational administration is a field of study within the study of education that examines the daily administrative system of ideas intended to explain how goals of a system can be achieved. The administrative system focuses on the practice of education in general, educational institutions and educators' activities. For example, North-Middle-Belt and South-Eastern Nigeria, as it were, got Western Education and civilization in 1842, before the Northern part of Nigeria³¹. Both the periods of Colonial Masters and Slave Trade, the regions were centers of slave „Harvest” to serve the needs of both the local chiefs and Colonial Masters, who were producers and the buyers of slaves. It was perceived by both in the records of the Missions and Colonial Masters that the areas were usually referred to as „Pagan territories”³². However, as powerful as educational-weapon is concerned, it seemed to have supported the creation of „monstrous projects that, at vast expense, devastated the environment and ruined lives, also supported and legitimized brutal tyrannies”, at the detriment of innocent citizens who today suffer at the hands of kidnappers, academic armless robbers, slave-housemaids, cultists etc. „...by legion of self-serving hypocritical”³³ politicians. Consequently, the quest for united and one Nigeria has been a long historical dream for many citizens, who believed that the unity of the country may bring an end to insecurity, corruption, poverty and vices in the society.

1.1.3. A One Nigeria

„Building God's Kingdom of Justice and Peace”³⁴ is the real foundation of one Nigeria. Nigeria is politically made up of Northern Block, North-Eastern Block, Western Block and Middle-Belt-Block. Yet the principle of unity has been as old as creation. One Nigerian popular adage

³⁰ Cf. K. Bisong, *Application of Restorative Justice in The Management of Niger Delta Environmental Conflict* „The Oracle” 2(2006)2, p. 124-138.

³¹ Cf. E. O. Oladimeji, *Latest Questions & Answers*, p. 62.

³² The word „Pagan”, was understood and commonly referred to as a state of non-belief in any God. That is people who have nothing to worship. Those who have no any kind of religious practice.

³³ G. Hancock, *Lords of Poverty*, Nairobi: Camerapix Publishers International 2009, p. 189.

³⁴ C. Anyanwu, O. J. Fadugba-pinheiro, eds., *Our Concern for Nigeria Catholic Bishops Speak: Communiqués Issued by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria (CBCN) on the State of the Church and Nigerian Nation From 1963 to 2015*, p. 181.

says: „United we stand, divided we fall”. Similarly, the unity of ten fingers function efficiently better by this principle. Similarly, the story of four men, who carried a paralyzed man to Jesus in the Gospel testified that, when they couldn’t get the man to Jesus, they made a hole in the roof right above the place where Jesus was. „Seeing how much faith they had, Jesus said to the paralyzed man, „My son your sins are forgiven” (Mk 2:3-5). Consequently, both the paralyzed and four men were happy. Indeed, through all generations, God expresses himself in an environment of unity. „At some point, every person needs to be carried...will need to be loved by a few people who will go above and beyond the call of normal friendship duty and will carry us extra-ordinary lengths in order to get us through whatever dark season awaits us”³⁵.

It is not out of place to give brief survey on the historical oneness of Nigeria before the coming of Colonial Masters. The area called „Nigeria” was part of a well-known Empire called, Songhai Empire, which broke up from Mali. Thus, any Fulani Herdsmen, from Mali began to enter the Northern Nigeria in the 13th century and by the 15th century they were tending cattle, sheep and goats in Borno as well. Following the breakup of Mali, a local leader named Sunni Ali (1464-1492) founded the Songhai Empire in the region of middle Niger and Western Sudan and took control of the trans-Saharan trade. His successor Askia Mohammed (1493-1528) made Islam the official religion. But they had a strong cultural and economic impact that became more pronounced in the 16th century, when the states became associated with the spread of Islam and trade. And throughout the 16th century, much of Northern Nigerian states paid homage to Songhai in the west or to Borno, a rival empire in the East.

However, due to the payment of homage, much of the states of Northern Nigeria, were constantly pressured by Songhai to the West and Kanem-Borno to the East, which they paid tribute to. Thus, an arm struggle was evident, which was motivated by economic concerns, as coalitions of Hausa states mounted wars against the Jukuns, Nupes and other minority tribes, in the North-Middle-Belt to collect slaves or against one another for the control of trade in the area.

The call to „one Nigeria” is not only propelled by geographical, political and economic concerns, but cultures, ethnicities, the history of slave trade and colonial system of administration are evident factors. In 1879, Sir George Dashwood Taubman Goldie, 20 May 1846-20 August 1925, amalgamated various British ventures to form the United African Company, which was later known as „Royal Niger Company Territories”³⁶. He played a major role in founding Nigeria. In 1914, the North-Middle-Belt and South-Eastern Nigeria were

³⁵ I. M. Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies, History of Nigeria before 1500*, in: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Nigeria_before_1500 (accessed 23.02.2017).

³⁶ Ibid.

amalgamated to form one Nigeria³⁷. This division and uniting into a whole of Nigeria is the continuation of the nationalists' tradition today, which speaks true of the North Central, North-East, North-West, South-East, South-South and South-West, as six geo-political zones in Nigeria.

One of such nationalists was Herbert Macaulay who was born in 1864-1946, was trained as an engineer, is considered as the founder of Nigerian nationalism as a movement in 1920s³⁸. He was a grandson of Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowder. The aim of the movement was the belief that the people of different backgrounds living in the British Colony of Nigeria needed to come together to make a „One Nigeria” (paradigm-identity). He was the first Nigerian to be sponsored by the Colonial Government for a professional course abroad³⁹. Furthermore, Britain has sponsored and opened doors of professional developments and advancements for Nigerians beginning with Herbert Macaulay till date. The story of the unity of Nigeria will not be complete without a link to the epochs of Sunni Ali 1464-1492, Askiya Mohammed 1493-1528–Songhai and Kanem-Borno Empires, Usman Dan Fodio 1754-1817, Sir George Dashwood Taubman Goldie 1879-1946, Sir Lord Fredrick Lugard 1914-1916 and 1920s to 1950s. In the same vein, some of the nationalists were: Alvan Ikoku 1900-1971, Fumilayo R. Kuti 1900-1978, Sir Ahmadu Bello 1909-1966, Chief Obafemi Owolowo 1909-1987, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Bellewa 1912-1966, Chief Anthony Enahoro 1923-2010, Hajiya Gambo Sawaba 1933-2001, Dr. Nnamdi Azikwe 1937-1996 etc.

In „1960-1963”⁴⁰, both the geographical and political shape of Nigeria took their roots when the Reginal Government was the ruling government with only three regions namely, Northern Region, Western Region and Eastern Region. Due to political need, in „1963-1967”⁴¹, a Mid-Western Region was added to comprise four regions. But, between „1967-1976”⁴², political crisis led to the replacement of Regional Government with the creation of 12 states with the view to solve the issues of political agitations, which were bordered around self-determination and economy. Furthermore, in „1976-1987”⁴³, five more states were created to make them 19 states. Yet, the political evolution of unity brought the creation of 21 states

³⁷ Cf. S. Sakaba, *A Clash Political of Political Identity in Nigeria: A Violation of Personhood*, Roma: Armando 2011, p. 20.

³⁸ Cf. M. Tokpe, *6 Influential Men Who Risked Their Lives to Fight for Nigeria's Independence*, in: <http://kokofeed.com/2015/10/01/6-influential-men-who-risked-their-lives-to-fight-for-nigerias-independence/> (accessed 25.02.2017).

³⁹ Cf. Ibid.

⁴⁰ Appendix no. 2a

⁴¹ Appendix no. 2b

⁴² Appendix no. 2c

⁴³ Appendix no. 2d

between „1987-1991”⁴⁴, and „1991-1996”⁴⁵, respectively with the total of 30 states. The last additional states came between „1996-1998”⁴⁶, making the 36 States including Federal Capital Territory, Abuja.

The quest for unity of Nigeria was not only to serve economic and political purposes of Nigeria and Colonial Masters, but it is the basis and structure of the historical developments. It was not a surprise that Benjamin Nnamdi Azikwe, born on 16th November 1904, was at the fore-front in the fight for Nigeria’s unity and he became the president of Nigeria when Nigeria ceased to be the British Colony. The unity of Nigeria was considered as a national service. He founded *West African Pilot*, which was an instrument used to promote the cause of Nigerian unity. For Christians the Holy Bible, which contains the word of God bears witness to this desire of unity (Jn 17:21). God expresses himself in unity. Unity shows how good and pleasant it is when brothers and sisters dwell in unity (Ps 133:1). Unity provides opportunity to make enemies to be at peace (Pr 16:1) to seek peace and pursue it (Ps 34:1) not just to pursue it but to build (Ps 34:1) it for one another. It is in the context of unity that the theological virtues (2 Cor 13:3-4) that God’s love is expressed and known (Jn 13:14). For Christians, unity makes a place for God to be in the midst (Mt 18:3-5) of people especially at their dire need. Unity is an attribute of mercy, by which the scattered and the damaged persons are brought together for rehabilitation and healing. Similarly, democracy is understood as government of the people by the people and for the people. Democracy is both a system and the way of life for a collective whole.

Moreover, unity can be approached from two perspectives. It can either be created peacefully or it can be created violently through a war or an arm struggle. Thus, the complex geographical location and composition of Nigeria, show the dire need of the intervention of the Divine Mercy. Nigeria was carved by negative powers such as intertribal wars, slave trade, poverty, geographical structure and socio-political legacies, which needed a superior power to shine the light of God’s love into it. There is no superior power than the power of Divine Mercy, which dispels the yoke of the political paradox existing between the North-Middle-Belt and South-Eastern Nigeria. The political paradox in Nigeria not only allows and promotes dehumanization, human rights violations, slavery and exploitations of persons, but it challenges the importance of justice, equity and the rule of law. Politicians have kept the attitude of mercy away of governance, consequently they indulged in selfish, stingy and greedy way of life. To inculturate Divine Mercy is transforming a situation where God is walking in the Garden of

⁴⁴ Appendix no. 2e

⁴⁵ Appendix no. 2f

⁴⁶ Appendix no. 2g

Eden (Gen 3:9) and calling out to men and women in Nigeria, „Where are you?“ (Gen 3:9). This call, was both a gift of Divine Mercy and a challenge to embrace Christianity as an expression of God’s mercy. It is only God’s mercy that can call a fallen and a wounded human being. Thus, the unity and oneness of Nigeria must be determined by a collective will and yes, as an expression of justice and mercy in Christianity.

1.2. The Coming of Christianity to Nigeria

The history of Christianity to Nigeria speaks the message of the Divine Mercy, which tends toward restoration, integration, development and capacity building of what has been damaged or lost by man’s inhumanity to man through acts of violence, dehumanization, human rights violation, racism, social indifference, political indifference and violation of personhood. This section, examines the arrival and the beginning of Christianity in Nigeria after many attempts by missionaries. The detailed history of Nigeria has been adequately treated by many Church historians⁴⁷.

I cannot ignore the Islamic conquests that affected Africa from the corner of the North-East of Nigeria, in order to put the history of Christianity into perspective. In 920 A.D, Umar Ibn al-Khattab, led twelve thousand soldiers and archers who crossed to what is now known as the Red Sea and conquered the city of Fustat—which became Cairo-Egypt⁴⁸. He reminded his soldiers who were both in Syria and Egypt, „We are a nation of arms”, and he launched war on all the former Roman-conquered cities of Cairo, Constantinople, Alexandria, Tripoli and

⁴⁷ Cf. J.F.A. Ajayi, *Christian Missions in Nigen-a 1842-1891*, London: Oxford Univ. Press 1965; E.A. Ayande1e, *The Missionary Impact on Nigeria, 1842-1914*. London: Oxford Univ. Press 1966; E.P.T. Crampton, *Christianity in Northern Nigeria*. Zaria: Gaskiya Corporation 1975; G. J. B. Grimley, *Church Growth in Central Nigeria*, Eerdmans 1966; G. M. Okafor, *Development of Christianity and Islam in Modern Nigeria*, Alle Rechte Vorbehalten: Germany 1992; J. K. Olupona and Toyin Falola, eds., *Religion and Society in Nigeria: Historical and Sociological Perspectives*, Ibadan: Spectrum Books 1991; E. W. Smith, *The Christian Mission in Africa*, London: The International Missionary Council 1926; A. J. F. Ade, *Christian Mission in Nigeria, 1841-1891: The Making of New Elite*, London: Longman Group Ltd 2001; A. J. F. Ade, *A Patriot to the Core: Bishop Ajayi Crowder*, Ibadan: Spectrum Books Ltd 1965; S.A. Adewale, *African Church Movement and their Impact on Social and Religious Life in Nigeria. The gods in Retreat: Continuity and Change in African Religion*, Enugu: Faith Dimension Publishing Co. Ltd 1985; E. A. Ayadele, *The Missionary Impact on Modern Nigeria, 1842-1914, A Political and Social Analysis*, London: Longman Group Ltd 1966; D. Ayegboyin & S. A. Ishola, *African Indigenous Churches: A Historical Perspective*, Lagos: Greater Heights Publications 1997; A.N. D. Kpobi, *African Chaplains in Seventeenth Century West African Christianity: An African Christianity: An African Stor*, U. O. Kalu ed., Pretoria: Department of Church History, University of Pretoria 2005; C. P. Groves, *1948-1958. The Planting of Christianity in Africa*, London: Lutherworth Press 2005; A. J. Kofi, *West African Church History: Christian Mission and Church Foundations 1842-1919*, Leiden: E. J. Brill 1986; S. Lamin, *West African Christianity: The Religious Impact*, Mary Knoll: Orbis Books 1983; C.S. Ola, „*Foundation of the Church in Nigeria*”, in: *Modupe Oduyoye, The Planting of Christianity in Yorubaland: 1842-1888*, Ibadan: Daystar Press 1969; J. Hanciles, „*Black to Africa: White Abolitionista and Black Missionaries*”, in: *African Christianity: An African Story*, ed., U. O. Kalu, Pretoria: Department of Church History, University of Pretoria 2005.

⁴⁸ Cf. A. Shakur, *The History of Islam in Africa: Muslim Heritage/the History of Islam in Africa*, in: <https://www.whyyislam.org/muslim-heritage/the-history-of-islam-in-africa/> (accessed 4.12.2016).

encouraged more Islamic expansion beyond North Africa. One of the reasons for the conquests is that the Arabs thought that the conquered cities by the Romans had a lot of wealth, and the war is the shortest way to take over the wealth, but they were disappointed when they found nothing of such riches. Consequently, Islamic conquests attracted anti-Islamic sentiments among Christians in Europe and America, which called for a missionary alternative to achieve justice, equality and peace.

Between 1445 and 1621, „the kings of Portugal launched pioneering missionary exploration in Nigeria, in the Kingdoms of Benin and Warri”⁴⁹. This primary attempt did not yield any fruit. A similar attempt was made at entering the North and North-East of Nigeria respectively. The missionary quest to enter Africa was necessary because Islam penetrated the area, particularly from the North of Africa and ousted Christianity massively. For example, St. Francis of Assisi who founded the Franciscan Order was known to have visited Egypt in 1219 during the Fourth Crusade.

However, the missionary exploration in Nigeria, took place not only because Islam had ousted Christianity in many parts of Africa in general, but King Henry of Portugal and others wanted to access more of Africa, to reach out new territories, to better the commercial interest of Portugal by exploring new areas where commodities could be bought and sold. Due to the anti-Islamic sentiments, which became quite high in Europe and North America within the Christian circles, Islam was viewed as the greatest social evil, which threatened the survival of Africa.

Subsequently, several attempts have been made by several religious orders and missionary societies to establish the Christian faith in Nigeria since the fifteenth century, with varying degrees of success⁵⁰. Now, the King of Portugal was interested in the conversion of West Africa, by the Papal Bull of Demarcation of the Holy See, which is the symbol of God’s mercy on his people through the Church, the missionary zeal for conversion was re-enchanted in the midst of challenges. In 1804, Uthman Dan Fodio waged a war in Northern Nigeria, and established a caliphate in Sokoto as its headquarters. Consequence, Nigeria was left with a painful history largely characterized by religious discrimination, domination and oppression⁵¹. Uthman, drew inspiration from an Utopian picture of the Abbasid era of the tenth and eleven

⁴⁹ O. Adewale, *Christianity in Nigeria before Pentecostalism* „Sapienza University” 2(2013)2, p. 120-156; A. Shakur, *The History of Islam in Africa in: Muslim Heritage/the History of Islam in Africa*, in: <https://www.whyyislam.org/muslim-heritage/the-history-of-islam-in-africa/> (accessed 4.12.2016); Cf. B. Y. Galadima and Y. Turaki, *Christianity in Nigeria* (2000)20.1, p. 86.

⁵⁰ Cf. A. O. Makozi, G. J. A. Ojo, eds., *The History of the Catholic Church in Nigeria*, Lagos: Macmillan 1982, p. 1.

⁵¹ Cf. M. H. Kukah, *Reflections on Christians and Persecution in Northern Nigeria* in: *Conflicts, War, Terrorism*, in: <https://zenit.org/articles/reflections-on-christians-and-persecution-in-northern-nigeria/> (accessed 6.05.2016).

centuries, where he considered in it the prototype of that „Rightful Guided Caliphate” through, which Muslim Umma had once enjoyed equality and justice⁵². In 1842, the Wesleyan Methodist and Scottish Presbyterians successfully established the Christian faith in the Yoruba land. However, the introduction of slave trade by Africans and Europeans, gave rise to inter-ethnic wars, depopulation and instability until colonial rule was established in the late 19th century.

The slave-trade is the absence of Divine Mercy. It is safer to say that inhuman and ugly face of slave trade in the past, was a collective conspiracy against the Divine Mercy by African leaders, communities, slave sellers and buyers. „Kidnapping and selling an enemy or a rival into slavery must have been the people’s way of expressing man’s inhumanity to man in those days of obscurity not yet enlightened by the Gospel”⁵³. Through the Divine Mercy, Christianity entered Nigeria in the 1840s and grew more rapidly than in any other region of the West Coast of Africa. The Divine Mercy became a catalyst, which changed people’s mind-set and encouraged them to go back to their moral root, which is to tend toward God, the source of all good. Significantly, indigenous missionaries of Nigerian origin were among the freed slaves from Americas and Europe, who not only accepted the Christian faith but became missionaries to their fellow Africans. They were the first members of different churches and they became the pioneers and instruments of spreading and building Christian missions on the West African Coast. For instance, one of the freed slaves was Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowder, who is a model of the first Christians in Nigeria⁵⁴. The Church of England’s Missionary Society(CMS), challenged young Africans to take responsible positions in mission service. The CMS appointed Samuel Ajayi Crowder as the first Anglican Bishop of the Niger. He was educated in Sierra Leone and Britain, thereby connecting Christianity and Colonial Regime.

1.2.1. Colonial Regime and Christianity

The complexed nature of Nigeria and her historical antecedents, are not different from the various ethnic, cultural, religious and geographical roots⁵⁵. Far from pessimism to say, it is a challenge to solve contemporary conflicts and violence in Nigeria without correcting the inherited primordial negative values and redressing their legacies⁵⁶.

The Colonial Administration was fair in its administration of the economic and political

⁵² Cf. A. Shakur, *The History of Islam in Africa: Muslim Heritage/the History of Islam in Africa*, in: <https://www.whyislam.org/muslim-heritage/the-history-of-islam-in-africa/> (accessed 4.12.2016)..

⁵³ C. A. Obi, ed., *A Hundred Years of the Catholic Church in Eastern Nigeria 1885-1985*, Onitsha: African Fep Publishers Limited 1985, p. 3.

⁵⁴ Cf. F. George, *An Area Study of Nigeria*, p. 5.

⁵⁵ Cf. S. Sakaba, *A Clash of Political Identity in Nigeria*, p. 13.

⁵⁶ Cf. B. Y. Galadima, Y. Turaki, *Christianity in Nigeria*, p. 1.

benefits both for the Nigerian Community and British Administration, when Lugard said:

„Europe is in Africa for the mutual benefits of her own industrial classes, and of native races in their progress to a high plane. That the benefits could be made reciprocal, and that it is the aim and desire of civilized administration to fulfil this dual mandate”⁵⁷.

Lugard believed that Britain had a moral responsibility to put an end to the disorder caused by the evil of slave trade and to provide good administration to Nigeria based on the „dual mandate” when he said:

„It was the task of civilization to put an end to slavery, to establish courts of law, to inculcate in the natives a sense of individual responsibility of liberty, and of justice, and to teach their rulers how to apply these principles, above all, to see to it that the system of education should be such as to produce happiness and progress. I am confident that the verdict of history will award high praise to the efforts and achievements of Great Britain in the discharge of these responsibilities”⁵⁸.

Thus, in 1841 Britain sent companies (the Albert, the Wilberforce and the Sudan to explore the Niger with the view to establishing trade relations with the states of the Niger Territories) to Nigeria so that the legitimate trade could replace the slave trade⁵⁹. This mission was headed by Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowder and was also accompanied by Rev. Schoen⁶⁰. Thus, Christian Missions and colonialists advanced into Nigeria almost simultaneously during the end of the 19th and early 20th centuries.

Consequently, economic stagnation was not envisaged. The seed of underdevelopment was nurtured and grown by Nigerians and their allies. The collective corruption from Nigeria’s industrial partners did not allow the acquiring of technical knowledge and skill acquisition among younger Nigerians, rather stifled the country by a system of corruption, damaging the forecast of self-sufficiency of the „Federal Character”⁶¹. Missionary activities expressed the attitude of mercy, which challenges Nigerians to rise up to their moral obligations to make primary and deliberate efforts at defining and transforming her democratic institutions, in the overall interest of Nigeria. Similarly, the Colonial Masters have made a lot of sacrifices in order to bring development to their countries and other countries. It was a big challenge for formal education to be accepted, which brought by the Colonial Masters. It is natural to take intelligent risks in order to be developed and to grow. In the same vein, the missionary activities were not immunized from difficulties. But their activities brought education, new religious experiences and health services as part of the Christian works of mercy.

⁵⁷ B. Y. Galadima, Y. Turaki, *Christianity in Nigeria*, p. 21.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Cf. O. Adewale, A. O. Friday, *Christianity in Nigeria Before Pentecostalism*, „Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies” 2(2013)2, p. 120-145.

⁶⁰ Cf. Ibid.

⁶¹ A. Onyeneke, *The Church and Development in Nigeria*, „West African Journal of Ecclesial Studies” (1993)5, p. 28-39.

1.2.2. Christian Missionary Activities

Theoretically, there were two diametrically opposing positions in the evangelization of Nigeria. These positions also stand as conditions to accept the Christian faith due to cultural, religious and ethnic backgrounds. Firstly, to found a local church, Nigeria's socio-religious customs must supersede those of the West. Secondly, missionaries were to be regarded as the product of the western culture. The transformation would have been impossible without changing approaches and developing new forms of communication. The issue was either to challenge or not to challenge the status quo, which was an option to realize the way of life of the Divine Mercy. Like the Israelites who had a similar situation when „...they said to one another, why do we sit here until we die?“ (2 Kgs 7:3-11). There were two „evils“ for the missionaries: taking back the Gospel message without delivering it or breaking the barriers of religious and socio-political resistance to transform the community.

The missionaries chose the „evil“ of breaking the barriers. Consequently, the missionary transformation brought the Gospel message to the grassroots in the society and leaving the legacies of humanitarian ministries and services, namely, educational programmes and institutions; medical services; social services; establishment of mission stations and churches and all kinds of services as part of the Church's mission to humanity¹. The Church has been a champion of humanitarian, social and political services in Nigeria. Christian missions held a dominant position in leading pioneers in various sectors and institutions as basis for human liberation from traditional, economic, social and even spiritual bondages². To imagine a society without educational, medical and legal institutions among others things, is to imagine erosion of human potentialities, natural resources and ecological waste.

The missionary activities have built government policies, socio-political and other contemporary issues such as relationship between Christian and Muslims in the Christian vision of our world³. During the pioneering periods, most missionaries were anti-intellectual and modernity because of the discouragement that Islam was perceived to be—a religion of sword that needed purification by integral education. By integral education among other themes, I mean education that forms the human person in these same dimensions that enlighten the whole person to appreciate the act of Divine Mercy⁴. This vision of integral development is typical of

¹ Cf. M. H. Kukah, *The Church and the Politics of Social Responsibility*, Lagos: Sovereign Print Nig Ltd 2007, p. 87.

² Cf. S. O. Anyanwu, *Currents Behind the Changing Role of Women in Society and Some Christian Ethical Points of Orientation*, „The Oracle“ 2(2006)2, p. 110-123.

³ Cf. T. B. Umaru, *Christian-Muslim Dialogue in Northern Nigeria*, p. 31.

⁴ Cf. A. Ottaro, *Nigeria approves Africa's first Dominican university*, in: *Catholic World Report*, in: http://www.catholicworldreport.com/Item/5271/nigeria_approves_africas_first_dominican_university.aspx (accessed 12.12.2016).

Divine Mercy, Christian and missionary. „Education so envisioned, like the traditional African cooking-stove, which is made up of three stones to stand on three feet. It is a project of integral education whose three feet are intellectual formation, moral formation and technical formation anchored on man’s relationship with God. And the three feet stand on the ground of spiritual formation as an expression of God’s mercy to humanity”⁵.

Between 1445 and 1850s, missionary activities have reached a lot of nooks and crannies of the Western, Southern, Middle-Belt, North-Eastern parts of Nigeria. This task was a collective job not only to convert the inhabitants of the ATRs, but to transform the entire aspects of the society, which is the reflection of the Divine Mercy. Missionaries made major breakthrough and transformations in the traditional society as they replaced immoral practices, such as human sacrifice, infanticide, the killing of twins, secret societies, which had formerly played roles in cultural, religious and community life. Despite the success of the missionaries in eroding inhuman practices in society, slavery became a generational cancer with different names and forms. Thousands of people were sold into human slavery and others are still slaves to ignorance, ethnic sentiments, political slavery, insurgency, terrorism and total lack of mercy to other people because of race, beliefs, cultural backgrounds and other affiliations in local communities.

1.2.3. Missionaries and Local Communities

The coming of Christianity to Nigeria, is an expression of the Divine Mercy on the Nigerian family. To incarnate Divine Mercy in Nigeria is to fulfill the divine injunction of Jesus⁶. The job of the missionary is to carry this Good News of God’s mercy to families as the consequence of man’s Fall. The Good News of God’s love, life and his happiness for the fallen man is embodied in the Christian message and the family of God on mission. In sharing the story of the Mercy of God with the people of Nigeria, is a conscious acceptance of God’s gift of life and responsibly propagating another life through the natural way of birth. Acceptance of this life from God as a gift in children, Nigerians agree to all the terms and conditions relating to preservation, protection and enhancement of life to its full potentialities.

The Gospel message of love carried by the missionaries transcends all cultures, ethnic and territorial boundaries⁷. Love expresses joy and happiness that can be said to be „suitable good”. That is, something that is capable of bringing „desired good”, which may be both to an

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Cf. E. Harris, *Your Task is to Incarnate Mercy, Pope Francis tells priests*, in: <http://www.ewtnnews.com/catholic-news/Vatican.php?id=13455> (accessed 24.03.2016).

⁷ Cf. Jesus Christ is not only the Divine Mercy Incarnate but he is Infinite, Eternal, Self-existence and Timeless.

individual or to a community as such. Speaking about sharing in God's happiness means that the common good, which in this sense covers every human community in the sense of objective good, which affects the universal conditions of man's happiness⁸. This encounter was a moment of the dawn of the Divine Mercy, future opportunities and possibilities for liberation, which a judicial system must be applied as a moral principle to give each person prerogative justice. It is from this background that this section seeks to bring out the moral implications of bureaucracy between missionaries and local communities. It is not out of place to think that the bureaucratic structures may be there, but the implementation or management of resources is another thing. Missionaries came with a clear vision and mission of bringing the dawn of the Divine Mercy in Nigeria. Both the missionaries and local communities had their different messages and values, which the acceptance and application were capable of changing attitudes. For instance, when the missionaries came to Benin in Nigeria, at the request of the Oba of Benin. When they came he exhibited a nonchalant attitude and behaviour, by being busy fighting a war in 1515 and finally dismissed them. Even when they returned in 1538, the king was no more interested in the religion. The missionaries were disappointed as they were denied access to the king who was regarded as a „god-man” in the community. The Gospel, was the Divine Mercy entering the territory of the mundane represented by ATRs. In a context like this, theology of the beatitudes and discernment of spirit prove to be divine directions for finding the right path through communication⁹. This situation led to the desperation of the missionaries, which in 1651 according Ajayi, the missionaries tried to interrupt a traditional festival, which led to their deportation. However, Christianity was curtailed to the palace of the king not in the community. People refused to take their children for baptism, because they believed that their children would die prematurely, neither did the sacrament of marriage and other sacraments have any influence in the community. Despite the difficulties of planting the faith, between 1570-1733, the Wari rulers became professing Christians.

1.2.4. The Catholic Church in Nigerian Society

In line with the Divine mandate, the „Apostolic Exhortation of *Ecclesia in Africa*, promoting Evangelization in Co-Responsibility”¹⁰, the initial contact with the Christian Missions

⁸ Cf. J. Donne, *No Man is an Island*, in:

<http://www.phrases.org.uk/meanings/no-man-is-an-island.html> (accessed 14.04.2016).

⁹ Cf. P. Solomon, T. Etim, *The Missionary is a Person of the Beatitudes*, „Nacaths Journal of African Theology” 22(2012), p. 74-84; J. V. B. Abugri, *I should be in trouble if I failed to Preach the Gospel*, „Nacaths Journal of African Theology” 22(2012), p. 1-12; M. Onjewu, *Effective Communication: Catholicon for Accomplishment of God in Society*, „Jords Nigerian Journal of Religion and Society” 6(2016), p. 101-109.

¹⁰ *Eaf*, no. 4.

especially the Catholic Church with Nigeria was between 1472-1621. The first missionaries to be involved, were mainly the Capuchin Friars and Augustinians from Portugal, Spain and Italy under the protection of Portugal. Following the pattern of relationship between Church and State, the first targets of the missionaries were the kings and their cabinets. Thus, the principle of the CBCN, is „Promoting authentic development in Nigeria”¹¹. In 1861, the Catholic Church made a fundamental breakthrough to implant the Christian faith in the Southern part of Nigeria. The conversion to Christianity was a big problem for the ATRs, due to their incompatibility with the Christian faith bordering around family. Similarly, „the encounter with Islamic Religion in the Niger-Benue confluence foreshadowed what problems would later bedevil evangelization and the relationship between Christianity and Islam”¹². The struggle to contain Islam and slavery, the system of visiting house to house in villages was an effective method for evangelization and to seek conversion to Christianity.

The announcement of the Christian faith to Nigeria, was an expression of the Divine Mercy. The Church further expressed Divine Mercy by welcoming all and sundry to be members of a special family of God¹³. But this position of the Church being opened to all, alienated many native converts from the Church. Consequently, in Wari and Benin, Christianity was a court and elite practice that did not really penetrate the interior¹⁴. Yet, the Church became a haven for those in need of spiritual support and a place for the hopeless in society. The Church was seen as „a center of mercy”.

According to St. John Paul II, the Divine Mercy is a gift from God to humanity and to the Church, which also implies the obligation to give it out in evangelization and human ministry. Moreover, „the task of evangelizing all people constitutes the essential mission of the Church...Evangelizing is in fact the grace and vocation proper to the Church, her deepest identity. She exists in order to evangelize”¹⁵. Evangelization presupposed the mandate to teach all nations the love and mercy of God (Mt 28:20). To teach is to educate. The Church in her compassion, prepared and placed herself at the service of Nigeria and humanity through the Ministry of Educational Programmes and Social Services. In Nigeria today, Catholic Church is a major contributor to educational sector. Thus, it is difficult to speak of education and human services in Nigeria without the Catholic Church, just like it is difficult for society to exist without knowledge, and developments propelled by education.

¹¹ C. Anyanwu, O. J. Fadugba-pinheiro, eds., *Our Concern for Nigeria Catholic Bishops Speak*, p. 310.

¹² A. J.V. Obinna, ed., *Church in Nigeria: Family of God on Mission, Lineamenta For the First National Pastoral Congress*, A Publication of Catholic Secretariat, Lagos 1999, p. 3.

¹³ Cf. *EN*, no. 27.

¹⁴ Cf. *EN*, no. 3.

¹⁵ *EN*, no. 14.

In fact, in 15 March 1958 the establishment of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria (CBCN), not only established as an organ of unity, communion and solidarity for Catholics spread and across Nigeria but it also consolidated the courageous and heroic acts of the Catholic Church in Nigeria. Through the CBCN, the Catholic Church is fully involved in transforming and „re-splendouring” the nation and the society with the Good News of salvation in Jesus Christ¹⁶. However, Nigeria suffered a Civil War between 1966 and 1970, which was not only a trying moment for the nation but also for the Church. The crisis revealed people's limited understanding of Divine Mercy through the Church as a family of God on mission. The survival of the Church is a testimony of the maturity of Christianity in Nigeria and a tribute to missionaries who brought the Christian faith to Nigerians. Both during and after the Civil War, showed that the Catholic Church participated in building a new society and the present Nigeria with capability of inculturating the Divine Mercy attitude. Despite the ethnic, religious and political challenges, the courageous and heroic missionary efforts so far, have led to the formation of 54 Archdioceses/dioceses and 1 Apostolic Vicariate, and 9 provinces in Nigeria, which express the „Catholicity of the undivided Church”¹⁷ and the universality of the Catholic Church¹⁸. Thus, Nigeria has been known to have „the highest level of religiosity”¹⁹ in the world coexisting but not without insurgencies and tensions.

1.3. African Traditional Religions and Islam as a Challenge

Religion is a belief in the Superhuman-controlling-power, known to be a personal God. There are many cited ideas as to the origin of religions. „Humans who survived to procreate were those who had developed evolutionary scientists call a hypersensitive agency-detecting device-HADD”²⁰. People may hold onto their private opinions and yet faith in God is not a matter of philosophical speculations or an option. The tendency to explain the natural world through the existence of beings with supernatural powers, formed the basis for religious beliefs, according to many scientists²¹. However, what makes man what he is, constitutes his spiritual soul, which both philosophy and religion tell us is the result of God's direct creation. Moreover, it is no longer permitted to over-extend the boundaries of revelation to the detriment of free

¹⁶ Cf. A. J.V. Obinna, ed., *Church in Nigeria: Family of God on Mission Lineamenta*, p. iii.

¹⁷ F. A. Sullivan, *The Church We Believe In: One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic*, New York: Paulist Press 1988, p. 109.

¹⁸ Cf. M. I. Uzoukwu, *2017 Directory & Liturgical Calendar*, Minna: Published by Project Office, 2017, p. 49-57.

¹⁹ S. P. Huntington. *The Clash of Civilizations and Remaking of World Order*, New York: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks 1996, p. 21.

²⁰ E. Palermo, *The 'god Faculty', The Origins of Religion: How Supernatural Beliefs Evolved*, in: <http://www.livescience.com/52364-origins-supernatural-religious-beliefs.html> (accessed 7.03.2017).

²¹ Cf. Ibid.

scientific pursuit²². Admittedly, the biblical accounts of revelation have traced for us man's ancestry to Adam. Anthropology has gone into the study of man's biological features that make him human. In other words, anthropology is a chapter of theology. Theology is also understood as the study of concepts of God and the nature of religious ideas. What makes anthropology a chapter of theology is that fundamentally, God created man in his image and likeness (Gen 1:27).

In all histories, man has been associated with the belief in God or some power in order to cope with human misery and the unknown events. In the events of human misery, man's happiness and peace are at jeopardy. History has provided evidence that when man depends only on human abilities he cannot face and solve some human problems. In the depth of the human mind, questions remain: What is the meaning of life? Why does man suffer? Why does man die? What happens after death? From the human experience, it is only within the context of religion, that soteriological questions can be addressed and to explain human desires.

For Christians, Jesus Christ has come and died for all people regardless of their affiliations since were created in the image of God and likeness. But the idea of co-existing without legitimate boundaries has not been understood. However, both Christians and Muslims live in the same Nigeria, go to common markets, go to common schools and go to civil work in conjunction with each other. Christianity is the religion of the Light-Jesus Christ, who is the light of the world. Christianity is the most difficult religion in the world. Jesus clearly commanded Christians to love their enemies. The enemy is always the one who does the will of the devil. A person who does not love is an enemy of mankind. Such a person needs prayers and reciprocal love instead of vengeance. Although, Christianity and Islam claimed the religions of righteousness to the ATRs members in order to convert them to their faiths. But, from the experiences of the relationships between Christianity and Islam in Nigeria, is a big issue under discussion. Moreover, many of the adherents of both Christianity and Islam came from the adherents of ATRs. The ATRs members are considered by both Christianity and Islam as a „virgin land” for evangelization. It is hoped and believed that Christianity is the religion founded by Jesus Christ, the Divine Mercy Incarnate, will bring mercy into Nigeria as a nation and Nigerians as a people. Christianity is capable to influence ATRs and Islam with love, joy and beauty.

²² Cf. B. Vawter, *A Path Through Genesis*, p. 52.

1.3.1. African Traditional Religions

Due to unspecified number of religions in Africa, they are collectively referred to as „African Traditional Religions” (ATRs). But technically and in practical terms, it is difficult to say that there are „ATRs” as a single unit as such. This is because there are hundreds of languages, cultural affiliations in Nigeria with their different religious practices. The language pluralism, multi-cultural and religious affiliations make it technically difficult, to refer to it as „African Traditional Religion”. Therefore, it is „African Traditional Religions”. These religions have no „sacred books”, which contain revelatory-history, theology and center of liturgical rubrics. The focus of these religions is on the One Supreme God who is consulted through the ancestors as mediators between man and God. According to ATRs, people believe that God is unapproachable directly by humans due to his holiness. It is not possible to speak of ATRs, without touching on the subject of the ancestors. African people believe that ancestors are nowhere and yet are everywhere. The ancestors were historical figures, who continue to live within a specific community and culture. Ancestors had a lot of moral, economic and social impacts on the life of their various communities. One doesn’t become an ancestor just because one has died. One must have been a person of integrity, lived a good moral life, was a good role model to the community, married and have many children who will be descendants to remember the „living dead”²³. It was on the basis of their good works, and moral integrity that „theology of the ancestral veneration” is built. The pneumatological content, the mythological nature, theology and syncretic practices of ATRs are very complex in nature beyond scientific verification. Despite the oral narrative, which religious practices are preserved, the temporal interval means a fading away in every regard of history; it disallows historical knowledge in the sense of a comprehensive restoration of what has happened. Fundamentally, history is always a selective system by means, which interpreters order and interpret not merely the past but their own understanding and their interest in the content of that history presented in a language and within a cultural identity²⁴. This method allows values and orientations the process of transformation of ethical and pedagogical consciousness of the community²⁵. The

²³ J. S. Mbiti, *Introduction to African Religion and Philosophy*, Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers 1992, p.143.

²⁴ Cf. S. Udo, *Theology of the New Testament*, p. 28.

²⁵ Cf. M. P. Wasswa, *African Christian Theology in the Contemporary Context*, Kisubi: Marianum Publications 2002, p. 2; Generally, in Nigeria and especially among ATRs, there is a lot of the use of local medicine for protection against evil spirits, bad dreams, misfortunes, childlessness, and unforeseen problems. In addition, during wars medicine is also used to safe-guard the family members and the clan from destruction by enemies. It is important to note that the type of medicine here is metaphysical, which cannot be subjected to the scientific hypothetical tests and verifications. In all these, ancestors are seen as part of the battle fighters for their communities. In most cases, the use of local medicine, reduces the freedom for women because of their natural monthly period. There is a strong belief that their state would neutralize the power of the medicine and thereby

performance of spiritual activities of ATRs, is mostly described as syncretism, which need to be purified by the Divine Mercy.

1.3.2. Conflicts and Resolutions Between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria

It is not possible to comment on conflicts in Nigeria without speaking of religious disparities between ATRs, Christianity and Islam. It is not as if they are the cause of conflicts, but that most conflicts have been associated with one religious disparity or the other.

Conflicts have come because of the various interpretations of theological content, fight for power, political dominance and social discriminations. Unlike Christianity and Islam, ATRs has no „sacred books”. But, in the context of these religions, the ATRs people believe that God has revealed himself to their ancestors as his mediators. Membership of ATRs is by lineage, not by faith, conversion or through any means. The theological „truths”, are preserved in narrative forms through a language. The calls to witness the message of the God of their ancestors through evangelization or conquest are absent in ATRs. The moral task for the members of each religion is to preserve, maintain and uphold traditions of their forefathers. Consequently, any attempt by any religion to change their religious ideals will be resisted vehemently by its adherents. The conflicts are not only when their religious values are under attack but when their farms on their ancestral lands are invaded arbitrary. Most of the conflicts are for the defense of their fundamental human rights and human dignity.

Paradoxically, Christianity, ATRs and Islam have been living side by side in Nigeria for many years. Christianity and Islam are often called „Abrahamic religions” because they trace their historical origin to the ancient figure of Abraham. Both Christianity and Islam admit their members by their profession of faith in God, baptism and initiation irrespective of their various ethnic, geographical and national affiliations. Both religions have the common belief in one God, salvation and the afterlife.

But, there are differences between Christianity, ATRs and Islam. Against the background of Christianity especially the Catholic Church, who as a matter of fact and duty to offer high regard to those who, through no fault of their own, do not know the Gospel of Christ,

making it impossible for the spiritual source of that medicine to work. That is, the spirit that works with that kind of medicine doesn't like or ancestors that are in charge of that area of the family or clan do not approve any dealings with any women during her natural period. There are also important deliberations that are not shared with women including information about certain happenings in the family or clan. There are things men and women can do in common and there are also other things that exclusively are been done by each gender. For example, both men and women go to the farm on equal basis: At the harvest time; the men harvest the grains; while the women gather; men go to the farm early and come back late; women cook breakfast and lunch bring them to the farm; grown up children from 10 years old, receive training on how to be farmers as they go through the stages of adulthood; children below 5 years old are attached to their mothers. Children are instructed to stay at home under the guidance of an adult for security reasons, if at all they need to stay at home.

seek God with a sincere heart, moved by grace, and through the dictates of their conscience will achieve salvation²⁶. On the other hand, „Islam makes a Muslim, his soul identity wrapped in Islam. Islam creates its own religion and culture. Islam is not only a faith, but it is also an ideology that defines, shapes, molds and drives the life of a Muslim. What comes first is not blood ancestry or ancestral land, but Islam. Islam creates a new Umma, a state and universal Brotherhood for him. His allegiance should be only to Islam”²⁷. Consequently, very often in Nigeria, there are conflicts, religious violence, land disputes and crises of many sorts between Muslims and Christians. Situations like these, make dialogue very challenging.

However, since the „Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions”–*Nostra Aetate (NA)*, of Vatican II in 1965, the history of the relationship and dialogue between Muslims and Christians especially in Northern Nigeria, has been successful and challenging²⁸. However, in the effort to find lasting solutions, dialogue has been accepted as an objective medium with various degrees of meanings. Therefore, a dialogue can be defined as: a frank discussion between two parties with the aim of learning and understanding each other’s point of view; revolutionary when it fosters discipline; planning; continuous learning; diversity; problem solving and leadership²⁹. Consequently, „to say ‘no’ to dialogue is to say ‘yes’ to violence”³⁰ CBCN „prefer dialogue to violence, and propose it as the way to collaboration, harmony, solidarity and unity”³¹. Despite the understanding of dialogue, the challenge of Christian-Muslim relations led to the formation of the Catholic Bishop’s Conference of Nigeria (CBCN) and Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria (CSN) in 1956³². In the same vein, the Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA) was created in 1973. The Jamalul-Ul-Nasril Islam, (JNI) the Council of Ulama, and the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) were formed in 1976. The role of these organizations is to respond to various religious, social, political, cultural and missionary challenges within the Nigerian post-independence³³. The ATRs members are seemingly absent in any of the above-mentioned organizations. This could also be referred to as an interreligious dialogue³⁴. Moreover, the causes of conflicts are the interpretations of the experiences of Islamic Jihad led by Usman

²⁶ Cf. *LG*, nos. 1, 3, 16; T. Horvath, *Salvation*, „Journal of Theology for South Africa”, XXXIII/3(2013), p. 299-322.

²⁷ Y. Turaki, *Historical Roots of Crises and Conflicts*, (typescript, 2013), p.17.

²⁸ Cf. *NA*, no. 2.

²⁹ Cf. G. Gerard, L. Ellinor, *Dialogue: Rediscovery the Transforming power of Conversation*, New Jersey: John Wiley and Sons 1998, p. 10.

³⁰ C. Anyanwu, O. J. Fadugba-pinheiro, eds., *Our Concern for Nigeria Catholic Bishops Speak*, p. 207.

³¹ C. Anyanwu, O. J. Fadugba-pinheiro, eds., *Our Concern for Nigeria Catholic Bishops Speak*, p. 175.

³² T. B. Umaru, *Christian-Muslim Dialogue in Northern Nigeria*, p. 111.

³³ Cf. A. Deji, *Religious Association and the New Political Dispensation in Nigeria*, „Journal for Studies in Interreligious Dialogue” 15(2005)1, p. 103-113.

³⁴ Cf. P. B. Tanko, *A Catholic View and The Christian Association of Nigeria and the Challenge of the Ecumenical Imperative*, Jos: Fab Anieh 1991, p. 30.

Fodio in 1804 and Christian missionary activities in the 14th to late 18th centuries. Today, moral responsibility not only directs Christians and Muslims on how to act morally, but also sets before them the absolute obligation and option under, which it is to do good and avoid evil.

1.3.3. Holy Contradictions

The phrase „holy contradictions” is borrowed from Leslie R. Flynn of New York, who suggests how God wants people to live in a world where he allows complex realities and anti-theses to co-exist. Yet, „the most sudden and sweeping upheaval in beliefs and values has taken place in this century. No generation in the history of human thought has seen such swift and radical inversion of ideas and ideals as in our lifetime”³⁵. And from the human point of view, God uses strange, unlikely, and often seemingly ridiculous things to accomplish his purposes³⁶. For instance, the powerful Pharaoh was thwarted by lowly midwives who refused to drown male babies (Ex 1:5-20). Who could have known what would become of Moses?

The co-existence of Christianity and Islam in Nigeria, does not mean that they are two contradictory oppositions. I am not juxtaposing them to highlight the degree of importance between them, rather, to highlight common shared values, namely God and faith among other values. In September 2006, Pope Benedict XVI, gave a speech during his visit to Regensburg, Germany, where he quoted a fourteenth Byzantine Emperor, Manuel II Palaiologos, which caused anger across the Islamic world, especially in Nigeria³⁷. Consequently, in 2007, the Muslim Ummah issued a document, namely, „A Common Word Between Us and You”³⁸. Moreover, the Qur’an says:

„O People of the Book, come to common terms as between us and you: that we worship none but Allah (God); that we associate no partners with him; that we erect not, from among ourselves, lords, patrons other than Allah. If they turn back, say: Bear witness that we at least are Muslims bowing to Allah’s Will”³⁹.

The quoted document, not only underscores the universal need for unity but it reiterated the teaching of NA: „that all men form but one community”⁴⁰. The call to love (Jn 13:34) and the call to be one (Jn 17:21) initiated the opportunity to recognize the mercy of God and dispose every avenue to actualize God’s acts of mercy in the community. Thus, it is clear that those who are merciful to others, they will receive mercy (Mt 5:7) and those who work for peace will become children of God (Mt 5:9). Paradoxically, both adherents of Christianity and Islam are living together in Nigeria, where their children, go to the same schools, shows God’s mercy,

³⁵ H. Carl, *The Christian Mindset in a Secular Society*, USA: Multnomah 1984, p. 81.

³⁶ Cf. L. R. Flynn, *Holy Contradiction*, Wheaton: SP Publications 1987, p.14.

³⁷ Cf. M. Bauschke, *A Christian View of Islam*, London: SMC Press 2006, p. 139.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ T. B. Umaru, *Christian-Muslim Dialogue in Northern Nigeria*, p. 104.

⁴⁰ NA, no.1.

which is to be translated in their witnessing to men the primacy of the love of God in their midst⁴¹. Based on the sharing of common elements of beliefs, such as prayers to God, almsgiving to the less privileged and desire to love our neighbour in order to live with God in the afterlife, Christianity and Islam, should prefer the attitude of Divine Mercy⁴². This event of grace sets before them the absolute moral obligation to do good and avoid evil. Their co-existence provides an opportunity to say woe to me, if I do not (1 Cor 9:16) promote the inculturation of Divine Mercy message, which calls for credible renewal of institutions, communities and individuals as collective moral obligation⁴³. The condemnation of violence and intolerance by both Christians and Muslims provides another active impetus to credibility and integrity to appreciate the rich diversity of Nigerian cultures⁴⁴. Christian and Muslim solidarity with one another under the mercy of God, is making history, where in the midst of joy, sorrow, pain and tensions, coming together to unite with dignity of our differences to become blessings for collective and national developments. Thus, love of neighbour not only begets respect for one's personal conscience, rejecting all forms of coercion or discrimination with regard to faith, freedom to practice one's religion and give witness to it, but appreciation for all genuine religious traditions⁴⁵.

The „holy contradiction” underscores the power in our differences embedded in our paradigm-identity. For example, Nigerians united their differences, when Ebola virus broke out. It was amazing how the collective will of Nigerians, was united to handle Ebola virus in 2014, which had killed thousands of people⁴⁶. The collective will, the unified energy, the undivided focus and unimaginable collective-will-support of Nigerians, which not only led to the expulsion of Ebola virus but uprooted its base out of Nigeria, which cannot be measured by any human scale. Essentially, „at the root of human sin is the lie, which is a radical rejection of the truth contained in the Word of the Father, through whom is expressed the loving omnipotence of the Creator: the omnipotence and also the love ‘of God the Father, Creator of heaven and earth...’”⁴⁷. If Nigerians succeeded in expelling Ebola virus—which was an enemy to all Nigerians, which was invisible to the ordinary human eyes, with their ordinary human

⁴¹ Cf. *S.C.R.S.I., ET*, no. 1.

⁴² Cf. *EAF*, no. 6.

⁴³ Cf. I. A. Kaigama, *Our Dignity, Our Nation & Our Citizenship*, in: *A Statement of the Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria 2017*, p. 3.

⁴⁴ Cf. J. C. Maxwell, *Developing the Leader Within You*, Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers 1993, p. 10.

⁴⁵ Cf. M. L. Fitzgerald, *Total Commitment to a Dialogue of Salvation, John Paul II and Interreligious Dialogue*, in:

<http://www.ewtn.com/library/chistory/intrejp2.htm> (accessed 3.05.2017).

⁴⁶ Cf. L. Waid, A. Navis, *Nigeria: Ebola Success Story*, in: <http://spotlightenglish.com/listen/nigeria-ebola-success-story> (accessed 21.02.2017).

⁴⁷ *DV*, no. 33; http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_18051986_dominum-et-vivificantem.html LEV 1986, (accessed 9.03.2017).

instruments and with God's help, what more will they not do, when they use divine institutions and instruments where God, who revealed himself to both Christians and Muslims is consulted?⁴⁸. Through the Divine Mercy, like St. Paul, Nigerians can say, corruption, insecurity, poverty, religious conflicts, „where is thy sting“? (1 Cor 15:55).

1.4. The History of the Divine Mercy Devotion in Nigeria

The message of the Divine Mercy Devotion (DMD) was given to St. Faustina by the Lord Jesus Christ not only for her personal growth but for the whole people in the world. The Lord also revealed to her the image of the Divine Mercy, to be venerated beginning from her chapel and the chaplet of the Divine Mercy, which is to be prayed at 3.00 O'clock for mercy for the whole world⁴⁹. These requests of the Lord to St. Faustina came between 1931 and 1938 and can also be considered as the beginning of the public history of the DMD⁵⁰. The DMD in Nigeria couldn't have been possible without a connection to the public devotion of the Divine Mercy, which began in 1935, at Vilnius city, in Lithuania and continued until in 1959, when its public devotion was banned, due to concerns of impediments. On 31 January 1968, Cardinal Wojtyła then, sent acts to Rome. The Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith declared a statement lifting the notification ban. When Cardinal Karol Wojtyła became Pope John Paul II, the Marians received an authoritative permission to spread the DMD to the whole world. Since there were no impediments found in the devotion, the message of the DMD spread like wild-fire to all the nook and crannies of the world. The Divine Mercy, which is revealed to St. Faustina and to our present generation is not new, rather, an important reminder that God is love and merciful. The message of Divine Mercy has been there from the beginning of creation. St. John Paul II, said: „How much the world needs to understand and accept Divine Mercy“⁵¹. On 30 April 2000, at St. Peter's Square, Rome, St. John Paul II, declared Sr. Faustina Kowalska, a „Saint“. Similarly, the history of the DMD is a sacred history containing the message of God's love and mercy on the whole world⁵².

St. John Paul II, taught that the message of the Divine Mercy is not only a gift but, it is also a moral obligation to participate in spreading the message to the point of inculturating the

⁴⁸ Cf. I. A. Kaigama, *Religion Instrument of Peace and Human Developments*, Akure: A Communique at the End of Plenary Meeting of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria 2016, p. 5.

⁴⁹ Cf. *Diary*, no. 570.

⁵⁰ Cf. C. O. Anyiam-Osigwe, *History of the Message and Devotion to Divine Mercy: „Divine Mercy Reporter“* (2006), p. 7.

⁵¹ D. Came, *Predispose to Receive the Gift*, in:

<http://www.thedivinemercy.org/news/A-Gift-of-Divine-Mercy-3597> (accessed 12.03.2017).

⁵² Cf. I. Rozycki, *Essential Features of the Devotion to the Divine Mercy, John Paul II Institute of Divine Mercy*, Stockbridge MA: An Imprint of Marian Press 2000, p. 7.

message in the life of the human person and the world⁵³. To inculcate the message of the Divine Mercy, means that people's actions and deeds will be governed by the attitude of mercy, and practice mercy with creativity, in ways that respect their local cultures and families⁵⁴. A family as a domestic Church, has the maternal obligation in transmitting the attitude of mercy to her sons and daughters in the world, preparing them for the task of becoming Divine Mercy devotees, lovers, friends, apostles, ambassadors and soldiers of Jesus Christ, the Divine Mercy Incarnate. Moreover, „the greater the misery of a soul, the greater its right to My Mercy”, „the greater the sinner, greater his right to My Mercy” and „I am more generous to sinners than to the righteous”⁵⁵. In the same vein, Jesus said: „Now go and learn the meaning of this Scripture: „I want you to show mercy, not offer sacrifices”. For I have come to call not those who think they are righteous, but those who know they are sinners” (Mt 9:13; Hos 6:6). This is the centerpiece of the wake-up call to the attitude of mercy.

1.4.1. The Activities of the Divine Mercy Devotion in Nigeria

The Church seeks to practice mercy towards people and through people, and she sees in this an indispensable condition for solicitude for a better and „more humane” world, today and tomorrow⁵⁶. Between 1970 and 1979, „leaflets”⁵⁷ containing the message of the DMD were in circulation in Nigeria and distributed by devotees, lovers and friends of the DMD after the Nigerian Civil War. However, this may not be unconnected with the feeling of mercy as a result of experienced misery during and after the war. Pope Francis put it well when he said: „The heart is united with the misery of another and that's mercy”. When a situation of pain or misery is permitted to get into the heart of another person, and subsequent acts coming from a person to a person, to remedy the situation is the act of mercy, which flows from the heart. The DMD leaflets were not only to console the sorrowful in Nigeria but they were to impart the message and knowledge of the mercy of God as the best remedy for the human condition. Moreover, Jesus Christ is the Face of God's Mercy⁵⁸. Naturally, man has the potentials of being merciful.

The activities of the devotees of the DMD, continued between 1980 and 1997, which led to the establishment of Divine Mercy Academy in Erena-Minna, Nigeria in 1998 by Most

⁵³ Cf. E. Harris, *Your Task is to Incarnate Mercy, Pope Francis Tells Priests*, in: <http://www.ewtnnews.com/catholic-news/Vatican.php?id=13455> (accessed 24.03.2016).

⁵⁴ Cf. *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ *Diary*, nos. 1275, 1182, 598, 1275.

⁵⁶ Cf. *DM*, no. 15.

⁵⁷ M. I. Uzoukwu, *Interview with the Author*, 27 December 2016.

⁵⁸ Cf. *MV*, no. 1; Vatican Radio, *Pope Francis sends video message to conference in Argentina*, in: http://en.radiovaticana.va/news/2016/10/08/pope_francis_sends_video_message_to_conference_in_argentina/1263839 (accessed 8.10.2016).

Rev. Dr. Martin Igwe Uzoukwu, Catholic Bishop of Minna Diocese, Nigeria. He is also the National Promoter of the Divine Mercy Devotion in Nigeria, Coordinator of World Apostolic Congress on Mercy (WACOM), Africa & Madagascar. The DMD started to take root during the Apostolic visit of then, the Holy Father, St. John Paul II to Nigeria in 1982 and 1998⁵⁹. The visits of St. John Paul II, not only animated the message of the DMD in Nigeria but deposited the seed of mercy in the history of Nigeria and Nigerians. Fundamentally, the devotional aspect of the Divine Mercy, aims at the spiritual and physical purifications, through the spiritual and corporal works of mercy respectively. The idea of rewriting events, comes as a result of history as a meaning-formation, which makes the same message relevant to a people within a historical context. Moreover, human existence and action are characterized by their capacity to find meaning in whatever the human person does. Without history, it is not possible to define and make reference to meaning in human history. In reality, meaning is a fundamental category element of human existence⁶⁰. Consequently, Bishop Martin is an icon of DMD in Nigeria and beyond. He established solid structures in Nigeria, which form the basis and structure of development, spread and growth of DMD, to proclaim the message of DMD and to make it relevant in Nigeria, Africa and Madagascar⁶¹. To make the DMD relevant in Nigeria, meaning-formation is not an option, to choose or decline, it is an inevitable task. The desires of Bishop Martin Uzoukwu are to promote, to inculturate, to plant, to root the message of DMD in Nigeria, which led to the establishment of the following solid structures, between 1998 and 2013:

„Divine Mercy Academy, Erena-Minna	1998
National Conference of DMD	1999
Congregation of Missionaries of Divine Mercy(MDM)	2002
Divine Mercy Materials	2002
Family Apostles of Divine Mercy	2002
Association of Priests and Religious	2002
Missionary Sisters of St. Faustina(MSSF)	2002
Association of Seminarians of Divine Mercy	2005
Associations of Volunteers of Divine Mercy	2005
Divine Mercy Reporter	2006
Divine Mercy Youth Apostolate	2006
Divine Mercy Novitiate	2008
Divine Mercy Herbal Farms	2008
Divine Mercy Shrines	2008

⁵⁹ Cf. M. I. Uzoukwu, *First Lap of Divine Mercy Relay Race*, in: *Keynote Address of National Conference on Divine Mercy*, Owerri: Nigeria 2014, p. 3.

⁶⁰ Cf. S. Udo, *Theology of the New Testament*, p. 33.

⁶¹ Cf. M. I. Uzoukwu, *Solid Structures in Africa Promoting Divine Mercy Devotion, 3 O'clock for Mercy*, Minna 2007, p. 6.

Despite the political crises in Nigeria, Bishop Martin Uzoukwu continued to have the desire to promote the DMD. Consequently, between 1999 and 2014 the National Conference of the DMD has gone to all the nine Catholic Ecclesiastical Provinces in Nigeria as follows:

„Ibadan Province	1999
Abuja Province	2000
Benin Province	2002
Calabar Province	2004
Jos Province	2006
Kaduna Province	2008
Lagos Province	2010
Onitsha Province	2012
Owerri Province	2014 ⁶³ .

Notably, „the First Africa/Madagascar Congress on DMD took place during the 7th National Divine Mercy Conference in Lagos in 2010⁶⁴. The conference nurtured and animated the spiritual life of the devotees who in turn contribute in the promotion of the sanctity of life and dignity of the human person. People practice the devotion as part of their faith and life. The devotees also understand that their individual existence is due to the act of the mercy of God, which in turn the devotees willingly participate in spreading the message of the devotion. The conferences become opportunities to make available the DMD materials for further internalization of knowledge and lessons received during conferences and seminars. Apart from the benefits of DMD, which served the national and communal interests, the Divine Mercy Spirituality is also seen through responses in the use of DMD materials, promotion of virtues, the solid structures, and national developments that cut beyond ethnic, political and religious affiliations. Greater cooperation and collaboration are the hallmarks of DMD in Nigeria, which has aimed at reaching out to individuals and communities in Nigeria through education.

Education and re-education are sure ways of sustaining what has been achieved in the past and the present. Bishop Martin Uzoukwu authored many books connecting important topics such as: Divine Mercy Devotion, prayer manual for family apostles of the Divine Mercy, understanding and practice of corporal works of mercy, Divine Mercy Devotion in Nigeria, a manual for priests and religious etc⁶⁵. Furthermore, during Christmas and Easter Seasons, pastoral letters, synodic decisions and messages are sent out to champion the message of the Divine Mercy Devotion, the call to repentance and reconciliation, expanding the scope of the

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ M. I. Uzoukwu, *First Lap of Divine Mercy Relay Race*, p. 3.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Cf. M. I. Uzoukwu, *Understanding and Practice of Corporal Works of Mercy*, Suleja: Ezvan Enterprise 2015, p. 17.

deeds of mercy to prisons, hospitals, the less-privileged centres, empowering the pilgrimage centres with structures in Minna Diocese, participating in active evangelization and giving authentic witness of the Christian faith. The message of the DMD permeates beyond the boundaries of Nigeria to other African countries namely, Cameroun, Congo D.R., Ghana, Rwandan, Uganda etc. The DMD is a fundamental instrument for the formation of teachers of the faith, to evangelize and transform people into messengers of mercy and evangelization.

The formation of the human agents of evangelization by the DMD in Nigeria led to the highpoint of the activities of the DMD, which witnessed the ordination of the first five Catholic Priests of the Congregation of the Missionaries of the Divine Mercy (MDM) on 5 July 2013⁶⁶. Through the activities of DMD, candidates were identified, were presented for formation and were formed through the solid structures of the Universal Church for the formation of priests for service. Jesus acknowledged the fact that there is a large harvest, but the labourers are few (Mt 9:35-38). He also requested an action of prayer to the Owner of the harvest that he will send out workers to gather in his harvest (Lk 10:2). Similarly, through St. Faustina, Jesus reiterated the Divine Mercy message and said: „Priests are to tell everyone about My great and unfathomable mercy”⁶⁷. In conjunction with Jesus, the Divine Mercy Incarnate, the Blessed Virgin Mary, who is the Mother of Mercy said to the priests: „I want to love with your heart, to gaze with your eyes, to console and encourage with your lips, to assist with your hands, to walk with your feet...to suffer with your crucified body”⁶⁸. The consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary is ordered only to the consecration of the world, to the merciful Lord. We can also understand why St. John Paul II saw, in the act of consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, the most effective means of obtaining the gift of Divine Mercy on the Church. However, there has never been a time in history especially at the moment as critical as our own. The Church cannot forget the prayer that is a cry for the mercy of God amid the many forms of evil, which weigh upon humanity and threaten it to the point of distracting the training and formation of the human agents of evangelization and spreading the Divine Mercy message⁶⁹.

Importantly, the training and formation of the human agents for the promotion of the message of Divine Mercy cannot be over-emphasized⁷⁰. Thus, evangelization leads to establishment of educational sector for further formation, political sector where Catholic politicians can serve humanity through politics to expand the scope of the spread of the Divine Mercy message, to promote inter-religious dialogue and future investments on human capital

⁶⁶ Cf. A. J.V. Obinna, ed., *Church in Nigeria: Family of God on Mission, Lineamenta*, p. 31.

⁶⁷ *Diary*, no. 570.

⁶⁸ *Our Lady Speaks to Her Beloved Priests the Marian Movement of Priests*, Castle Hill, Australia 1992, p. 22.

⁶⁹ Cf. *DM*, no. 15.

⁷⁰ Cf. G. A. Ojo, *Catholic Laity in Nigeria Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow*, Ibadan: Daily Graphics Nigeria Limited 2004, p. 327.

developments⁷¹. When one speaks of investments, it presupposes inter-connectedness with individuals, corporate bodies or families. Communities and families are encouraged to invest in the knowledge of the Divine Mercy so as to build a strong family of God with vision and mission. Families are challenged to make this possible through the family settings as a domestic Church. It was Fr. Patrick Pyton who said: „The family that prays together, stays together.”⁷² In the same vein, the Divine Mercy Devotees are urged to „Spend one hour with the Lord Jesus Christ the Divine Mercy Incarnate”⁷³, not only for their personal growth but to build a robust and new society where the attitude of mercy will be the guiding principle for integral purification. Today, our society is not only traumatized by evil attacks but it is spiritually sick in need of healing⁷⁴. Indeed, DMD becomes a stepping stone to the spiritual works of mercy. Moreover, there is no auto-spirituality⁷⁵. God’s mercy has no limit and its doors are always opened. In the understanding of Divine Mercy, families are to revive the values of family life as seen in the family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph. An example, of authentic spirituality is seen in the Blessed Virgin Mary the Mother of God. Since Mary gave birth to the Son of God, she is really and truly the Mother of God. As St. Paul says, „But when the right time finally came, God sent his Own Son. He came as the Son of a human mother and lived under Jewish Law to redeem those who were under the Law, so that we might become God’s sons and daughters” (Gal 4:4-5). Thus, Mary’s dignity as Mother of God and the graces attached to her Divine Motherhood are prerequisites factors of our prayers through her maternal intercessions⁷⁶. For this reason, „after the sin of Adam and Eve, God did not want to leave humanity in the throes of evil. And so, he turned his gaze to Mary, Holy and Immaculate in love, choosing her to be the Mother of Man’s Redeemer”⁷⁷. Mary’s entire life is patterned after the presence of the Divine Mercy Incarnate made flesh, which she treasured in her heart as Jesus is revealed as God made man in his Incarnation⁷⁸. According to St. John Paul II, man in all his activities is bound to follow his conscience in order that he may come to God, the end and the purpose of his life. He added that man’s existential faith is „a state of consciousness and an attitude” that gives rise to actions, which the content of faith is lived out because it is seen to give meaning

⁷¹ Cf. GS, no. 43; T. Guzuma, P. Jarumi, M. Jatau, eds., *First Synod of the Catholic Diocese of Minna*, Minna 2016, p. 19.

⁷² M. I. Uzoukwu, *Christmas Message*, Abuja: Tonem Publicity and Publications Ltd 2008, p. 2.

⁷³ M. I. Uzoukwu, *Christmas Message*, p. 3.

⁷⁴ Cf. F. Watts, ed., *Spiritual Healing, Scientific and Religious Perspective*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2011, p. 2.

⁷⁵ Cf. United States Conference of Bishops, *The Spiritual Works of Mercy*, in: [HTTP://USCCB.ORG/BELIEFS-AND-TEACHINGS/HOW-WE-TEACH/NEW-EVANGELIZATION/JUBILEE-OF-MERCY/THE-SPIRITUAL-WORKS-OF-MERCY.CFM](http://USCCB.ORG/BELIEFS-AND-TEACHINGS/HOW-WE-TEACH/NEW-EVANGELIZATION/JUBILEE-OF-MERCY/THE-SPIRITUAL-WORKS-OF-MERCY.CFM) (accessed 4.05.2016).

⁷⁶ Cf. J. Pohle, *Mariology, A Dogmatic Treatise on the Blessed Virgin Mary Mother of God, With an Appendix on the Worship of the Saints, Relics and Images*, London: B. Herder 1914, p. 15.

⁷⁷ MV, no. 3.

⁷⁸ Cf. Ibid, no. 24.

to life⁷⁹. That „the split between the faith, which many profess and their daily lives deserves to be counted among the more serious errors of our age”⁸⁰. In his pastoral approach, St. John Paul II stated: „When a man goes down on his knees in the confessional because he has sinned, at that very moment he adds to his own dignity as a man. No matter how heavily his sins weigh on his conscience, no matter how they have diminished his dignity, the very act of truthful confession, the act of turning again to God, is a manifestation of the special dignity of man, his spiritual grandeur”⁸¹ who is created in the image and likeness of God. Notably, in the *Sign of Contradiction* Cardinal Wojtyła stressed the principle that man can only know himself in reference to Jesus the Son of God⁸². That without the Creator, man, the creature would disappear due to lack of his connection to God as the source of life⁸³. Thus, man’s connection to the Divine Mercy is inevitable for life and happiness.

1.4.2. Man, and the Divine Image of God

When we talk of man, it is not about giving an abstract answer to the question: Who is man? Rather, it is a matter of the whole of the dynamism of life and civilization as a consequence of experience in everyday life and through the application of principled knowledge in many human programmes and projects⁸⁴. And again, the questions like: Who are we? Where do I stand myself? These questions are as old as man himself as a self-conscious being. A cow is always simply a cow. It does not ask, „what is a cow”? Who am I? Man discovers a difference between himself, other creatures and objects in the world around him, which he deals with. Or discovers a difference between the world, which he shares with others, and his own particular fate, which has befallen him⁸⁵.

In the category of creatures, a person is more than a body, then even that category is thought to be built up in various ways⁸⁶. For example, a child is addressed by a personal name for a short while, but once a child gets old enough to play with other children relative age dictates the terms to be used. Elders are addressed as „big brother” or „big sister”⁸⁷, and expected behaviour patterns follow the terms. The terms change with time, but the age

⁷⁹ Cf. D. Bushman, *Pope John Paul II and the Christ-centered Anthropology of Gaudium et Spes*, in: http://www.ignatiusinsight.com/features2008/dbushman_gaudiumetspes2_jan08.asp (accessed 20.03.2017).

⁸⁰ *GS*, no. 41.

⁸¹ D. Bushman, *Pope John Paul II and the Christ-centered Anthropology of Gaudium et Spes*, in: http://www.ignatiusinsight.com/features2008/dbushman_gaudiumetspes2_jan08.asp (accessed 15.03.2017).

⁸² Cf. K. Wojtyła, *Sign of Contradiction*, New York: A Crossroad Book-The Seabury Press 1979, p. 101.

⁸³ Cf. *GS*, no. 36; *EV*, no. 22.

⁸⁴ Cf. *RH*, no. 16.

⁸⁵ Cf. J. Moltmann, *Man*, London: transl, John Sturdy, SPCK 1974, p. 1.

⁸⁶ Cf. J. Hendry, S. Underdown, *Anthropology: A Beginner’s Guide*, Oxford: Oneworld Publications 2012, p. 90.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.* p. 93.

distinction continues throughout school life, and in the workplace, where everyone is addressed according to relative age, cultural value, context and status society. This way of looking at the situations and levels of a person and a child, suggests the study of anthropology of the various aspects of man⁸⁸. The name „man” is a generic noun, which makes reference to a male or female person.

However, theological anthropology in the Christian context is the study of man as he relates to God. Man was not created by accident. His creation was an act of God’s love and mercy. It was a decisive act of God to bring man into being. God personally invited man with a purpose and brought him into being to share in his love, joy and presence. God made man with a body and soul as properties suitable to man’s nature, to know and experience God. Man is a material creation, and thus limited, but infinite in that his immortal soul has an indefinite capacity to grow closer to the divine⁸⁹. As St. John Paul II said in the *The Acting Person*, „For us action *reveals* the person, and we look at the person through his action”⁹⁰. Later a person says, „man manifest himself...through his body...It is generally recognized that the human body is in its visible dynamism the territory where, or in a way even the medium whereby, the person expresses himself. Thus, in theology of the body, ‘the body manifests man’”⁹¹ and in manifesting him, acts as an intermediary that allows man and woman, from the beginning to, communicate with each other in response to the will of God their Creator.

God has given man so much that he made him inferior only to himself and crown him with glory and honour appointed him ruler over everything he made and placed him over all creation (Ps 8:5-6). This position of „kingship” and „dominion” of man over the whole visible world, constitutes the priority of morality over technology, the primacy of the human person over things, and the superiority of spirit over matter⁹². Yet, God willed man to communicate with nature as an intelligent and noble „master” and „guardian”, and not as a heedless „exploiter” and „destroyer”⁹³. In addition, the Lord God did not only take the man and placed him in the Garden to till and keep it but invited man to observe the moral freedom not to go beyond divine act of love for man. After all, God is love (Gen 2:15-16; 1 Jn 4:8). In a sense, for God to have invited man to till and keep the Garden, it is an act of God’s grace, which is the favour, the free and undeserved trust that God gave man to participate in mutual relationship

⁸⁸ Cf. S. Sakaba, *Body and Soul in the Anthropology of St. Augustine in the Context of Ancient Greek Thought* „Kieleckie Studia Teologiczne” 15(2016), p. 319-342.

⁸⁹ Cf. K. Corrigan, *Evagrius and Gregory, Mind, Soul and Body in the 4th century*, p. 37.

⁹⁰ G. Levshon, ed., *Karol Wojtyła’s Love and Responsibility: A Precis*, October/November 2002 Updated July 2004, p. 1; Cf. K. Wojtyła, *love and Responsibility*, transl. H. T. Willetts, San Francisco: Ignatius Press 1993, p. 24.

⁹¹ K. Wojtyła, *The Acting Person*, transl. A. Potocki, D. Reidel eds., England: Publishing Company 1979, p. 10.

⁹² Cf. *RH*, no. 16.

⁹³ *Ibid*, no. 15.

with him. Thus, love is the fundamental moral vocation of man, which is connected to mercy. God's grace is always required in order to fulfil the task of serving God⁹⁴. However, the expression, „She is now bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh, and she shall be called woman” (Gen 2:23), presupposed man's acknowledgement of God's many gifts not only within the context of where a family can begin, but communicators of God's love and lovers of mercy in the world.

Man's creation also reflects God as both *Agape* and *Logos*: The Truth and the Word⁹⁵. Thus, man's relation to God is beyond the earthly definitions of words of our familiar dictionaries, which words are defined within a limited scope by human relationships, experiences and appearances. To be in the image of God refers to the spiritual inclination of man that makes him a spiritual being who seeks to worship a higher power than him through the „tilling” and „keeping” the „garden” on earth as moral duty of man to God's creation⁹⁶.

When God breathed into man's nostrils, the breath of life and the man became a living being, it signifies special attention and focus God has on man⁹⁷. Similarly, juxtaposing the actions of God on man, which the Gospel of John reported that due to fears of the Jewish authorities, the disciples were gathered behind locked doors after Jesus was crucified, and he came and stood among them, then when he had spoken to them, he breathed on them and said to them, „Receive the Holy Spirit...” (Jn 20:22), which expressed the continuation of Divine Mercy attitude over a fallen man. Furthermore, the Lord manifested the same act when he said: „I will put flesh and muscles on you and cover you with skin. I will put breath into you, and you will come to life” (Ezel 37:6). At this moment, man was in the state of happiness. After all, happiness is our natural state as designed by God. It is the natural state of little children, to whom the kingdom of God belongs until they were polluted and contaminated by another „serpent”, which is the immoral choices of society and culture⁹⁸. Of course, to be happy is to say yes to God. But, to be happy forever on earth is like throwing black paint in the air; the air remains uncontaminated without colouring the air black⁹⁹. Truly, man may ever be richer in knowledge, in material riches, in the love of others, has always the sense that he has not yet possessed happiness, that there is still something before him, something that may satisfy him¹⁰⁰. Within academic analysis, man would have remained uncontaminated in his freedom. While man experienced the state of happy moments in his innocence, there came a moment of obstacle

⁹⁴ Cf. *FC*, no. 4.

⁹⁵ Cf. *CV*, no. 3.

⁹⁶ Cf. R. E. Dickson, *Dickson's Teacher's Bible*, Cape Town 2011, p. 11.

⁹⁷ Cf. *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ Cf. A. D. Mello, *Awareness*, J. F. Stroud ed., Glasgow: William Collins Sons & Co Ltd 1990, p. 77.

⁹⁹ Cf. *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ Cf. A. M. Krąpiec, *Conversations on Man*, p. 113.

to happiness, to the effect that man can no longer manifest his full dignity of his nature without reference to not only to the level of concepts but also in an integrally existential way- to God¹⁰¹.

The account of the Fall of man, shows the basis and structure of Divine Mercy as a flow of an attitudinal compassion of God. In this sense, the Divine Mercy is an attitude of God. Ordinarily, an attitude is a settled way of thinking or feeling about something. While a behaviour, is a way, which one acts or conducts oneself, especially towards others. When one puts the two together, they produce „divine mercy habit or attitude of mercy”¹⁰² where the aim is always to restore, heal and inspire. This position also indicates a stable mental way of acting towards issues in everyday life. For instance, St. Paul was making reference to this settled way of thinking of God that is beyond human control when „he says to Moses, ‘I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion’” (Rom 9:15). When Adam and Eve realized that they were naked (Gen 3:7), it became a situation between life and death. And because God has a settled attitude of mercy and compassion, he showed the attitude of the stronger party-God himself, towards man the weaker party, which God expressed his love and forgiveness over man for his disobedience and sin¹⁰³. This is the beginning of the corporal works of mercy. Corporal works of mercy are actions directed toward fulfilling the physical and related needs of a neighbour. The emphasis is not on specific actions but on an overall attitude toward people who are disadvantaged, challenged and defeated in life¹⁰⁴.

The aim of temptation is to attack the soul of man and his freedom. However, one of the most challenging issues of man is that, the soul, „which once yielded to the temptation of distrusting the goodness of God, may be left to itself to disobey him, and, in the conflict between pleasure and the service of God, will prefer its own way. Disobedience to God is the assertion of self-will, and ‘sin is lawlessness’”¹⁰⁵. In the light of man’s situation, it is clear that man in the story of Job does not „see” the nature and purpose of God. But does discern two truths:

¹⁰¹ Cf. *DM*, no. 1.

¹⁰² The „divine mercy habit” is the science of Divine Mercy, which can be verified in every individual’s history. Far away from generalization, every human person has received mercy at one time or the other in life. This fact can be verified.

¹⁰³ Cf. R. Cantalamessa, *Beatitudes Eight Steps to Happiness*—Transl. M. Daigle-Williamson, Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press 2009, p. 65.

¹⁰⁴ Cf. R. P. McBrien, *The HarperCollins Encyclopedia of Catholicism*, San Francisco: A Division of HaroerCollins Publishers 1995, p. 995.

¹⁰⁵ F. R. Tennant, *How Sin Came into Man*, „*The Fall*”, in: <http://biblehub.com/commentaries/cambridge/genesis/3.htm> (accessed 22.03.2017). Similarly, lawlessness is a reaction to distrust. It is better to quietly trust God even when we do not understand. Like the story of Radha: an illiterate Hindu woman of thirty-five in Delhi, endures bleak poverty and deprivation. She was a victim of an arranged marriage at the age of ten, and her husband left her when she was fifteen. She lives under a veranda with her daughter Chandra and an old bachelor named Pandit and ekes out a bare existence selling the betel leaves chewed by man labourers, shopkeepers, and taxi drivers around the center of the city. Yet she is able to say with a smile: It’s not bad; it could be worse. We live here, we wash here, we eat here. My child has grown up here. She sleeps next to me. I know the people here and they know me. It is my life. God has willed this and there’s nothing I can say about it.

firstly, that nothing can frustrate the will of the Highest God, and that the divine intention is completely beyond human understanding, hence can only be accepted in faith since God knows what is best and can be counted on to accomplish it (Job 40:4, 42:3, 2-6) how and when he wants.

Essentially, man is not a functionality of the divine image rather, it is ontologically rooted in the very spiritual nature of man and his humanity. In other words, this image cannot be attached and be detached like any mechanical spare parts at the control of man himself. Truly, professional competence and moral consistency are necessary. But, without God man neither knows, which way to go nor even understands who he is. In the face of enormous problems surrounding the development of peoples, which almost make us yield to discouragement, we find solace in the sayings of our Lord Jesus Christ, who teaches us:¹⁰⁶ „Apart from me you can do nothing” (Jn 15:5) and then encourages us: „I am with you always, to the close of the age” (Mt 28:20) with the attitude of Divine Mercy.

1.4.3. Divine Mercy and the Attitude of God

Mercy is the mode or attitude; which God expresses his love. It is a positive force in the sense that it produces life instead of death of the victim. This is to say; the identity and content of mercy is seen through the attitude portrayed. In other words, an attitude is „a carrier” or „an instrument” of mercy and compassion to the center of misery where they are needed. Mercy is a deep-seated reality in God that comes from the mysterious nature of God, which is love and mercy itself¹⁰⁷. When we say, „God is love and mercy itself”, we mean God’s acts of love are „are pure” or „absolute”. In other words, mercy flows from the „Eternal Being” of God or what is called „the heart”, while habit and attitude express an action of the will. Furthermore, the nature of God is love. For example, when Jesus Christ was on the Cross, he didn’t need mercy on the Cross, rather love. Thus, it was love and mercy that spoke thus: „Father, forgive them for they do not know what they do” (Lk 23:34). And using an inadequate human language, God’s mercy comes from his omnipotence.

When Adam and Eve in the Book of Genesis sinned, God’s action to towards them was an expression of the attitude of mercy to man. By the sin of disobedience, they lost the „original happiness”, which God first gave them. Moreover, the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord (Rom 6:23). God the Creator already forgave them „seventy-seven times” (Mt 18:25), just like „when we were still powerless, Christ died for the

¹⁰⁶ Cf. *CV*, no. 78.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. *Diary*, no. 950.

ungodly” (Rom 5:6). The fact that God granted Adam and Eve, opportunity to express themselves, shows the display of man’s free will to choose and what he ought to do but not without accountability. Similarly, on the part of God, his verdict on Adam and Eve in the Garden was that the offspring of the woman will crush the head of serpent-Satan, and Satan will bruise the heel of the offspring (Gen 3:15), which is anchored on divine justice. In this announcement of the First Good News, *protoevangelium*¹⁰⁸ has come for the first time in the history of mankind, where God did not only express act of Divine Mercy, corporal works of mercy but granted man the opportunity to turn from sin. Thus, man suffers from sin, error, sickness and death, and in the midst of this gloom came Christ our Light dispersing the darkness. The rays emerging from his heart appear as a shining path to love, joy and peace¹⁰⁹.

There are two meanings of mercy. Firstly, mercy has the power to override legality whereby a sin committed is replaced by restored human dignity. In other words, when forgiveness is granted, the effect of forgiveness overrides the punishment, which was given for the sin committed. Sin not only takes away the human dignity but takes away all moral fibers to a point of defeat and degeneration of virtues. But, mercy is revolutionary, in that it renders disobedience, rebellion and duplicity meaningless where God turns sin against itself by providing opportunity for the sinner to experience the depth of his love and mercy. Thus, while touching on the central Christian virtues of love, purity and finding in them the means of recreating the divine image in man¹¹⁰.

Secondly, mercy also indicates the attitude toward the needy and the suffering. But in this case, it is not necessarily that the other person committed sin as such, it is expressed in what we call works of mercy. Here, a person has not committed sin but lost some human respect to the point of attracting mercy toward restoration of some physical lack, which also expresses act of virtue on the part of the actor. A virtue is a habitual and firm disposition to do good in line with our moral nature¹¹¹. Sometimes, mercy is being looked upon as „mercy of the heart and mercy of the hand”¹¹². Jesus used these two forms of mercy, where he shows the mercy of God towards sinners, but he also expresses compassion for all the suffering and the needy. For example, these actions of Jesus showed him feeding the crowd, healing the sick and setting the oppressed free thereby restoring their human dignity, with deserved respect and honour in society (Mt 8:17; Isa 53:4; Jn 19:7; Rom 4:25; Lev 16:10; Ps 69:26). Similarly, the Blessed Virgin Mary performed the greatest works of mercy among men by accepting to be the Mother

¹⁰⁸ In other words, this was the announcement of the „Good News” about man’s redemption after the Fall. The story of the Divine Mercy Incarnate, Jesus Christ is coming to save man.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. A. Christi, *Image of the Divine Mercy*, in: „Light of the North” (2016)31, p. 5.

¹¹⁰ Cf. B. Green, *The Soteriology of Leo the Great*, New York: Oxford Press 2008, p. 86.

¹¹¹ Cf. CCC, no. 1803.

¹¹² R. Cantalamessa, *Beatitudes Eight Steps to Happiness*, p. 65.

of God. She acted mercifully towards a couple at the wedding in Cana, when she said: „They have no more wine” (Jn 2:3). Furthermore, on 13 May 1917, the Blessed Virgin Mary taught the world the spiritual works of mercy, through Lucia, Jacinta and Francesco at Fatima, when she said: „After each decade of the Rosary add this prayer ‘O my Jesus forgives us our sins, save us from the fires of hell, lead all souls to Heaven, especially those who are most in need of thy mercy’”. As part of the corporal works of mercy, Jesus taught and urged man to be merciful for his benefit (Mt 5:5; Lk 6:36-37, 7:34; Mk 2:17). Mercy in the pattern of God’s actions, is both a gift and a life-giving action that is willingly expressed to provide help to the needy¹¹³. The point here, we learn, is not who deserves to be cared for, but rather the demand to become a person who treats everyone in an encounter of mercy—however frightening, alien, naked, or defenceless— with compassion¹¹⁴.

Essentially, in this chapter, I dealt with the brief history of Nigeria, which also is part of the history of the Divine Mercy. Nigeria is called and challenged, not only to embrace the attitude of mercy but turn the compass to where human life and property are secured¹¹⁵. History is as important as science and technology, when it comes to fostering analytical thinking, innovation and helping people. Although, the heart of the tragedy is that modern man has experienced „the eclipse of the sense of God and of man...when the sense of God is lost, there is also a tendency to lose the sense of man, of his dignity and his life...”¹¹⁶. Part of the moral implications of divine mercy in history, is that Nigeria is under moral obligation not only to acquire resources, to erect historical memorials, to celebrate historical events of the country’s history and to spend billions of Naira annually, but it is more urgent to protect lives and property through the instrumentality of the institutions as a national act of mercy. The links between the past and present are absolutely important for self-understanding of who we are, where we came from and where we are going.

Conclusion

The application of history as a universal subject is inescapable for Nigerians as a people. It is difficult to avoid a human catastrophe, a political damnation and a historical disaster where history is not taken seriously. Bedevil life, which is associated with various forms of poverty

¹¹³ Cf. M. Glazier, M. K. Hellwig, *The Modern Catholic Encyclopaedia*, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press 1994, p. 562.

¹¹⁴ Cf. O. F. Cummings, *Theology of Mercy and Love: Insights from Saint Luke and Saint John* in: „Emmanuel Magazine” 122(2016)5, p. 298.

¹¹⁵ Cf. D. Hewardd-Mills, *Church Administration & Management*, Benin City: Hosanna Christian Bookshop & Publishing House 2014, p. 61; Cf. J. Allen, *Mind is the Master the Complete James Allen Treasury*, New York: Jeremy P. Tarcher/Penguin 2010, p. 20.

¹¹⁶ P. L. P. Simpson, *On Karol Wojtyła*, New York: Lucarios Occasio Press 2014, p. 10.

will be the order of the day on both children and adults without mentioning the economy and governance of a country. Nigeria needs not only the inculturation of the Divine Mercy in the life of Nigerians as a principle but to participate in living and spreading the message of the attitude of mercy. Indeed, people make history. Thus, people need to feel that they are rooted somewhere. Where people feel that they are rootless in a country or society, they live rootless lives inevitably, which cause a lot of damage to themselves and others. The past, influence the present positively particularly in those areas where things were not done well. A case in point was the life history of Jesus, at the moment of how he died, shook the whole world and stirred the faith of the pagan centurion to say, „Truly, this was the Son of God” (Mt 27:54). I strongly advocate for the return of the subject of history in all the educational institutions in order to inculturate the attitude of the Divine Mercy and to allow healing of wounds, hurts and seek forgiveness over mistakes of the past and negative primordial legacies¹¹⁷. „Human beings do not learn from the past, people sometimes say. An extraordinary remark! People certainly do not learn from the future. And the present is so fleeting that everything that is learned in the present has already passed into the past by the time it is consolidated. Of course, humans learn from the past-and that is why it is studied. History is thus not just about things ‘long ago and far away’-though it includes that-but it is about all that makes humanity human-close and personal”¹¹⁸. The embodiment of human attitude of mercy in the history of Nigeria anchored in the Divine Mercy, is the end of Nigerians’ misery, poverty and generational hunger.

Fundamentally, an attitude is a powerful instrument, which the human person expresses acts of good or bad deeds. Attitude has three levels, namely, the needful, renewal and getting involved, which is expressed with the sense of imagination of mercy. The transformation can only take place if the needful or the essential is done. The opposite of the needful is corruption. Corruption creeps in when the needful must have been abandoned at the detriment of the individual person, family, community and the nation, which leads to suffering. Similarly, the act of renewal is a process of transformation, which undergoes various degrees of stages in search of better stage or transcendence. The renewal reminds people of their incompleteness that they need to keep moving towards perfection or completeness. Analogically, cancer is a terminal disease. It needs honest involvements by experts who will go into the research of its causes and possible cure. Paradoxically, the cause of corruption in Nigeria is the betrayal of freedom given to Nigerians in trust, due to greed and selfishness. The honest involvements of Nigerians into the causes of their present situation that is marked with political instability,

¹¹⁷ Cf. R. W. Finn, *Divine Mercy and The Death Penalty* (typescript, 2010), p. 3.

¹¹⁸ P. J. Corfield, *All People Are Living Histories-Which is Why History Matters*, „Institute of Historical” *Research*, in: http://www.history.ac.uk/makinghistory/resources/articles/why_history_matters.html (accessed 10.03. 2017).

insecurity and economic challenges will lead to the cure of the „cancer” of corruption. In other words, there is the need of introducing the term *Wazobia* to „*Wazobianification*”¹¹⁹ of the Divine Mercy in Nigeria to welcome life, justice, equity, mercy, peace, happiness, prosperity and „human dignity”¹²⁰ in both divine and human institutions. There is no tribe in Nigeria that does not know and experienced goodness, love, forgiveness and mercy. The sense of the „Theology of Divine Mercy”, exists in all the languages spoken in Nigeria. This is because, God relates with Nigerians in a daily basis. Even the ATRs members, have a high sense of the Supreme God in all aspects of their life. Therefore, inculturating WZB in Nigerian languages, is transforming languages into the citadel of God’s presence among Nigerians. *Wazobianification* in Nigeria, will make Nigerians to feel, think, see, judge and live godly. For Nigerians, it is possible to act justly, to love mercifully and walk with God humbly (Mic 6:8).

¹¹⁹ „*Wazobia*” is a three-word combination of three National Languages in Nigeria. In Yoruba Language „*Wa*” means come; in Hausa Language „*Zo*” means come and in Igbo Language „*Bia*” means come. Thus, „*Wazobianification*” of Divine Mercy means, recognizing God’s presence in the human person. This recognition also means moral obligation to look at situations, judge and act with the aim and objective to inculturate mercy as a principle in culture and in their daily life. This act must be knowingly and willingly. Nigerians are hereby tasked to inculturate and cultivate the attitude of Divine Mercy, making it present in our traditions, cultures, family-histories, institutions, communal and individual life. This principle is to embrace all the possible cultures as a collective project for the common good. *Wazobia* is part and parcel of Nigerians’ normal life. Indeed, there is a radio station named *Wazobia*, which stands as a point of contact to other institutions in Nigeria for inculturation of the attitude of mercy.

¹²⁰ *EV*, no. 2.

CHAPTER TWO

2. Theology of Divine Mercy and Nigerians

Introduction

In the previous chapter, I not only briefly dealt with history as a divine event but treated the history of Christianity in Nigeria as divine involvement. In this chapter, I will examine the theology of Divine Mercy in the OT and NT, the teachings of the Church, „Sacred Scripture, Saints, Popes, theologians and Catholic Tradition”¹.

I chose the title: „Theology of Divine Mercy and Nigerians” of this chapter for four reasons. Firstly, „mercy” as an attribute of God is not only in the human nature but it is the prerogative and the very reason for man’s existence after the Fall. Secondly, based on the fact that the reality of the theology of Divine Mercy is the „Revelation of Mercy”² to man and Nigerians are not isolated from the „Incarnation of Mercy”³ through Jesus Christ. Since mercy

¹ A. Liguori, *The Glories of Mary: Explanation of the „Hail Holy Queen”*, New Jersey: Catholic Book Publishing Corp 1981, p. 5.

² *DM*, no. 1.

³ *DM*, no. 2.

is a divine attribute, I contextualized the understanding of Divine Mercy attitude to show Divine Mercy activities in the natural and human resources. In this sense, Nigeria as a country and Nigerians as a people can morally participate in practicing, promoting, exercising the sense of mercy side by side with God as it affects justice, mercy and peace. Thirdly, „we ought to imitate the perfection of our heavenly Father: ‘Be you merciful as also your Father is merciful’”⁴. Fourthly, the superiority of mercy is present in man’s life in a special way in respect to Divine Justice⁵. Moreover, mercy is not only „the essence of the Gospel”⁶ but man is constantly in need of renewal from the human condition to the divine grace. The activities of insurgency, insecurity and poverty in Nigeria, indicate lack of the attitude of mercy among Nigerians. For Nigerians to win the war against the ills of society they need the Divine Mercy in their lives. The attitude of mercy provides man the opportunity for spiritual, physical and institutional purifications in order to experience conversion and transformation. The entire history of Nigeria is seen as divine history wrapped in God’s mercy. In this context, the theology of Divine Mercy and Nigerians is the study of God’s love and mercy to Nigerians in the natural and human resources.

Therefore, I will depend on the OT and NT texts in this chapter as the soul of moral theology, source of formal and material norms found in the biblical context. The theology of Divine Mercy provides the meaning of justice and mercy as an attribute, which God shared with man in his search for God as taught by Scripture, Fathers of the Church, Doctors of the Church, Popes, Bishops and credible theologians.

Thus, Divine Justice and mercy are summarized in the Passion and Death of Jesus Christ, the Divine Mercy Incarnate. Here, Divine Justice is expressed with the death of Jesus Christ on the Cross. Technically, man cannot stand Divine Justice. If God judges man according to his deeds, he will not survive, but God forgave man so that he can stand in awe of him (Ps 130:3-4). God is not and cannot be in any kind of misery. Theologically, God does not need man’s help. God is neither earlier or later; God is timeless and infinite beyond history. God is never confined by history.

Moreover, theology is man’ inborn desire and search of God. Many shared the desire to reconstruct a systematic introduction to theology, which would set out principles and methods to be followed in the doctrinal or dogmatic tracts that followed⁷. This desire may only be

⁴ G. Frankowski, *De Misericordia Divina Eiusque Excellentia Secundum S. Thomam: Dissertatio ad Lauream in Facultate S. Theologiae apud Pontificium Athenaeum „Angelicum” de Urbe, Romae: Typis Pontificiae Universitatis Gregorianae 1962, p. 2.*

⁵ Cf. Ibid, p. 162.

⁶ W. Kasper, *Mercy: The Essence of the Gospel and the Key to Christian Life*, transl. W. Madges, New York: Paulst Press 2014, p. 157.

⁷ Cf. G. O’Collins, *Rethinking Fundamental Theology*, London: Oxford University Press 2011, p. 2.

suppressed or undermined. Theology has been a statement of faith that has been thought deeply and at length over the centuries by theologians in search of the truth experienced in their hearts and life, including the Psalmist who said: „As the deer longs for running streams of water, so my soul longs for you, o my God. My being thirsts for God, the living God” (Ps 42:2-3). The striving of human beings to know God, explains the fact that it is only in God that human beings can find the truth, peace and happiness, which we never stop searching through theological study⁸. Similarly, by nature humans are religious beings as evidenced by our religious beliefs and behaviours⁹. It was St. Augustine who said that God made us for himself and our hearts are restless until they rest in him¹⁰. In other words, the human person seeks truth, goodness and beauty. Some people seek for truth, goodness and beauty, in material things alone, because they share a little bit in God, who is the ultimate truth, goodness and beauty. Consequently, everyone who seeks for these values in pure conscience is really looking for God but not without adoration and worship as the ultimate good, peace and beauty for human existence¹¹. St. Anselm described theology as „faith seeking understanding”¹² as people delve more deeply into their faith attempting to understand more about God.

Fundamentally, the theology of Divine Mercy is rather a systematic story of God, the Father of all creation who shows mercy to all people¹³. It is Jesus Christ who tells the story of the Prodigal son to show the love and mercy of God the Father to all people. The Prodigal son, did not only receive his inheritance from his father, he travelled out of his father’s house, but squandered all his inheritance on the life of debauchery in a distant land, which experienced severe famine. When he came to his senses, he decided to come back and ask for forgiveness from his father and ask for re-admittance as one of the workers in his father’s farm:

„So, he got up and started to his father. He was still a long way from home, when his father saw him; his heart was filled with pity and he ran, threw his arms round his son, and kissed him. ‘Father’ the son said, ‘I have sinned against God and against you. I am no longer fit to be called your son’. But the father called his servants. ‘Hurry!’ he said. ‘Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and shoes on his feet. Then go and get the prize calf and kill it and let us celebrate with a feast! For this son of mine was dead, but now he is alive, he was lost, but now he has been found” (Lk 15:20-24).

The 3 parables of Divine Mercy in Luke 15: The Lost Sheep (Lk 15:1-7); The Lost Coin (Lk 15:8-10) and Prodigal Son are consistent with what Jesus said to the Pharisees who set „righteousness” as an absolute condition for meriting God’s love. The Scripture remains a

⁸ Cf. R. W. Finn, *Divine Mercy and The Death Penalty*, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Washington D.C 2010, p. 3; CCC, no. 27.

⁹ Cf. CCC, no. 28.

¹⁰ Cf. R. Warner, *The Confessions of St. Augustine*, New York: A Mentor-Omega Books 1963, p. 19.

¹¹ Cf. P. Moskal, *Apology for the Catholic Religion*: transl, D. Bugno-Narecka, Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL 2013, p. 31.

¹² K. J. O’Neill, P. Black, *The Essential Moral Handbook a Guide to Catholic Living with a Glossary of Key Terms*, Bangalore: Asian Trading Corporation 2006, p. xiii.

¹³ Cf. W. Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, transl, M. J. O’Connell, New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company 1984, p. 133.

credible foundation, which all forgiveness is based¹⁴. Mercy is one of the governing principles of God's creation. However, the theological doctrine of forgiveness is understood to be based in God who is willing to forgive. Forgiveness is also an attribute of man who can also possibly desire and forgive his fellow man. Truly said: „To err is human, to forgive is divine”. This means that the ability to forgive is not possible without a link to Divine Mercy¹⁵. For instance, Christians understand God as a God of mercy and forgiveness especially through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. They also understand that God may treat them in mercy and not in justice. This is because to ask for justice would be a plead to be treated as his equals¹⁶. No man can stand God's justice and no one is permitted to go on sinning while hiding under God's mercy. The OT presents God as a merciful God, who loves, who forgives and who is faithful. Thus, Christians are said to have had the characteristics of forgiveness, which they must have emulated the life of God's forgiveness from Moses in the OT and Jesus Christ in the NT. To be merciful is „the way of life”¹⁷. It is difficult to speak of God correctly without acknowledging his love, mercy and forgiveness. The rooting of forgiveness in the character of God aids definition of what forgiveness means and prevents it from being either ignored by those who do not see an obligation to forgive or cheapened by those who would glibly and indiscriminately apply the term to a wide variety of emotional or psychological responses anchored on modernity and blame-game¹⁸.

We live in a time where seemingly, God is no longer the King of kings but perhaps the president; where God has died a thousand times distinctions in politics; consumerism—where everything has a prize; where God can no longer exercise the patriarchal authority of a former time and where God cannot be thought in a particularistic nationalist way¹⁹. God can be addressed personally but the address will evolve from our understanding of God as a universal Lord for all people who are created in his image and likeness. God remains God in any case.

Theology as a concept, has many branches. Notably, for co-existential harmony, philosophy „is an inner moment of theology”²⁰ where dogmatic theology, often seen to be the chief branch of theology, which draws on Scripture and Tradition to examine and present

¹⁴ Cf. F. Hogan, *Forgiveness the Glorious Face of Love*, London: Collins Flame 1990, p. 10.

¹⁵ Cf. B. W. Anderson, *Contours of Old Testament Theology*, Minneapolis: Fortress Press 1999, p. 31.

¹⁶ Cf. J. Macquarrie, ed., *Justice*, in: „Dictionary of Christian Ethics”, London: SCM Press Ltd 1967, p. 213.

¹⁷ K. Naab, ed., *Mercy Isn't a Way of Life, But the Way of Life, Says Pope in Final Meditation for Priests*, in: *Zenith*, in: <https://zenit.org/articles/mercy-isnt-a-way-of-life-but-the-way-of-life-says-pope-in-final-mediation-for-priests/> (accessed 30.03.2017).

¹⁸ Cf. A. Sarat, N. Husain, eds., *Forgiveness, Mercy, and Clemency*, Stanford: Stanford University Press 2007, p. 138.

¹⁹ Cf. E. S. Gerstenberger, *Theologies of the Old Testament*, transl. J. Bowden, London: T & T Clark, 2002, p. 304.

²⁰ G. O'Collins, *Rethinking Fundamental Theology*, p. 10.

coherently all the major doctrines of Christian faith²¹. Theology is part of the whole of Divine Mercy. According to St. John Paul II, Divine Mercy is a gift and a moral task. It is a gift that flows from the love of God that is expressed in God's mercy to man. Man, not only represents God in the „garden” but he has the moral task to show mercy in his life. This moral obligation gives man the opportunity to underscore the riches of mercy. God made man to know him, to love him and to be happy with him eternally²².

Adam and Eve have lost the state of „happiness” and „life” by their disobedience. In the midst of this situation, God revealed his merciful love to Adam by calling him „Where are you”. By this call, God communicated his mercy and love to man (Ex 34:6). God in his mercy, promised man salvation, which will come with the victory of Jesus over temptation, sin and death (Gen 3:15; Mt 4:1-11; Mk 16:6; 1 Cor 15:4). However, the relationship between theology and Divine mercy, is reiterated that man's existence and life are configured with Divine Mercy without, which man cannot exist. The concepts of love, mercy, forgiveness and compassion are used to explain the various connections between man and God, the Creator. Intellectual foundation and moral foundation are necessarily to comprehend relatively the complex ideas and sentiments that under-gird our morality²³. In other words, theology must be an answerable theology for its interpretational authenticity. But, the theological responses must also be compatible with the Magisterial interpretation of the Church²⁴. The theological content of answers must be in consonant with Scripture and Tradition as contained in the revelatory events of the Church. For many people more than ever before, the existential questions of man's existence are connected to philosophy and ontology, which focus on the question of being, or what it means to be, to exist, to be alive, to be happy, to be free and to be a finite being with all the riddles of life.

I will now analytically survey the concept of mercy, from the biblical context to show how it has the capacity to restore Nigerians to integral transformation. For example, the Israelites experienced Divine Mercy because when they cried to God he heard their groaning, and he remembered his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob²⁵ (Ex 2:24, 3:7-8, 16-22, 6:4-6, 13:5-11). In this text, God intervened on behalf of the Israelites as part of the promise of mercy made to all the patriarchs in the history of salvation²⁶.

²¹ Cf. Ibid.

²² Cf. CCC, nos. 1-3, 4-10.

²³ Cf. E. Durkheim, *Moral Education*, transl. E. K. Wilson, H. Schnurer, Mineola: Dover Publications 2002, p. 18.

²⁴ Cf. K. J. O'Neil, P. Black, *The Essential Moral Handbook a Guide to Catholic Living*, p. 306.

²⁵ Cf. H. D. Preuss, *Old Testament Theology*, Vol. II, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press 1996, p. 81

²⁶ Cf. J. Barton, *The Old Testament Canon Literature, and Theology*, England: Ashgate Publishing Limited 2007, p. 238.

2.1. Divine Mercy in the Biblical Context and the Nigerian context

The concept of mercy in the OT has a long and rich history. I juxtaposed this concept of mercy from the OT and the history of Divine Mercy in Nigeria, to ex-ray the need of mercy in institutions, individual and social life of Nigerians in the face of political instability. Divine Mercy in the biblical context represents moral authority, which Divine Mercy is made visible in Jesus Christ. By revealing the Divine Mercy both through his actions and teachings, Christ addressed himself to people who not only knew the concept of mercy, but who also, as the people of God of the Old Covenant, had drawn from their age-long history a special experience of the mercy of God. This experience was „social and communal, as well as individual and interior”²⁷. The description of mercy is the universal tool through, which the divine and human institutions, communities and individual Nigerians is ex-rayed.

It is possible to know someone that has not been met before by what the person has done. For many people, the God of the OT is considered wrathful in his actions and the God of the NT is considered merciful and gracious in his actions. This argument does not present two sets of gods. It rather highlights the variability of actions of the same and only one God, which in both testaments underscores the same message of the merciful attitude of God. The Biblical context presents God’s character in both what he has done in the past and what he does in all generations. The biblical texts both in the OT and NT are about God. God is the subject, the center and „the author” of the Scripture who revealed his Divine Mercy-*hesed*²⁸ in many occasions. Man can only describe God and his nature. During the events of revelation of God, his character and actions can be described by man as merciful and gracious:

„The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and children’s children, to the third and the fourth generation” (Ex 34:6-7, 20:5, 22:27, 33:19; Rom 2:4).

The very fact of natural and human resources in Nigeria, expressed Divine Mercy. God manifested his mercy to Adam and Eve when they distrusted him. The glory of God passed behind and before them even as they were running away but they never saw the glory of God because they were covered by „the cloud of sin” and „death.” For the glory of God to pass around them without hurting or destroying them, it means that God’s attitude to the sinner is

²⁷ *DM*, no. 4.

²⁸ *Hesed*, is Hebrew word denoting two meanings. The first meaning refers to merciful action toward a person who has committed sin, that needed restoration through an act of mercy. Sometimes, the person may not deserve it but desired to receive mercy. Secondly, the person may not necessarily have committed sin. From the type of misery, the person is going through requires practical expression of mercy towards the person by someone in order to restore the human dignity that is lost as the result of the consequences of the person’s situation (cf. „Marian Studies” Vol. L 1999, *Manificat: Remembrance and Praise, The Mariological Society of America, 1949_1999, Annual Publication of the Mariological Society of America*, p. 58.

merciful and gracious. God's action, rendered loving kindness, steadfast love, mercy when it designates the divine action and gift²⁹.

According to biblical scholars, *Hesed*, in its original meaning, refers to the feeling of mercy about a situation, to the expression of pity at the very sight of the human person who is miserable due to unfortunate circumstance. On the other hand, *Hesed*, in its active voice expresses feelings shown in the sense of help, feel pity, show mercy; where they are used in the passive, they express the experience of the emotions³⁰. Because of Yahweh's superiority as the partner in the covenant who remains faithful, was understood for the most part as a gracious gift to man, which is constantly renewed (Ex 34:9; Num 14:19; Jer 3:12), even in the NT times.

The human response to God's attitude of mercy is best translated by the terms „devotion”, „prayers”, „loyalty” (Macc 2:42), „adoration” and worship. The human response to God's mercy forms the basis and structure of the Divine Mercy Devotion. God has no any other name than „I AM WHO I AM” (Ex 3:14). All other names of God are only descriptions of his attributes such as the tender One, the gracious One, the merciful One, the God of justice and he gave hope to the guilty and his punishment expressed his justice³¹ (Ex 20:5).

The Divine Mercy was first applied to God at the vertical level-relationship between God to man but mercy is also applied at the horizontal level-relationship between man to man (Gen 20:13), a host and guest (Gen 19:19), which a practical kind gesture is expected from the host or the strong party to act towards the weak party. However, care may be taken here because the character of a covenant may overlap as expressions vary. The character of a covenant may refer to both the present and the future, but mercy flies directly to the miserable partner and restores that weaker partner to human dignity and personhood.

The Gospel of Mark, presents the Divine Mercy as the breaking of the kingdom of God into the reality of the human misery, which took place in the person of Jesus Christ. The Gospels present Jesus Christ not only as the Divine Mercy Incarnate but as bringer of the Kingdom of God; bringer of salvation; bringer of freedom and healing to humanity (Jn 1:1, 14), who from the OT and NT, heard the cry of the poor; the less privileged; the poor, the sick, the hungry and the needy (Mk 10: 47; Mt 9: 27; Lk 17:13; 1Sam 15:22; Hos 6:6). The sick people are in need of Divine Mercy in order to be restored to their natural state of pride with all its human dignity devoid of shame. Mercy is not only flowing from God to man but mercy is a shared attribute

²⁹ Cf. Marian Studies, Vol, L, *Magnificat: Remembrance and Praise*, The Mariological Society of America, 1949_1999, Ohio: Annual Publication of the Mariological Society of America 1999, p. 58.

³⁰ Cf. C. Brown, *Hesed*, in: „The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church”, transl, from the German *Theologisches Begriffslexikon Zum Neuen Testament*, L. Coenen, E. Beyreuther, H. Bietenhard, eds., Vol. 2, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House 1976, p. 593.

³¹ Cf. P. Kreeft, *You Can Understand the Bible: A Practical Guide to Each Book in the Bible*, San Francisco: Ignatius Press 2005, p. 12.

given to man, which is to be extended to a fellow man. For instance, the deeds of mercy are not limited to material help but also spiritual help. In any case, it is understood that such actions were motivated by God's mercy³². And also, St. Paul interchanged the words to mean „grace” and „peace” as mercy³³. St. Thomas Aquinas points out that mercy is a godlike virtue because it involves the strong showing pity to the weak, and from this truth someone may delight in showing „mercy” precisely because it allows him to highlight his own superiority on both at spiritual and material levels³⁴. Ironically, politicians sometimes in human communities, material help is given to people in the name of mercy, but it is done in order to violate their personhood and to take away their human dignity. This is not mercy. St. Francis de Sales said that this type of pride dressed up in the „cloth of mercy”, would make the poor „hate you for the very bread you give them”. This type of expression of mercy only empowers and enriches the very forces that efficiently stifle the initiative and resourcefulness of the poor, the sick, the slum-dwellers and villagers whose life situations represent the failure of the privileged and lack of mercy and forgiveness in society³⁵. However, the word „forgiveness” remains for all times important for all peoples and communities in Nigeria. God as a shepherd of Israel, kept on celebrating the word „forgiveness” not only to express love for his people but to bring about hope, healing and restoration.

In Moral Theology mercy is a virtue, which is a positive quality tending towards good and it is expressed in right-feeling, thinking, choosing, judging and acting. A virtue brings out the required morality, which is the tension connected to the human dignity and freedom in a creative sense. When mercy is received, the miserable person experiences freedom and restoration of the human dignity that was taken away by the situation of a misery. Morality was the first principle God gave man as a universal scale of measurement of every action. Morality may also be specifically synonymous with „goodness” or „rightness”. At the creation account, the elements; knowledge, good and evil, are within the „moral autonomy of man”³⁶. The moral

³² Cf. C. Brown, *Hesed*, in: „The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church”, p. 595.

³³ Cf. C. Brown, *Hesed*, in: „The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church”, p. 597.

³⁴ Cf. P. J. Cameron, ed., *Magnificat Year of Mercy companion*, December 8, 2015 to November 20, 2016, p. 9.

³⁵ Cf. G. Hancock, *Lords of Poverty*, p. 183.

³⁶ God created man with moral autonomy. However, man's genuine moral autonomy in no way means the rejection but rather the acceptance of the moral law, of God's command (cf. *VS*, no. 41).

Moral autonomy means accountability and responsibility. But it is the power to give out the various attributes of God to fellow men, women and earthly home. This moral autonomy is also an obligation to man to participate in the work of giving out the gifts received from God to others. Man is created to love because God is Love. Man receives almost everything he owns not only from God but from other men and women in his life. For instance, an anonymous writer puts it well, when he said: „Your birth came through others; Your name was given by others; You were educated by others; Your income indirectly comes through others; Your respect is given by others; Your first bath was given by others; Your last bath will be given others; Your funeral will be organized by others; Your will be taken to your final resting place by others, and everything you owned will be inherited by others”. This shows the moral implications of Divine Mercy, which means, man is obliged to act mercifully towards another man, who in turn would do the same to the next person. Each action is to be propelled by the moral law, tending toward good. The attitude of Mercy is not only a freely received gift from God, but it challenges man to enculturate

autonomy means that man can make good choices in response to God's will and to be accountable and responsible for all his choices. Man has been given the power to subdue and conquer temptation, sin and godlessness.

In the context of the OT, the acts of God were understood to be both individual and national in character. For instance, beginning from Adam and other occasions to the people of Israel, God intervened at different times to reveal who he was. Each time he acted, his actions were seen as flowing from his attitude of mercy and love. Furthermore, during national and personal crisis, Elijah received an extremely impressive revelation that can only be compared to the disclosure Moses experienced on Sinai after the golden-calf incident (Ex 33:20-23).

Secondly, the affection for justice, which an individual is able to will what an individual should do³⁷. Human beings, can choose between benefit and justice. When they choose the affections of benefit and justice, they have freedom to retain uprightness of will by serving justice or to lose it by rejecting justice³⁸. Ultimately, this freedom forms the guiding principle of moral life, which tends man to do what is ought to be done out of freedom especially, the act of forgiveness. *Hesed* always suggests that God should „do something” for someone (Gen 24:12, 14; Ru 1:8) who is locked-up within a misery and needs freedom and restoration. However, in Nigeria today, the media, individuals and groups, have been turned into instruments of gossips, hate, violence, unforgiving gangs and murderers at various levels. Most of the time it is complicated to the point of confusion and long inability to solve the pressing problems of the consequences of unforgiven spirit. For example, there are hundreds of words on forgiveness already available on papers, internet and in the 371 languages in Nigeria.

Fundamentally, every tribe in Nigeria has a way of going through the process of reconciliation and forgiveness. Forgiveness is part of the sacrificial system, which has been inherited as gift of Divine Mercy to humanity. Forgiveness is not an option for Nigerians rather it is a fundamental moral demand. The Divine Mercy Incarnate makes demand of humanity and Nigerians when he said: „You will be my tongue and throat, parched; You will be my hand and my feet nailed; You will be my head, thorned; You will my side, lanced; You will be my body, stripped; You will be my corpse, buried; And when the borrowing is over, you will my brothers and sisters, risen (Jn 13:16; Mt 10:25) Work of mercy Dm 1155, 1158”³⁹. Therefore,

the attitude of Mercy to other people by being merciful to them. God's love expresses this mercy of God on man as he is invited to participate in spreading the message of mercy to others. From Christian point of view, God uses anybody at his will to achieve his purpose. The sacrifice of Jesus Christ is a system of self-sacrifice for others. It was God's will that Jesus is sacrificed for others, which serves as an example for the human person to follow. Hence, the establishment of moral autonomy for man, anchored with moral accountability for the person's actions.

³⁷ Cf. D. Langston, *Did Scotus Embrace Anselm's Notion of Freedom?* in: „Medieval Philosophy and Theology”, 5(1996)2, p. 146.

³⁸ Cf. D. Langston, *Did Scotus Embrace Anselm's Notion of Freedom?* p. 147.

³⁹ M. I Uzoukwu, *Divine Mercy Devotion a Manual for Priests & Religious*, Abuja: Tonem Publicity & Publications Ltd 2013, p. 143.

given the fact that Nigerians inherited many primordial legacies from the Colonial, military and civilian regimes, Christian and Islamic Religions legacies, theology of Divine Mercy is in the narrative-language of Nigerians as fact of history, which provides opportunities for forgiveness as seen in the OT and NT references.

2.1.1. Old Testament References and Nigerians

The situation of Nigerians needs the understanding of the theology of Divine Mercy not only to comprehend the experience of mercy but to participate in the encounter of mercy within the pluralistic society of Nigeria. The themes of mercy and forgiveness are important in the OT, as much as to Nigerians who are engaged with the interreligious dialogue, political instability marked with syndrome of modernism. The „error of modernism is ‘objectivism’, that is the idea that the individual subjects can attain the entire, value-free, truth when examining an object-they can see it as it really is: while the error of postmodernism is ‘subjectivism’, the idea that because observers are never value-free or objective, they see the object according to their subjective perspective”⁴⁰. The errors of both modernism and postmodernism are inevitable due to the use of „auto-systematic lenses” to generate and to determine textual content (Gen 3:15, 6:13ff; 2 Sam 16:5ff, 9:3), of mercy in the OT theology, and the NT theology (Jn 14:9; Lk 17:3-4; Mk 2:7; Mt 6:14-15). Thus, the OT captures various themes, which include: The Garden of Eden; covenant; obedience and disobedience; the Fall and forgiveness. And since theology is dynamic in content and interpretation, various theologians would present their different views about the state of the OT today in relation to Nigerians⁴¹. However, the theology of Divine Mercy, remains active in the OT as provided by the various texts, which also provided many occasions where the love and mercy are experienced such as: „presentations of penitent supplications”⁴² and testimonies of the reception of Divine mercy, and followed by thanksgiving and praises of God⁴³.

Pope Francis, at the 12th anniversary of the ‘birth’ in heaven of St. John Paul II, quoted his teaching when he said: „The world will find peace in the Mercy of God”⁴⁴. In other words, Nigerians’ salvation, developments, the present life and future existence are impossible without

⁴⁰ S. Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty, A Biblical Theology of the Hebrew Bible*, D. A. Carson, ed., Illinois: An Imprint of Intervarsity Press 2006, p. 17.

⁴¹ Cf. S. Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty, A Biblical Theology of the Hebrew Bible*, p. 232.

⁴² B. W. Aderson, *Contours Old Testament with Assistance of Steven Bishop*, Minncapolis: Fortress Press 1999, p. 53.

⁴³ Cf. W. Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament*, transl, J. A. Baker, Philadelphia: The Westminster Press 1975, p. 211.

⁴⁴ A. Bourdin, *Legacy of John Paul II: The World will find peace in the Mercy of God*, in: *Zenith*, in: <https://zenit.org/articles/legacy-of-jean-paul-ii-the-world-will-find-peace-in-the-mercy-of-god/> (accessed 10.04.2017).

God's mercy⁴⁵. Indeed, lack of mercy colours truth in transmission and interpretation of Divine Mercy attitude⁴⁶. If the Bible is approached as a political tract, a textbook of knowledge, ... then, surely its meaning will be distorted⁴⁷. The historical content and relevance of Divine Mercy are immutable experiences. The virtue of mercy is „a life wire”⁴⁸ for Nigerians without, which it is impossible to exist. In the OT the Lord, through his servant Moses, led Israel in the desert like a child, educating his people in his faith and creating a strong bond of love. Similarly, in the NT, Jesus Christ not only taught his people the way of mercy but he died for justice and mercy. In OT the Lord's mercy makes Israelites precious. Similarly, the conversion of Nigerians will make them more precious in the eyes of God, like a personal wealth, which belongs to him, he conserves and is pleased with⁴⁹. Therefore, Nigerians must not allow moral virtue to be history but inculturating it in the NT.

2.1.2. New Testament References and the Nigerian Context

The Nigeria of today constitutes the Nigerians of the NT. The OT has been established and inferred as history of Divine Mercy. It is the victory of Jesus Christ over death on the Cross and his Resurrection that gave birth to the NT. In as much as Nigerians can depend on the theology of Divine Mercy in the OT, Jesus the Divine Mercy Incarnate identified himself not only with humanity but with Nigeria as a nation and Nigerians as citizens in dire need of mercy. Fundamentally, God „dwells in unapproachable light’, ‘he speaks to man he means of the whole universe: ‘ever since the creation of the world his invisible nature, namely, his eternal power and deity, has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made’. This indirect and imperfect knowledge, achieved by the intellect seeking God by means of creatures through the visible world, falls short ‘vision of the Father’. ‘No one has ever seen God’, writes St. John, in order to stress the truth that the only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has made him known”⁵⁰. In this way, Christ confers on the OT tradition about Divine Mercy as a definite meaning and in the NT as a legacy for generations to come⁵¹. Analogically, he himself

⁴⁵ Cf. E. Martens, *Design A Focus on Old Testament Theology*, Michigan: Published by Baker Books 1994, p. 22.

⁴⁶ Cf. S. Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty, A Biblical Theology of the Hebrew Bible*, p. 17.

⁴⁷ Cf. S. Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty, A Biblical Theology of the Hebrew Bible*, p. 20.

⁴⁸ Through the generations of Adam, Noah and Moses and others, God's mercy is the cause of their survival. The deeds of the generations were synonym to death. There is no other reason why man should be alive devoid of God's mercy. In this sense, mercy is like a life wire throughout generations. The Psalmist confirm this when he said: „Of what importance is the human race, that you should notice them? Of what importance is mankind, that you should pay attention to them...” (Ps 8:4). Without mercy, it is impossible to be among the living witnesses.

⁴⁹ Cf. Francis, *General Audience: God Gives Us Legacy of Mercy*, in: *News.va-Official Vatican Network*, in: <http://www.news.va/en/news/general-audience-god-gives-us-the-legacy-of-mercy> (accessed 10.02.2016).

⁵⁰ *DM*, no. 2.

⁵¹ Cf. *Ibid.*

incarnated and personified mercy so that nations and Nigerians are invited to bury their differences and inculturate mercy not only as a legacy and virtue in the NT but as the way of life.

Divine Mercy in the NT is a legacy bequeathed by Jesus Christ to humanity. It propelled God's actions in favour of the human person. God taught and revealed his mercy when he sought and called out the man; „Where are you?” (Gen 3:9), and he said to Moses; „Go and tell the people of Israel, ‘I am Who I am’, has sent me to you” (Ex 3:14). Due to the importance of the theology of Divine Mercy, the OT is connected with the NT where Jesus is the Divine Mercy Incarnate and the Blessed Virgin Mary is the Mother of Mercy as a message to humanity in general and to Nigerians in particular. There is a connection between „the offspring of the woman” (Gen 3:15), in the Book of Genesis and the prophecy of Isaiah, who prophesied that a child would be born to us. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father and Prince of peace (Is 9:6). The child to be born, is Jesus Christ the Divine Mercy Incarnate, while the Mother of this child is referred to the Blessed Virgin Mary. Mary performed the greatest act of mercy among men, because she said „yes” to her Immaculate Conception and birth of her divine Son, Jesus Christ. The prophecy of Isaiah bore witness to this fact⁵². The Blessed Virgin Mary is the first teacher of mercy. In this sense, the Blessed Virgin Mary has not only been prophesied to be the Mother of God but accepted God's will by her „yes”. God's prophecy of the victory of Mary's Son over Satan, is not only the first good news, but it is a redemptive announcement for humanity. Similarly, in the OT, the Blessed Virgin Mary was not only prefigured as prophetess and Mother of Mercy in the place known as the „palm tree of Deborah”, between Ramah and Bethel, in the land of Ephraim: it was there, the children of Israel went when they were in trouble, like the couple at the wedding in Canaan, to obtain grace and justice, which overcame shame and disgrace⁵³. Furthermore, Mary's Magnificat is above all the canticle of God's mercy, praise and hope of the chosen people through Mary, to be also participants and transmitters of the attitude of mercy⁵⁴. Jesus is the King of kings. He is the King of Justice. He kept the Kingdom of Justice for himself and gave the Kingdom of Mercy to Mary. „At the same time, he arranged that all mercies dispensed to human beings should pass through her hands and be disposed just as she pleases”⁵⁵. The Blessed Virgin Mary is not only the Queen but the Mother and Queen of Mercy⁵⁶. St. Thomas Aquinas confirmed this when he said: „When the Blessed Virgin Mary conceived the Eternal Word in her womb and gave him

⁵² Cf. M. Miravalle ed., *Mariology A Guide for Priests, Deacons, Seminarians and Consecrated Persons*, 2007, p. 43.

⁵³ Cf. M. Miravalle ed., *Mariology A Guide for Priests, Deacons*, p. 62.

⁵⁴ Cf. *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ A. Liguori, *The Glories of Mary: Explanation of the „Hail Holy Queen”*, p. 20.

⁵⁶ Cf. A. Liguori, *The Glories of Mary: Explanation of the „Hail Holy Queen”*, p. 19.

birth, she obtained half of the Kingdom of God. She became Queen of Mercy and her Son remained King of Justice”⁵⁷. She is the Queen but not of justice, punishing the guilty. She is the Queen of Mercy, the Mother of repentant sinners, full of compassion and pardon for sinners⁵⁸. Thus, John the Evangelist, affirmed Jesus Christ as the Word, that was with God in the beginning, and he is always God (Jn 10:30), he humbled (Phil 2:8), himself not only to dwell among human beings (Jn 1:14) but to incarnate the virtue of mercy in all human activities. Man is morally bound to give freely (Mt 10:8) the attribute of mercy to others in education. The virtue of mercy can be passed on to others through the process of education (Dt 6:7).

Similarly, Jesus gave a summary of the theology of Divine Mercy when he said:

„To a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. When he had begun to settle them, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him. But since he did not have the means to repay, his master commanded him to be sold, along with his wife and children and all that he had, and repayment to be made. So, the servant fell to the ground and prostrated himself before him, saying, ‘Have patience with me and I will repay you everything’. And the master of that servant felt compassion and released him and forgave him the debt. But that servant went and found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii; and he seized him and began to choke him, saying, ‘pay back what you owe’. So, his fellow servant fell to the ground and began to plead with him, saying, have patience with me and I will repay you’. But he was unwilling and threw him in prison until he should pay back what was owed. So, when his fellow servants saw what had happened, they were deeply angry and came and reported to their master all that had happened. Then summoning him, his master said to him ‘you wicked servant, I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. Should you not also have had mercy on your fellow servant, in the same way that I had mercy on you?’” (Mt 18:23-33).

Nigerians are challenged to realize and recognize that, the theology of Divine Mercy is not only taught by the OT, NT, the Blessed Virgin Mary—the „Mother of Mercy”⁵⁹ in her apparition messages, the Fathers of Vatican Councils but that the teachings of the Church are relevant that the expression of Divine Mercy is the dignity of man that is expressed upon the fact that he shares in the divine mind by his intellect, which gives him the primacy status over things⁶⁰. Nigerians share in the divine mind by their intellects, to be experts in the transmission of the virtue of mercy among fellow Nigerians as a moral obligation to the wake-up call to mercy.

2.1.3. A Wake-up-call of Mercy

In the North-Eastern part of Nigeria, the experience of political instability, insurgency and Boko Haram who destroyed lives and properties indiscriminately in recent times, gave rise to wake-up-call to mercy. This experience has spread to all parts of Nigeria, where people not only experience insecurity but there are high tensions. The virtue of mercy not only required by individual Nigerians but more on the institutions, which regulate all activities of Nigerians for

⁵⁷ A. Liguori, *The Glories of Mary: Explanation of the „Hail Holy Queen”*, p. 20.

⁵⁸ Cf. A. Liguori, *The Glories of Mary: Explanation of the „Hail Holy Queen”*, p. 43.

⁵⁹ *DM*, no. 9.

⁶⁰ Cf. *GS*, no. 15.

the common good. Consequently, this situation left more orphans and widows without welfare, dignity and personhood. It is as if no one has ever encountered and received mercy.

The realization of the reality of Divine Mercy seems to be a private and individual affair. And truly, the wakeup-call of mercy is like „a second name of creation” through-which man was brought back to life. Yet, the reality looks as if the implication of Divine Mercy belongs to a category of „their own thing”, both in principle and practice. The reality of the Divine Mercy is looked upon as a distraction and a mental burden, which takes away time without providing commensurable price for it. Thus, the reality of Mercy is everybody’s business. The reality of Divine Mercy goes beyond the matter of mythology. Unfortunately, when man disobeyed God, instead of him to run to God out of trust, man distrusted God, consequently, he presumably ran out of the sight of God in rebellion. Man’s loss of confidence in God does not exempt him from moral accountability. He abandoned himself into the power of the Devil. In other words, at the dawn of history man got lost and was at the edge of death. At this point, there was nothing possible as powerful as the act of Divine Mercy for his rescue. The creation of man was an act of God’s love, while the calling of man back to live and to God was an act of Divine Mercy. When man distrusted and rebelled against God, the „Heart of God’s Mercy”, „flew” into the man’s situation in order to rescue him, restore him to human dignity, personhood and to live again. For example, when Adam sinned God mercifully called him: „Where are you?”. This „question-call”⁶¹ is a wakeup-call against eternal damnation. Contextually, the moral challenge implies that Nigerians should urgently moralize the immoral society, communities, families, individuals and social life. It is a call for the transmission of the moral implications to go and do the same to others (Lk 10:37; Jn 13:1-17). Man’s nature constantly puts him to and fro around evil. The intimacy between him and God has been wounded. God becomes a „dreaded” reality that cannot be trusted. Man has introduced the culture of „the blame game”, not only to blame God, but to aggressively blame the gifts and blessings of God in others. The Divine Mercy is all about the plan of God to rescue man from death, man is morally challenged to tend toward good⁶². The fact that God called and questioned man, it does not mean, he was not seeing man. He wanted man to pass through the process of justice, fairness and formation anchored in his moral conscience.

Similarly, the moral conscience of Nigerians has the capacity to call institutions and politicians who are responsible for political instability to inculturate mercy in institutions and social life. Moral conscience is tending to whatever is true, pure and holy. With the ownership

⁶¹ The „question-call” is a question intending to know where the man is. But, it is also a call, in order to invite a response from the man. Of course, God saw him anywhere he might have been in the garden. After all, God put him in the garden. The man in the Garden was equivalent to be on God’s palm.

⁶² Cf. V. Flynn, *7 Secrets of the Divine Mercy*, San Francisco: Ignatius Press 2006, p. 196.

of the wake-up of mercy, conscience can put Nigerians in contact with the Source of Moral Law and Lawgiver, God Himself. However, conscience is about freedom in the truth, not freedom from the truth. It discerns good and evil more accurately. It does not decide good and evil. However, it includes „both the disposition and inclination to do good and the practical judgment for this or for that action”⁶³. There are features of moral conscience, namely: perception- through the sense of seeing or hearing; judgement- evaluation of evidence by the intellect; deliberation-a thoughtful process of weighing options; decision- a resolution reached after a consideration; and learning lessons. Morally speaking, when man experienced God’s impartiality and just treatment, it becomes a moment of formation of moral character anchored on mercy as it relates to other persons (Jer 1:5; Gal 1:5). A habit is related to attitude⁶⁴.

Forming a habit is the same process whether it is a good habit or a bad habit. It takes spiritual, personal desire and psychological help to change every habit acquired. The main difference is that what we consider to be good habits usually take concentrated effort. While bad habits are easy to fall into. A habit is a regular practice that is hard to give up in an individual’s daily life. It is an effect of repeated acts and aptitude to do them. A habit is a regular tendency, whose nature that is mutable for good or bad direction. Due to its innate natural background, it is a power of a particular moral force that has the capacity to influence the actions of a person in every human culture⁶⁵.

Due to dynamic nature of culture, Nigerians have rich cultures that the wake-up-call of mercy can be institutionalized in all sectors of society, which can be anchored on the moral values against immoral effects⁶⁶. After all, there are many politicians who have made political life their culture, business and life career, which shows that Nigerians have the capacity to sow, cultivate, nurture and acquire divine attributes of justice, love and mercy.

2.2. Mercy: An Attribute of God

An attribute is a specific quality that is inherent in a person’s personal being. The quality that has the power to cause the existence of an action. In every existence, quality is mostly preferred to quantity. Previously, it has already appeared that the question as to the possibility of knowing God in his essential being, engaged the best minds of the Church from the earliest centuries of the Church’s history⁶⁷. In this case, „mercy” is an attribute of God, which caused the redemption

⁶³ CCC, nos. 1776-1802.

⁶⁴ Cf. S. Sakaba, *Habits Beyond Today*, Zuru: Anchor Publishing and Resources 2016, p. 1.

⁶⁵ Cf. S. Sakaba, *A Clash of Political Identity in Nigeria*, p. 4.

⁶⁶ Cf. S. Sakaba, *A Clash of Political Identity in Nigeria*, p. 42.

⁶⁷ Cf. R. P. C. Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God: The Arian Controversy*, 318-381, Edinburgh: T & T Clark 1997, p.731; Robert C. Neville, *God the Creator: On the Transcendence and Presence of God*,

of mankind from eternal damnation. St. John Paul II, put it well when he said; „Mercy is an indispensable dimension of love; it is as it were love’s second name and, at the same time, the specific manner, which love is revealed and effected vis-à-vis the reality of the evil that is in the world, affecting and besieging man”⁶⁸. Mercy is precisely the mode and sphere, which love manifests itself that in the biblical language is called „mercy”⁶⁹. Mercy is the most powerful attributes of God⁷⁰. The depth of mercy is so immeasurable when the Lord says: „My daughter, do you think that you have enough about My mercy? What you have written is a drop compared to the ocean. I am Love and Mercy itself. There is no misery that could be a match to My Mercy, neither will misery exhaust it, as it is being granted-it increases. The soul that trust in My Mercy is the most fortunate, because I myself will take care of it”⁷¹.

Mercy is meeting misery face to face. Mercy is both spiritual and physical. Mercy exists to live. For instance, one of the expressions of mercy is healing of Bartimaeus. He was a blind man and a beggar in Jericho for many years until he met Jesus when he was passing to Jerusalem. A burning desire for mercy made him to inquire with a deep trust about awesome divine presence of Jesus (Gen 3:8; Lk 18:35). Due to the power-packed of trust, he did not wait for Jesus to call him, but he called out saying, „Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” (Lk 18: 38; Mk 10:47). Here, at the meeting of mercy and misery-Bartimaeus who was blind, mercy washed away the misery of the blindness. Bartimaeus was not distracted over the forces of discouragement of the crowd. Mercy is opened to both the faithful and the faithless. In other words, those who believe can receive directly from God and those who have no faith in God, God is waiting for their repentance. Analogically, Nigerians can make a strong wake-up-call to fellow Nigerians, on the benefit of mercy among the members of ATRs, Christianity and Islam, which is powerful enough eradicate poverty in Nigeria.

Poverty is the fitter emblem of the human community as it seeks God’s mercy. Jesus, the Divine Mercy Incarnate, does not only come to heal and save, but he is the Divine Mercy Incarnate, he is the Perfect attribute of mercy. The mission of the Church is to free those in bandage of poverty and introduce them to the Kingdom of God, which can be realized in the Church that is also a sacrament of Jesus Christ⁷². The mercy of Jesus empowers and encourages the blind on the road to mercy center and the prayer of faith for mercy. In a sense, Bartimaeus was an apostle of Divine Mercy. An apostle is one who is sent forth with a specific message,

Chicago: The University of Chicago Press 1968, p. 74; L. Berkhof, *Systematic Theology: The Banner of Truth Trust*, Edinburgh 1974, p. 43.

⁶⁸ *DM*, no. 7.

⁶⁹ *DM*, no. 3.

⁷⁰ Cf. *Diary*, no. 301.

⁷¹ *Diary*, no. 1273.

⁷² Cf. W. Kasper, *Harvesting the Fruits: Aspects of Christian Faith in Ecumenical Dialogue*, London: Continuum 2009, p. 62.

which a person presents it vigorously with enthusiasm. In other words, he is a vigorous and pioneering advocate of mercy, which was not in doubt representing his confidence in the mercy of Jesus. He went out and glorifying God; and when all the people saw it, they gave glory and praise (Lk 18:43; Mt 5:16) to God in heaven. Mercy is associated with riches. To receive mercy is to be rich. A rich person is made rich in order to show God's mercy and glory in his life like Bartimaeus. Mercy is the transmission of love, which expresses itself at healing, forgiveness (Lk 18:43; Mt 5:16) and leaving a mark of hope. The story of the attribute of mercy is an event to be grateful, because its occurrence prevents something unpleasant happening to man as a creature of God.

2.2.1. The Attribution of Mercy to Nigerians

Nigerians as creatures of God need the realization of Divine Mercy and divine favours bestowed on them. Nigerians share in the worth of human person than other creatures on earth. God gave Nigerians the gifts of intellect and the freedom to make moral choices between options. Even they decide not to choose, this will not exempt anyone from moral accountability. In their state of innocence, Adam and Eve needed no clothes, ornament and shoes. These were dozens of favours, which God in his love bestowed on them. God commanded: be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth and subdue it (Gen 1:28). The spiritual and moral of life of man, placed him above other creatures and earthly human creation through technology.

Unfortunately, man's divine honour and prestige have been damaged by disobedience and sin, which made him perpetually vulnerable to everything created and even the things he co-created. And soon becoming like the beasts that perish. Although God „dwells in unapproachable light, he speaks to man through his Son Jesus Christ; by means of the whole universe: ever since the creation of the world his visible nature, namely, his eternal power and deity, has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made. This indirect and imperfect knowledge, achieved by the intellect seeking God by means of creatures through the visible world, falls short of 'vision of the Father'. 'No one has ever seen God', the only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has made him known. This 'making him known' reveals God in the most profound mystery of his being, one and three, surrounded by unapproachable light"⁷³ through-which man seeks his way to God.

God's nature is love. He took time to teach man how to speak a language as an instrument through, which he can live morally in his mercy. God taught Adam a language when he asked him to bring creatures to see how he would call them (Gen 2:19). This giving and

⁷³ *DM*, no. 2.

calling their names means the power of language. The naming of all the creatures by man, was an opportunity to exercise the use of a language, which encodes and decodes messages. A „language”⁷⁴ is a powerful tool for meaning-creating process that confers meaning on both the past and the present; such constructions provide the sense-making capacity that facilitates individual’s orientation within the complex framework of life. Consequently, characteristics can be used to identify causes. For instance, children resemble parents, not only through their common humanity but is known and accepted by a scientific term as DNA (Deoxyribo Nucleric Acid).

In the same vein, Nigerians as creatures know the causes of political instability, anti-people leadership, insensitive leadership, the leadership that hears the cries of the poor and brings the dividends of democracy to the grassroots. Hence, the observer can recognize the imprint and image of the cause in its effect(s)⁷⁵. Nigerians as creatures of God have the capacity to understand and imitate, in faith what God has already made with the marks of his attributes⁷⁶. Moreover, divine attributes are also found in man namely, spirituality, rationality and morality. Man is a moral being like God. On one hand, the attributes such as self-existence, immutability, infinity and eternity are reserved for God alone⁷⁷. On the other hand, God shares with man the attributes of knowledge, wisdom, goodness, love, holiness, justice, and truthfulness as his finite „representative” on earth.

2.2.2. The Meaning of Mercy to Nigerians

In this section, I want to show that each Nigerian at each given level, is representing God. The decisions and work of each Nigerian are to aim at doing good for the glory of God and for the good of Nigerians. God caused each man to exist in a creative sense towards perfecting not only God’s work but to contribute to the welfare of man. Therefore, Nigerians are to use all that God gave them to reflect his gifts and blessings for the common good. The creation of man in the image and likeness of God constitutes enormous tasks, namely, priority of morality over technology, primacy of life over things and superiority of human spirit over matter. Ethically, God is the Perfect-Moral-Being, which man’s ethical life is anchored.

⁷⁴ Language is an important tool to either construct or destroy the central message of a reality. With the aid of language, the mental visualization becomes possible which facilitate the direction of the framework where such a reality can be placed. A language can create a good or bad message by twisting, distorting or changing the entire message which nullifies its content. Readers would now have to accept the interpretation and meaning of the editor (Cf. S. Udo, *Theology of the New Testament*, p. 37).

⁷⁵ Cf. G. O’Collins, *Rethinking Fundamental Theology*, p. 26-27.

⁷⁶ Cf. G. Devine, *Transformation in Christ*, New York: alba house 1972, p. 160.

⁷⁷ Cf. *Ibid.*

The word „ethics” comes from the Greek word, „ethos” with three different meanings. Firstly, „ethics” is related to the idea of „morals”, referring to a particular custom or way of doing positive things. Secondly, it refers to a character of a person highlighting the consistency of the character of a person in doing such things he or she does. Thirdly, „ethics” also means „a residence,” or „a home”⁷⁸, which „at first blush, this definition may seem to have nothing to do with moral theology or the moral life. Granting that we all have different experiences of home life, many people typically see ‘home’ as the place where we belong, where we are ourselves. Surely none of us has arrived at this point, nor are we totally consistent in our moral lives”⁷⁹. In other words, God’s kingdom will be a permanent home of man. More technically, „ethics” is defined as that science, which studies the morality of human acts through the medium of natural reason, which is directive of the moral acts of man’s will according to basic rational principles and moral law⁸⁰.

A credible knowledge of the moral principle is necessary for man who is a direct „representative of God”. To carry out his legitimate responsibilities for God. Man was endowed with intellect, free will and conscience, with which all human acts are subjected to accountability. It was not enough to till and care for the Garden of Eden. It was more important and empirical for man to ethically and obediently act morally. The „discovery of new knowledge” by Adam and Eve, ironically, ran away from God’s sight. By trusting God, man makes ethics a subject of science. Ethics is a science, because it is systematic body of knowledge with coordinated conclusions and clearly established and based upon proven rational principles and moral law, which dignify human person as God’s „representative” on earth⁸¹.

Objectively, ethics is to discover the origin, nature and purpose of those things, which are within its boundary of study. Similarly, Nigerians are not only to focus on the field of moral truth, presenting it in an orderly manner on a sound rational basis of moral goodness or badness of all human actions, but not to compromise the primacy of moral act and attitude⁸². Although, man’s situation in the modern world seems indeed to be far removed from the objective demands of the moral order, justice, and love. God’s first message to man was to morally and mercifully „subdue” the earth⁸³. Man’s compromise, distrust and abandoning the science of

⁷⁸ K. J. O’Neill, P. Black, *The Essential Moral Handbook a Guide to Catholic Living*, p. xiv.

⁷⁹ K. J. O’Neill, P. Black, *The Essential Moral Handbook a Guide to Catholic Living*, p. xiv-xv.

⁸⁰ Cf. C. J. McFadden, *Medical Ethics*, Burns & Oates, London 1962, p. 1.

⁸¹ Cf. K. Naab, *Cardinal Parolin to Humanitarian Summit: Human Dignity Transcends Politics*, in: <https://zenit.org/articles/cardinal-parolin-to-humanitarian-summit-human-dignity-transcends-politics/> (accessed 30.05.2016).

⁸² Cf. W. Kay, *Moral Education: A Sociological Study of the Influence of Society Home and School*, London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd 1975, p. 359.

⁸³ Cf. *RH*, no. 16.

ethics, attacked all centers of happiness: relationship with God, relating with other people, enjoying the aura of safety and goodness and consequently; suffering, illness and death. Man has no independent capability to exist and do anything without God (Jn 15:5).

The cultural backgrounds of Nigerians, give them opportunity to understand the science of ethics based on the fullness of the Divine Revelation to man⁸⁴. There is no doubt that the science of ethics establishes the reliability of human reason as an instrument for the acquisition of knowledge in order to complete the moral demand of Nigerians. Politically, there are seasoned legislatures who represent different Federal Constituencies in Nigeria. The general assumption is that all forms of knowledge, especially science, if they are properly used, they can lead Nigerians to the truth and refusal to accept this truth established by ethical science not only possesses danger to Nigerians but cuts by-lateral relation with International Community. Therefore, man cannot relinquish himself or the place in the visible world that belongs to him; he cannot become a slave of things, political systems, economic systems, a slave of production, the slave of his own products in his status as God's „representative” on earth⁸⁵.

Regardless where Nigerians are, as God's „representatives” have a moral duty to promote mutual solidarity for the common good. In the promotion of common good, the protection of lives and properties becomes a watch word.⁸⁶ In other words, the human dignity and its worth cannot be compromised over things. Thus, moral principles must be put in use to ensure adequate protection from every form of violation of personhood and human dignity without, which man cannot attain that true happiness, which he yearns with all the strength of his spirit⁸⁷. This expresses the primacy of the human person over things (Ex 20:13; Mk 10:19; Jas 2:11).

Essentially, the body and soul, are the properties that make up the whole unit of a person. It is only in the spirit (Jn 4:4) and the body, the human person sacrifices in worship of God his Creator. Lack of human bread, money, job, friend, can bring about a feeling of being unloved. The person with life and spirit must be preserved against sacrifice for the sake of these human bread. Of course, matter is never the source of man's life. The secret of Jesus' victory in the tempting time (Mt 4:1-11), was his anchoring on the power of the written Scripture as God's word. All answers were tied to the Scripture. It is also clear that Satan has no objection of going to holy places because those are places where the human person expresses his yearnings for God, as he plans at attacking him. Fortunately, it is at the holy places that the human person receives help to avoid sin and protection against the evil one (Mt 26:41; Lk 22:46). Nigeria will

⁸⁴ Cf. A. Dulles, *Models of Revelation*, Preface to the 1992 Edition, p. 155.

⁸⁵ Cf. *RH*, no. 16.

⁸⁶ Cf. *HV*, no. 4.

⁸⁷ Cf. *HV*, no. 31.

celebrate divine promotion if they reject vehemently political temptation by seeking God's mercy. The superiority of the spirit over matter is in the custody of politicians, Christianity, Islam and ATRs in Nigeria to reject evil proposals against moral obligations of Nigerians.

2.2.3. Nigerians' Moral Obligations

The task of man is to seek the truth and the truth will set him free (Jn 8:32). To seek the truth is to seek God. The human inclination always reminds man about this responsibility. It is difficult to love someone one does not know. Love is like a seed. God is Love. All his gifts to man presuppose the development of those gifts for further creativity for the glory of God. The implementations of these gifts into developmental projects spell out clearly man's moral responsibility. Man has a debt of moral duty to translate the divine attributes, with which to perfect the world, as a stakeholder.

Man is a created-creator, who has participated in the evolution of many sectors not only to his credit but enabled him to fulfil the divine mandate to subdue the earth and conquer it (Gen 1:28). Man has subdued and conquered distance by airplane, expanded the voice of communication by telephone, lengthened sight by glasses and microscopes, bringing down abstracts ideas into practical reality by architectural designs, making science and technology not only living realities but to serve the needs of man. Mercy is „the way of life”. It is only the mercy of God that will save not only Nigeria but the world⁸⁸. Moreover, „today, Jesus gives a voice to those without a voice and asks each one of us an urgent appeal to open our hearts and make our own the sufferings and anxieties of the poor, the hungry, the marginalized, refugees, those defeated by life, those who are rejected by society. Pride and vanity are the cause of many evils in the world”⁸⁹. Many Nigerians are facing challenges, namely, political discrimination, unemployments and resource imbalance. Nigerians are their instruments, available such as: their openness to truth and beauty, sense of moral goodness, freedom and the voice of their conscience, with their longing for the infinite and for happiness they can redirect various philosophies of life, science and technology, and projects to implant and embed mercy⁹⁰. After all, no Nigerians without God can add a single hour to their span of life, despite their anxiousness (Mt 6:27). Nigerians are morally challenged to responsibly bequeath a legacy of moral obligation, which marks the end of misery in Nigeria and in the midst of ideologies of mortal life⁹¹.

⁸⁸ Cf. J. G. Murphy, J. Hampton, *Forgiveness and Mercy*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2010, p. 10.

⁸⁹ Francis, *Open Your Hearts to Those Defeated by Life*, in: <http://www.ewtnnews.com/catholic-news/Vatican.php?id=14167> (accessed 30.08.2016).

⁹⁰ Cf. CCC, no. 33.

⁹¹ Cf. RN, no. 13.

2.3. The Divine Mercy in the History of the Church

In this section, the apostolic mandate given to the Apostles by Jesus to go and teach, presuppose the teaching and transmission of the theology of Divine Mercy. The Apostles, Fathers of the Church and Doctors of the Church, never lost sight of the God of Jesus Christ in their teachings⁹². The truth about theology of Divine Mercy in reference to Nigerians is very credible due to the credibility of the sources. The authority of the Apostles proceeded from the office imposed on them by Jesus Christ. Since mercy is about restoration of what is lost or wounded, Jesus promised to be with them till the end of age (Mt 28:20), gave authority to their preaching (Mk 16:16), sent them the „promise of the Father”–the Holy Spirit (Lk 24:49), who animates and actualizes the inculturation of the virtue of mercy. The authority of Jesus Christ is based on mercy through, which he redeemed man.

Subsequently, Fathers of the Church passed on the teaching of Jesus on mercy through Tradition, Scripture, Magisterium and Councils of the Church. Nigerians need to practice mercy as taught by the Apostles and Fathers of the Church⁹³. This same message that was passed on by the Apostles and Fathers of the Church, is invariably given to Nigerians. Moreover, God is the source of every Nigerian utility⁹⁴. Every genuine teacher passed through a credible institution and teacher so that acceptable articles of faith and doctrine can be further taught to the next generations to ensure moral culture and integral education. In the same vein, the Catholic Church in Nigeria had the mandate of teaching (Mt 28:19) from Jesus Christ the Divine Mercy Incarnate⁹⁵. Similarly, CBCN reiterated its observation and teaching thus: „Politics in Nigeria are degenerating into personal antagonism, harsh words, character assassination, half-truths or even falsities, unsuitable language in radio, press and television, and intolerance of other views, and other political options or opinions. Our political leaders will serve this nation better if they are more accommodating towards those of other opinions and other political parties; if they are ready to work with other parties for the good of our country; if they are prepared to accept electoral defeat without rancour and co-operate with the winning party in the overall interest of the nation”⁹⁶.

The Synoptic Gospels show how Jesus appointed twelve men and transformed them from his disciples to his Apostles with diligent and integral formation (Mt 3:14; Lk 6:13). The meaning and content of an „Apostle” lie in the special vocation and „formal appointment” (Mk

⁹² Cf. W. Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, p. 133.

⁹³ Cf. S. Wood, *Breaking Free: 12 Steps to Sexual Purity for Men*, Greenville: Family Life Centre Publications 2010, p. 27.

⁹⁴ Cf. B. MacCarthaigh, *Value of Education What, Why and How*, Branda: Better Yourself Books 1992, p. 26.

⁹⁵ Cf. A. Hilhorst, ed., *The Apostolic Age in Patristic Thought*, Leiden: Brill 2004, p. 28.

⁹⁶ C. Anyanwu, O. J. Fadugba-Pinheiro, *Our Concern for Nigeria Catholic Bishops Speak*, p. 19.

3:13-19; Mt 10:1-4; Lk 6:12-16) to a specific office, which is connected with authority and duties. These duties are directed towards God, ourselves and others, which are anchored on moral duties as an expression of mercy. All the actions of God towards man, have no adequate explanation without a link to mercy. The characteristics of love, compassion and mercy were the conditions of the apostleship. The prerogative authority of the Apostles and Fathers of the Church proceeded from Jesus Christ by virtue of their appointment. They received mercy freely and they were to give it freely (Mt 10:8). Therefore, it is not a surprise and out of the context of mercy, when Jesus asked the Apostles: „Do you also wish to leave?” (Jn 6:67). Peter answered emphatically, „Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life (Jn 6:68). Peter’s response, expresses the understanding and the readiness of the Apostles to champion the course of the Divine Mercy by the very fact of their Appointments. Moreover, the CBCN observed that „there is a painful gap between these ideals and the realities of our existence”⁹⁷. And it taught that the broken dreams and disappointed hopes of Nigerians must be transformed by acts of mercy. It is intrinsically the message of mercy they are to teach (Acts 4:2), preach (Acts 4:8-12) and practice (Acts 4:13) in the world. But, to practice the way of mercy, it is like gold that is tried in the fire, and acceptable in the furnace of adversity⁹⁸. Similarly, Nigerians as ambassadors of mercy need to restore the economic, political and social life of Nigerians. The teaching of mercy as the way of life, is analogous to Jesus’ treatment of the blind and deaf (Mk 7:33, 8:23; Jn 9:6), which provides healing and remedial therapeutic measure to cope with human condition and challenges as taught by the Vatican Council II.

2.3.1. The Call of Mercy from the Apostles to Vatican II

The divine mandate to the Apostles to go and teach all nations (Mt 28:20) was in harmony with the Meeting of the Apostles at the Council of Jerusalem in order to uphold the credible and coherent teachings of Christ. Since mercy is the essence of the church, and all Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness (2 Tim 3:16), the Apostles gave the guiding moral principle for Christians, when they said: „It is the decision of the Holy Spirit and of us not to place on you any burden beyond these necessities, namely, to abstain from meat sacrificed to idols, from meats of strangled animals, and from unlawful marriage. If you keep free of these, you will be doing what is right. Farewell” (Acts 15:28-29). Moreover, the Church is both the Mother and Teacher of nations. Further, the

⁹⁷ P. Schineller, *Pastoral Letters and Communiqués of the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Nigeria 1960-2002*, p. 230.

⁹⁸ Cf. C. T. Rowan, *Dream Makers, Dream Breakers, The World of Justice Thurgood Marshall*, Boston: Little, Brown and Company 1993, p. 22.

Apostolic teachings on the natures of Jesus' Christ—divine and human natures—was formally approved at the first session of the Council of Ephesus of 431 and from then on, the teaching on mercy was preserved as the deposit of the faith of the Catholic Church⁹⁹. However, due to universality of the Divine Mercy and its content, the message on the Divine Mercy is opened to the whole world, people and nations. The various Ecumenical Council that took place, the content and subject of discussion were Christ-Centre. Since God has honoured man by taking the likeness of men and became man, there must be a credible and reliable way for man to conduct his affairs in order to act suitably in accordance with his nature. Every council both local and ecumenical were aimed at teaching the credible tenets of the faith and to guide the intellectual, moral and technical formation of man in life.

Similarly, St. John Paul XXIII, convoked the Vatican II on 11 October 1962 but he did not know how long the Council would last. He convoked the Council not only as a wake-up-call for the continuation of the call to mercy by Pius IX during the First Vatican Council (1869-1870 to deal with contemporary issues of rationalism, liberalism and materialism), to discern various renewal movements in the Church, such as new trends in biblical studies, a new ferment in Catholic Theology and liturgical renewal, but to allow the consolidation of the teachings of the Apostles and Fathers of the Church on mercy to bear fruit and integrate them into the life of the Church, or reject them if they don't seem to benefit the Church as a sacrament in the world and the human person¹⁰⁰. The Council Fathers were very aware of this call to mercy not only on the Church as an institution but on Nigerians as part of the family of God on mission, so that, „he who hath talent, says Gregory the Great, let him see that he hides it not; he that hath abundance, let him quicken himself to mercy and generosity, he that hath art and skill, let him do his best to share the use and the utility thereof with his neighbour”¹⁰¹. In other words, Nigerians have intellect and other sources of knowledge, which to arrive at the truth about God, should be purified in order to put into perspectives, the temporal and spiritual goods of mankind.

Contextually, Nigeria is endowed with temporal and spiritual resources. The political institutions and the Church are for the promotion of mercy, community and human renewal. In the same vein, „as the end of the twentieth century drew near, there were sophisticated projections of the Year 2000, where mankind... and announcements of an ‘electronic revolution’”¹⁰² witnessed many movements communicating different ideas. To expand the

⁹⁹ R. Price and M. Gaddis, transl, *The Acts of the Council of Chalcedon*, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press 2005, p. 174.

¹⁰⁰Cf. Schreck A., *Pope John XXIII and Vatican II*, in: *The Divine Mercy*, in: <http://www.thedivinemercy.org/news/Pope-John-XXIII-and-Vatican-II-5670> (accessed 20.04.2017).

¹⁰¹ *MM*, no. 119.

¹⁰² W. A. Kappeler III, *Communication Habits for the Pilgrim Church, Vatican Teaching on Media and Society*, New York: Peter Lang 2009, p. 99.

power of communication, St. Paul reiterated this when he said: „Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. How can they call on the One they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the One of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone to preach? And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!’” (Rom 10:13-15). In other words, there is beauty on the feet of those who communicate mercy not only to promote universality in the world but to respond to moral duty to the restoration of the man-made world to its moral dignity and unity. However, this communication must seek common good through justice and social justice not like the fake social justice where the alleged perpetrators conducted themselves under each other’s cover-up system leaving the poor and defenceless without any truth about the human rights violation and personhood¹⁰³.

Turning to Thomas Aquinas as a lens to focus on Nigerians, he defined justice as „a habit whereby individual renders to each one his due by a constant and perpetual will”¹⁰⁴. Justice is taken here as a cardinal virtue to be inculturated as the way of life of Nigerians. Justice is a moral quality, which when it is practiced, it not only perfects the will and inclines it to render to each person what belongs to him or her but it chooses always that, which tend to our true good and the attainment of our last end. In a more restricted sense, justice inclines us to give to all persons their dues as designed by God; and to God by the virtue of religion; to our parent by filial piety; to our benefactors by gratitude. To other people, we can give them their due by acts of what is commonly understood as justice. On one hand, commutative justice, is giving other people the exact equivalent in return for what they have for us. On the other hand, distributive justice is a virtue of a ruler, which a person distributes honours, rewards, burdens etc., of the community according to various conditions of merits of a ruler’s subjects¹⁰⁵. While charity teaches us to help our neighbour out of our stores.

The Council Fathers addressed the issues of common good and justice „to stimulate the Catholic Church Community to foster progress in needy regions and social justice on the international scene”¹⁰⁶. And it is in reply to this request that Pope Paul VI, established the Pontifical Commission for Justice and Peace dated 6 January 1967. Two months later, in *PP*, Paul VI, clearly stated of the new body, namely, Justice and Peace¹⁰⁷. The *GS* and *PP* are in some way applying the teaching and responding to the call of the Council Fathers on mercy,

¹⁰³ Cf. M. H. Kukah, *Witness to Justice: An Insider’s Account of Nigeria’s Truth Commission*, Ibadan: Bookcraft, 2011, p. 239.

¹⁰⁴ T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* Vol. II, question 58, transl, Fathers of English Dominican Province, Chicago: William Benton, Publisher 1952, p. 41.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, II-II, Question 61, p. 55.

¹⁰⁶ *GS*, no. 90; Cf. *IM*, no. 90; *SRS*, no. 6.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. *PP*, no. 5.

issues of common good and justice. St. John Paul II upgraded its status to Pontifical Council of Justice and Peace, when the Apostolic Constitution *PB* was issued on 28 June 1988. Justice is the seat of mercy.

The instance of shared common good, was in the face of the threat of terrorism attacks between Nigeria and Cameroon, Christians guarded the mosques as Muslims prayed on Fridays. Muslims returned the favour by protecting churches during Sunday services¹⁰⁸. The Council Fathers saw that there is a moral duty lying on the shoulders of persons who are managing the divine and human institutions, to participate in the promotion of Divine Mercy as the consequence of sin through the institutional structures in the world. Mercy and compassion have the power to purify the individual who gives it out to others¹⁰⁹. The acknowledgement of the priority of the conversion of the heart in no way eliminated but on the contrary, imposes the obligation of bringing the appropriate remedies to institutions and living conditions when they are an inducement to sin, so that they conform to the norms of justice and advance the good rather than hinder it¹¹⁰. The Church is Mother and Teacher of all nations. She is essentially a society—a „perfect society” in the sense that it is subordinated to no other and lacks nothing required for its own institutional completeness¹¹¹. For example, the Roman Catholic Church is essentially a single concrete historical society, having „a constitution, a set of rules, a governing body, and a set of actual members who accept this constitution and these rules as binding on them¹¹².

Theologically, Christ is the sacrament of God, the Church is for us the sacrament of Christ; she represents him, in the full and ancient meaning of the term. She really makes him present with all the elements of the Divine Mercy incarnate. She not only carries on his work, but she is his very continuation, in a sense far more real than that in, which it can be said that any human institution is its founder’s continuation¹¹³. Thus, Nigerian institutions should characterize the virtues of justice and mercy. Moreover, the CBCN not only made a call to „Save the family”¹¹⁴ but to „Save the nation”¹¹⁵ of Nigerians. The CBCN is concerned about how Nigerians can obtain possibilities of mercy and salvation, which Jesus Christ has brought through his death and Resurrection. The Church as a sacrament, and as „an apostle of Divine Mercy”, understands and knows the realities of sacraments as visible and invisible signs to man.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. T. Turner, *Muslims Guard Churches on Sunday*, in: *Good News Network*, in: <http://www.goodnewsnetwork.org/cameroon-christians-protect-mosques-on-friday-muslims-guard-churches-on-sunday/> (accessed 30.01.2016).

¹⁰⁹ Cf. S. N. Zbairu, *Life After NYSC*, (typescript, 2006), p. 2.

¹¹⁰ Cf. J. B. Benestad, *Church, State, and Society*, p. 147.

¹¹¹ Cf. A. Dulles, *Models of the Church, Phy & Theology*, Vol. 1, no. 2. November 1986, p. 34.

¹¹² Cf. *Ibid.*

¹¹³ Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 63.

¹¹⁴ C. Anyanwu, O. J. Fadugba-Pinheiro, *Our Concern for Nigeria Catholic Bishops Speak*, p. 14.

¹¹⁵ C. Anyanwu, O. J. Fadugba-Pinheiro, *Our Concern for Nigeria Catholic `bishops Speak*, p. 89.

The sacraments themselves are efficacious signs of God's mercy¹¹⁶. When the NT tells us that marriage is "a great mystery in reference to Christ in the Church" (Eph 5:32), this implies that the union of the human with the divine, begun in Christ, and goes on in the Church.

It is not out of place to recall the definition of a sacrament as „an outward sign of inward grace by, which grace is given to our soul”¹¹⁷. The notion of a sacrament, harmoniously combines both the divine and human, which cannot be disassociated. In fact, the Church has been described as the Primordial Sacrament. She represents Jesus Christ, in full and ancient meaning of the term. Importantly, „all the sacraments are essentially sacraments of the Church”¹¹⁸. This concept came up as a later development of theologians, hence, the Vatican II Council, declared that by the virtue of the Church's relationship to Christ, „the Church is a kind of sacrament of intimate union with God and of the unity of all mankind; that is, she is, a sign and instrument of such union and unity”¹¹⁹, which is emphasized in several Council documents, particularly in the Constitution on the Liturgy. Thus, “the liturgy”, is the summit toward, which the activity of the Church is directed; and it is the fountain, which all her power flows, and culminates in taking part in the sacrifice of Christ and to eat the last Super¹²⁰.

Philosophy and theology, work hand in hand in order to put certain concepts into perspective for the purpose of arriving at truth, intelligible and reasonable conclusions. The structure of human life is symbolic. A sacrament is a sign, but it is not just a mere sign pointing to something absent, is pointing to a reality that is present. That is why the Council of Trent described a sacrament as “the visible form of an invisible grace”¹²¹. Man comes into the world as a member of a family, a race and of a people.

Despite Nigerian's state of political, economic and social instabilities, God communicates to Nigerians in love and mercy. Nigerians need to believe also that God's redemptive will is powerful and efficacious, that it produces effects in history. Moreover, God's grace is powerful than man's sinfulness, thus, where sin abounded, God's grace abounded even more (Rom 5:20). We characterize Christ as sacrament of God, because he came from above. The Incarnation makes Christology of Jesus Christ from below¹²². Therefore, the grace of God impels Nigerians toward communion with God, and as grace works in men, which assists them to express what they are in the journey of faith through the Holy Spirit. In the OT history, Israel as a people constitute a sign of yes to God though imperfect, and a sign of no to idolatry. The entire history

¹¹⁶ Cf. J. W. O'Malley, *Spiritual Formation for Ministry: Some Roman Catholic Traditions-Their Past and Present*, „Theological Education and Moral Formation” (1992), p. 79-111.

¹¹⁷ *S.C.R.S.I, DC*, no. 1.

¹¹⁸ H. d. Lubac, *Catholicism*, London: Burns, Oates 1950, p. 35.

¹¹⁹ *LG*, no. 9; Cf. *SC*, no. 26; *AG*, no. 5, *GS*, no. 42.

¹²⁰ Cf. *S.C.C* and *S.C.D.S*, *Sanctus Pontifex*.

¹²¹ A. Dulles, *Models of Revelation*, p. 66.

¹²² Cf. G. Meier, “*Sacramentum Mundi*”, 3(1969), p. 191-198.

of grace has its summit in Jesus Christ. He signifies and confers grace to enable man to live with God. In him the invisible grace of God takes on visible form. The model of the Church as sacrament is related to the model of the Church as an institution, mystical communion of grace and sacramental ecclesiology, harmonizing the relationship between visible institution and communion of grace.

Consolidation of the teachings of the Apostles and Fathers of the Church on mercy is the medicine and remedy for political, economic and social enslavements. Consequently, the ecclesiology as a Church model and post Conciliar Documents do not give room for any deification of the actual form of the Church's life, for they acknowledge that the symbolic expressions of mercy and grace are never adequate to the life of grace.

2.3.2. Post Conciliar Documents on Mercy

The CBCN as an organ of unity and communion, remains a moral voice of the voiceless, defenceless and vulnerable in Nigeria. The Church is both „the pillar and ground of the truth” with the twofold task of giving life to her children and teaching them and guiding them, as individuals and as nations¹²³.

Man had received directly his first lesson of communication from God when he was asked to name all the creatures of God (Gen 2:19). The second lesson of communication, was in the naming of animals, trees and other creatures of God and the imposition of the prohibitions. This initiative of speaking using the human language presupposed the gift of rationality, a language, a narrative and ability to keep records of history by recalling each creature by its name and kind. By this ability of naming of various creatures, implies that man is created with the faculty of speech, the ability to articulate ideas and rational utterance, the ability to attach meaning to words and ideas through the evolution of a language. A language is a powerful tool of communication to man. It is on this basis that education is a Christian mandate and ethos¹²⁴.

Furthermore, the ability to narrate gives us an insight into man's intellectual condition, his study of the animal creation, and the nature of the employment, which he spent his time (Gen 2:20). By this gift of speech, it attests man's intelligence and wisdom, capable to influence the entire world through the medium of communication. But man's ability to communicate is not without errors or imperfection. The Church as the Mother and Teacher of all nations, cannot

¹²³ Cf. *MM*, no. 1.

¹²⁴ Cf. A. J.V. Obinna, *A Public Presentation at the First Catholic Education Summit National Centre for Women Development*, in: „Catholic Education Summit,” Abuja 2006, p. 4.

stand aside while man is misusing the gifts of communication to alter the moral standard, which does not give God glory and preserve the dignity of human person. In other words, Nigerians are to care, till and conquer the forces of poverty and create moral superiority over technology. Nigerians cannot subject themselves to the defects of corruption and bad governance. Rather, everyman-made thing, must be subjected to the moral standard suitable to the needs of Nigerians.

Of course, Nigeria is a nation among nations in the world. Therefore, in view of the international expansion of the means of social communication, the Decree on the Means of Social Communication, taught all mass-media practitioners and users to use them morally to suit the nature of man as a moral being¹²⁵. Moreover, the decisions, the choices, the promotions and advertisements, must be based on moral principles, in order to reveal the truth, that tallies with the moral principles that points the way to salvation of Nigerians. The media must communicate what is godly and moral as intended by God. Financial gains should not be the end product of Nigerian media. Politics should not be to gratify the individual rather to develop both Nigerians and infrastructures towards perfecting the purpose of God¹²⁶. The aims of the social media and mass communication, are not only to foster common good, unity of mankind and bridge the human gaps of communication, but provides entertainments and emotional stimulations, which make life at the social level bearable. The stakeholders in Nigeria must be aware that the media can be both mass-constructive and mass-destructive against the common good. Indeed, mass-media can facilitate awareness to spiritual realities, which benefits Nigerians morally and religiously. Nigerians can deeply discover more about themselves and their environment. But, the satiability of man can also make Nigerians dependent on material things, which keep them away from God as their ultimate end.

The Church teaches and produces parents who are also natural teachers who continue to teach their children what they have received from the Church. Similarly, the *Inter Mirifica*¹²⁷, pointed out that the Catholic Church needs to become a more effective force in communication by better understanding public opinion, how it is formed and how it affects people's life situations. Aply, the Second Vatican Council decreed that an office for the mass communication be formed in every country including Nigeria, in order to promote „cooperation between Christians and Civil Authorities,”¹²⁸ „nations”¹²⁹, „cooperation between Christians,

¹²⁵ Cf. *IM*, no. 90.

¹²⁶ Cf. P. Ubom, „*The Outstanding Local Government Administration in Akwa Ibom State*”, in: *Tell* 2001, no. 15, p. 18.

¹²⁷ Cf. *IM*, no. 90.

¹²⁸ *IM*, no. 84ff.

¹²⁹ *IM*, no. 92ff.

All Believers and All Men of Goodwill”¹³⁰. Although, the sad reality about the media, is that, it is „the immoral”, and „the bad news” that sell well rather than the truth that sets people free, which expresses credible journalistic profession. Consequently, when moral values are eroded, the deceptive form of morality will now be determined by the porous culture of mass-media. The world is hungry of what it doesn’t know—God. Without God, man will neither understand and know himself, nor know where he is going.

Essentially, man cannot survive without a link to God. Due to this lack of perfect disposition of man in his spiritual life, God provides opportunities for man to turn away from sin and seek renewal of his status to be with God through confession. It is impossible to receive forgiveness without remorse and repentance over sin committed. Thus, it was time for the *SCRSI*, to call the attention of the world in general and Nigerians in particular, concerning the use and administration of the sacrament of penance¹³¹. The sacrament of penance renews and strengthens members of the Church who have sinned against the fundamental gift of „metanoia”, of conversion to the kingdom of Christ, which is first received in Baptism¹³². However, the consequent of „metanoia” is the expression of commitment, consecrated life of allegiance to Divine Mercy or the Divine Mercy Incarnate—Jesus Christ, the source of our vocation and mission in the world. God did not create Nigerians to only exist, but to live and re-create in order to add beauty and goodness to Nigerians. The Blessed Virgin Mary remains an example, a model of „yes” to mercy. Her union with Christ, should be Nigerians’ complete prototype of their daily life. After all, man’s prayer life ushers him every day to God as an instrument for God to use for his glory. Nigerians make Nigeria. The existence of Nigerians is as a result of God’s mercy. The physical and spiritual life of Nigerians must be propelled by God’s mercy and become merciful in all their dealings. For a man to be merciful, he must realize that he first of all needs God’s mercy for his existence and sustenance. Speaking of Divine Mercy, man must recall the dangers of sin both in his spiritual and physical life. Man must be prepared to be rebuked and be reprimanded when he errs. He in turn must reprimand his fellow imperfect-man with fraternal support, with great kindness, patience and charity (Mt 18:15-17; 2 Tim 4:2).

Fundamentally, the reality of the Divine Mercy continues to be taught, which shows that „God, who is rich in mercy whom Jesus Christ has revealed to us as Father: it is his very Son who, in himself, has manifested him and made him known to us”¹³³. St. John Paul II, continued his teaching when he said: „Following the teaching of the Second Vatican Council

¹³⁰ *IM*, no. 96ff.

¹³¹ Cf. *DC*, no. 2.

¹³² Cf. *DC*, no. 1.

¹³³ *DM*, no. 1.

and paying attention to the special needs of our times, I devoted the encyclical *RH*, to the truth about man, a truth that is revealed to us in its fullness and depth in Christ. A no less important need in these critical and difficult times impels me to draw attention once again in Christ to the countenance of the ‘Father of mercies and God of all comfort’¹³⁴. We read in the Constitution *GS*: „Christ the new Adam...fully reveals man to himself and brings to light his lofty calling and does it ‘in the very revelation of the mystery of the Father and of his love. The words that I have quoted are clear testimony to the fact that man cannot be manifested in the full dignity of his nature without reference- not only on the level of concepts but also in an integral existential way-to God. Man, and man’s lofty calling are revealed in Christ through the revelation of the mystery of the Father and his love’¹³⁵. The concept of „mercy” in the Post Conciliar Documents have also reiterated the urgency of inculturating the attitude of mercy in all spheres of Nigerians.

2.3.3. Mercy as a Prerogative Nature of Man

Nigerians share in the humanity of man, which constitutes the properties of body and soul. The human body and soul are different from other creatures because the human body and soul of man are configured with the Incarnation of Jesus Christ, to the point that believer’s body will be transformed into a glorious body (Phil 3:21) and together with the soul in order to be with God.

First and foremost, „prerogative of mercy” is a legal concept. It cannot be set in motion unless and until there is a sentence of court on a convicted person(s), which the mercy will act as a panacea by mitigating or waiving the punishment. It is like, „I looked at him. Alive. His lap a puddle of blood. With the restoration of the normal order of matter and sensation, I felt I was seeing him for the first time as a person. The old human muddles and quirks were set flowing again: compassion, remorse, mercy¹³⁶ flow. Still on the prerogative concept: the types of prerogative of mercy and the legal procedures of the prerogative of mercy are beyond the scope of this chapter. But we know „the President¹³⁷” or „the Governor¹³⁸” of a state has the prerogative powers to grant pardon to convicted persons. Similarly, I borrow this concept to explain, that God has the prerogative power to condemn or acquit man when he sinned. Through the mercy of God, he shared this attribute of prerogative power with man to use it for the

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ J. G. Murphy, J. Hampton, *Forgiveness and Mercy* p. 162.

¹³⁷ 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, With Amendments, 2011, no. 175.

¹³⁸ 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, With Amendments, 2011, no. 212.

purpose of rehabilitation and transformation of Nigerians. Nigerians exist because they have received prerogative-mercy when they disobeyed God. But through the divine prerogative power, Nigerians were granted pardon so that they can share in the divine love, mercy and life. Moreover, the entire nature of man, is saturated with Divine Mercy, which he lives, moves and has his being. Therefore, it is imperative to maintain the standard that „mercy” is the prerogative nature of Nigerians as they relate to their fellow Nigerians with mutability, mortality and imperfections. On top of the gracious gifts of mercy, which reflect in man’s conscience, intellect, feeling, human sympathy and love, man is a daily recipient of mercy. Since Nigerians freely received mercy, it morally implies that Nigerians are tasked to be the best givers of mercy to fellow Nigerians, who are under the same human conditions of sin and conscience.

The CCC teaches that conscience is a judgement of reason whereby the human person recognizes the moral quality of a concrete act that he is going to do¹³⁹. In fact, „Deep within his conscience man discovers a law, which he has not laid upon himself but, which he must obey. Its voice, ever calling him to love and to do what is good and to avoid evil, sounds in his heart at the right moment... For man has in his heart a law inscribed by God... His conscience is man’s most secret core and his sanctuary. There he is alone with God whose voice echoes in”¹⁴⁰ the depth of his heart. For man to have recognized the presence of this voice, which unveils itself in his entire life, means that, Nigerians know how they feel when they received mercy and kindness where they hoped to have suffered or have been punished. They know the joy and mental relief they experienced at such moments. For example, in Athens and its legal system, the general trend of democracy was that, „democratic rule was manifested throughout the city’s governance, but nowhere did it carry greater weight than in its courts”¹⁴¹. In other words, Nigerians will have the capacity to show compassion and mercy as „atonement and the perfection of the Divine Agency”¹⁴². God knows that by the Incarnation of Jesus Christ, nations and Nigerians can wash another Nigerians’ feet (Jn 13:14) by acting mercifully. Truly, „Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy (Mt 5:7). Nigerians can relieve Nigeria and Nigerians of their misery. According to Cardinal Home: „If you can dream it, we can build it”¹⁴³. Similarly, Nigerians can build a Nigeria of their dream. It is also put in another way, that „God created us without us: but he cannot save us without us”¹⁴⁴. Essentially, „inspired

¹³⁹ Cf. CCC, no. 1778.

¹⁴⁰ CCC, no. 1776.

¹⁴¹ A. Lanni, *Law and Justice in the Courts of Classical Athens*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2006, p. 15.

¹⁴² A. Vidu, *Atonement, Law, and Justice: The Cross in Historical and Cultural Contexts*, Michigan: Baker Academic 2014, p. 235.

¹⁴³ Cardinal Home, *Inside the Vatican*, (June-July 2015), p. 27.

¹⁴⁴ CCC, no. 1847.

initiatives”¹⁴⁵ can lead developmental revolution among Nigerians. Although, accountability and responsibility govern all human actions, unless if they are nullified by ignorance, fear, duress, bad habit, inordinate attachments, social and psychological factors.

2.4. Divine Mercy and the Contemporary Ideologies

„It would be difficult not to notice that very often programmes, which start from the idea of justice and which ought to assist its fulfilment among individuals, groups and human societies, in practice suffer from distortions”¹⁴⁶. Nigerians are capable of arriving at the truth about God’s love. The natural and human resources indicate God’s love. Those who have served Nigeria selflessly, have bitter experience when a government compromise the promise of pensions and gratuities. The idea the human dignity is outed is morally wrong and it needs to be corrected. Nigerians feel less valuable due to the contemporary ideas that the human person alone can do everything under the earth. The image of God in Nigerians, which needs to be recognized and be promoted need to be present in all the meeting points and activities of Nigerians. Where they live and work are the basic centres where the anti-human ideas can be discovered and subjected to the command of mercy for purification. According to St. John Paul II, Divine Mercy is like the second name of love, which both spring up from God the Father. This love of God is expressing itself within the human person in history and daily life. Due to the imperfect nature of man, his activities are also imperfect associated with many flaws. Nigerians need to transcend beyond the habit of natural state of man. Moreover, the mission of the Church to bring the Gospel message to bear fruits, not only to transform individual persons, but also transform contemporary ideologies, social life, political, and economic structures of the Nigeria, with the aim of promoting the human person’s dignity and deserved welfare¹⁴⁷. Some thinkers consider the traditional understanding of God as irrelevant and outdated. Yet man cannot stop, sustaining bruises, leaving scars on his body, unprepared stumbling, the inevitable teeth biting the tongue without explanation. A growing child with many weaknesses discovers the inevitability of repeating the situation of a child at later age and inevitable passing through the path of mortality in death. However, contemporary Nigerians have been challenged as too optimistic in their assumptions about the human nature. Those who destroy Nigeria and Nigerians should not be celebrated in support of contemporary ideologies. Surprisingly, these

¹⁴⁵ P. Lappin, *Challenge and Change: Volume One, The Foundation*, Ohio: 1999 Apostolate for Family Consecration, p. 183.

¹⁴⁶ *DM*, no. 12.

¹⁴⁷ Cf. C. Anyanwu, O. Jide, Fadugba-Pinheiro, eds., *Our Concern for Nigeria Catholic Bishops’ Speak*, Lagos: Gazub Prints Limited 2015, p. 119.

ideologies have found their way into Nigerian politics. This is not only a temptation but trying times for Nigerian politics.

2.4.1. Politics of Mercy in Nigeria

In Plato's Republic, „the moral education necessary to live the just life requires a transformation of the learner, a transformation that is both moral and intellectual. The result of the transformation, ideally, is new understanding of power—one that subverts conventional ideas about power and one that requires nearly a lifetime of moral education to cultivate. When you direct the eye of the soul toward the Good, Socrates teaches, we see the political power alone is powerless to satisfy our deepest longings; our ambitions for political power are destined for frustration unless they are redirected by philosophical wisdom. Moreover, wisdom teaches that worldly power is just the appearance of power; and *real* power lies in knowledge of truth”¹⁴⁸. Consequently, moral authority is required to balance freedom, order and human flourishing¹⁴⁹.

The Saharareporters, New York, reported that a Nigerian based in Germany has asked to dump his Nigerian citizenship¹⁵⁰. However, he did not give reasons why he wanted to renounce his citizenship. But one could have easily deduced that it may be due to economic challenges. He did not say he would like to be German citizen or another nationality. But one can guess an expression of dissatisfaction with situations. There may be more Nigerians who feel they have no apology or explanation to give to anybody by declaring that they are not Nigerians. Analyzing this situation, these people of this category must have been tax payers and contributing enormously to the common good of Nigerians. First of all, before arriving at the point that made them to feel that they are no longer Nigerians, it meant that they were Nigerians before. The situation of hardship has been there for a long time, which promoted the general review of the situation in Nigeria. The CBCN has observed that the silence over the situation is a grave disservice to the nation¹⁵¹.

Lack of historical data has given room for politics of mercy to score political points against innocent citizens and at the detriments of good governance, national developments and principle of common good. Nigerians have a responsibility for the preservation of historical data and archives of the country for the present and the generations yet unborn. Nigerians have

¹⁴⁸ R. K. D. Young, *Power Made Perfect in Weakness: Aquinas' Transformation of the Virtue of Courage* in: „Medieval Philosophy and Theology” 11(2003)2, p. 147.

¹⁴⁹ Cf. E. K. Wondra, *Importance of Moral Authority: Reflections on Current Events in the Anglican Community*, in: „The Anglican Theological Review” 98(2016)3, p. 533-5334.

¹⁵⁰ Cf. „Saharareporter”, New York, German-based Nigerian Requests to Renounce Nigerian Citizenship, Sahara Newspaper, in: <http://saharareporters.com/2017/04/09/germany-based-nigerian-requests-renounce-nigerian-citizenship> (accessed 12.04.2017).

¹⁵¹ Cf. P. Schineller, ed., *The Voice of the Voiceless*, Ibadan: Daily Graphics Nigerian Limited 2002, p. 116.

received mercy from good Nigerians in history. Every event of elections, politicians promised electorates many things that never existed in practice. The hopes of the electorates are dashed against them. Politicians who play the politics of mercy, promote deceit and corruption at the detriment of integrity. Politics of mercy is against transparency, accountability and good governance. It has devastating effects, which not only promotes falsehood but destroys the history of Nigerian heroes and heroines¹⁵². In a sense, Nigerian historians, are prophets in reverse. They are the custodians of the narratives of the past, and that fact alone explains why they are to be celebrated today as supported by the National Anthem of Nigeria¹⁵³. The rejection of history is a rejection of that, which makes Nigerians who they are.

The politics of mercy promotes falsehood. Those who are writing or saying „white” which is „black”, are capable of other poor judgments as regards to the security, national development and principle of subsidiarity. Sometimes, the situation creates conflicts between national sovereignty and humanitarian intervention. For instance, in North-East of Nigeria, in the event of an outbreak of famine due to politics of mercy, the situation could be approached differently. The first approach could be to emphasize the absolute scarcity of food; there is no food to eat. the second approach could be to emphasize the unequal distribution of food among people; food is not reaching the starving¹⁵⁴. Politics of mercy, needs to be purified of its distorted ideologies and policies, which do not benefit the poor and the needy. It is on this ground, Pope Francis said: „Let yourself receive mercy and begin the return trip, and with your hands give mercy to others, spreading mercy and love”¹⁵⁵. This is because, „The heart, which in the Good Samaritan is like that of Jesus, was touched by the misery: The misery he saw there, the misery of that widowed mother whom Jesus saw, that misery of pain and the misery of the beaten man who was seen by the Samaritan, the heart is united with the misery of another and that’s mercy”¹⁵⁶. Mercy is not pity. Pity is a different feeling in concrete terms. For example, „I can feel pity when I see a wounded animal or such a situation, but mercy is another feeling: It is when the misery of another, or a situation of pain or misery, gets into my heart, and I permit the situation to touch my heart. I say this: It is an outward journey, the journey of mercy to the heart. And this is the path: It is not mercy if it is not of the heart, a heart wounded by the misery of another”¹⁵⁷. Mercy is beyond the gesture of philanthropy. „It is distinctive from having good

¹⁵² Cf. J. G. Murphy, J. Hampton, *Forgiveness and Mercy*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1998, p. 1.

¹⁵³ Cf. Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Cf. J. Harvey, *Civilized Oppression and Moral Relations: Victims, Fallibility, and the Moral Community*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan 2015, p. 71.

¹⁵⁵ Vatican Radio, *Pope Francis sends video message to conference in Argentina*, in: http://en.radiovaticana.va/news/2016/10/08/pope_francis_sends_video_message_to_conference_in_argentina/1263839 (accessed 10.10.2016).

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

feelings; this is not mercy, it is having good feelings”¹⁵⁸. Similarly, justice and common good, are the principles around the Church’s social doctrine, which turns, on to take on practical form in the criteria governing the moral action. Furthermore, charity goes beyond justice, because to love is to give, to offer what is „mine” to the other; but it never lacks justice, which prompts us to give the other what is „his”, that is to say, what is due to him by reason of his being¹⁵⁹. The politics of mercy uses human words and human philosophy to politicize legitimate moral actions. Mercy cannot be expressed alone, with words or speech but with actions and in truth (1 Jn 3:18). Therefore, the more we strive to secure a common good corresponding to the real needs of our neighbours, the more effectively we love them in their very mission in the world¹⁶⁰. And again, politics of mercy is a preposition, which in actual fact, the remedy it proposes is a result against justice¹⁶¹. It is a situation of a sheep being sent in the midst of wolves (Lk 10:3) with every sense of innocence of the fact that the hired hand leaves the sheep to the wolf to be scattered because he is the hired hand and is not concerned about the sheep (Jn 10:13). Politicians talk like „saints” but they live and act like hired men with all colours of a chameleon.

Furthermore, politics of mercy has been incorporated into science and technology as human instruments. Due to politics of mercy in Nigeria, prudence has degenerated into vice of craftiness, which promotes the ideology that „the end justifies” the means. Of course, I am neither justifying timidity or self-distrust over the common good, nor submissiveness or simplicity over truth. For instance, in the name of charity to the internet subscribers, websites have been said to have such fora where pain is inflicted on innocent-internet-users without their consent. Politicians of the politics of mercy are malicious-internet-subscribers who appear innocently but maliciously to retrieve personal information and subscribers’ data against their will. This situation is like Judas Iscariot, who not only consented and began seeking for an opportunity to betray Jesus (Lk 22:6) but he corrupted and politicized the „sign of kiss”¹⁶², in order to express the height of a traitor, greediness and selfishness. Judas, not only politicized the „sign of kiss”, but remained stubborn and unrepentant even when Jesus gave him an opportunity (Jn 13:27) to repent. In the same vein, Joab was found practicing the politics of mercy when pretending to be a friend to Amasa: he took him by the beard to kiss him, when he slew him (2 Sam 20:9). St. Justin the Martyr, presented the same true meaning of the explanation about the sign of kiss. „That after prayers being ended, we salute one another with a kiss, and then the bread and cup are brought to the president. This was called the holy kiss, to

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ Cf. *CV*, no. 6.

¹⁶⁰ Cf. *CV*, no. 7; Cf. *PP*, no. 5.

¹⁶¹ Cf. *RN*, no. 6.

¹⁶² In the Old Testament, Jews consider the „sign of kiss” as a deep expression of friendship, harmlessness and affection.

distinguish it from the lustful kiss and the kiss of charity” mercy and love (1 Pet 5:14; Rom 16:16; 1 Th 5:26). Furthermore, politicians have not only promoted the politics of mercy but changed its name from „politics of mercy” to „politics of unfinished business” to continue biting with „new teeth”–new hardships and new poverty of life.

2.4.2. Politics of Unfinished Business and the Nigerian Factor

Nigerians must return to the state of Nigeria not the other way round¹⁶³. Politics is an instrument of human engagements to bring about human capacity-building, empowerments and developments. When people are economically, politically and socially better, the institutions and infrastructures become functional to serve the needs of man.

In this section, I will show how politics of unfinished business is characterized by deception and corruption. Although, politics is not only as part of responding to man’s nature as a political animal, but it is an instrument through-which a legal attitude is expressed to gain political leadership devoid of cost¹⁶⁴. In Nigeria, to defect from one political party to another is constitutional according to section 68 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999, as amended. However, defecting from one political party to another is not equals to good governance and economy.

The important story to citizens is security, peace, good governance, stable economy and functional infrastructures to address daily challenges of life facing Nigerians. The belief in the authority of mercy is medicine for Nigerians poverty¹⁶⁵. Politicians defect to other parties due to personality clash, power tussles, realization of one’s personal political ambition, and divergent views on the operations of a political party’s philosophy and ideology¹⁶⁶. Political parties are democratic institutions, which have no moral accountability because they are not free like human beings. Political parties do not reason or make choices. Political parties have no rationality and intellect to make judgement by which they can be held accountable. Therefore, all political parties are good by the very fact of their existence. Politicians who defect

¹⁶³ Cf. J. Horvat II, *Return to Order: From a Frenzied Economy to an Organic Christian Society, How We have been, How We got here and Where We need to Go*, York: York Press 2015, p. 45.

¹⁶⁴ Cf. J. Bartkowski, *Public Opinion and Decommunization in Poland*, „Institute of Sociology, Warsaw University Political Sociology Section: The Politics of Democratic Transformation: Poland After 1989” (Scholar Agency 1993), p. 80-107.

¹⁶⁵ Cf. J. Meneendez, *The Way of Divine Love or the Message of the Sacred Heart to the World and a Short Biography of his Message*, Rockford: Tan Books and Publishers 1981, p. 53.

¹⁶⁶ Cf. M. B. Aleyomi, *Election and Politics of Party Defection in Nigeria: A Clue Kogi State*”, „Covenant University Journal of Politics and International Affairs”, 1(2013), p.72-84.

from one political party to another, presupposed bias-style of administration, hate, corruption, when such politicians emerge as leaders¹⁶⁷.

Bias-style of administration not only suffocates Nigerians but it breeds marginalization, nepotism, sectionalism, tribalism, in a pluralistic society like Nigeria. Consequently, national issues are reduced to private issues. Priorities are abandoned, uncompleted projects are replaced by corruption. The „state of emergence”, is mostly found in both public and private sectors. Situations are created to look like, I against my brother, I and my brother against our cousin, I, my brother and our cousin against a neighbour, and all of us against the „foreigner”¹⁶⁸. Violation of personhood becomes the order of the day, marginalization and dehumanization¹⁶⁹. These violations have been made personal, collective and institutionalized and leaving the victims without any kind of rights. Consequently, morally decent individuals avoid active participation in politics seeing it as „dirty game”. The „national cake”, which is the resources of the nation are pocketed by corrupt politicians at the detriment of national developments. Many feel and think that most Nigerians join and defect to other political parties due to lack of mercy, for greediness and self-developments. Those who have offered services for the nation, their welfare should not only be taken care-off but should be honoured with all the dignity they deserve as an expression of mercy, which they have shown in their self-less services to the nation. It is only in the politics of unfinished business that:

„Former vice presidents, ex-senate presidents, house of Representatives Speakers, Chief Justice of the Federation, deputy senate presidents and deputy Speakers of the House of Representatives will have life benefit under the 1999 Constitution. In the same vein, members of the families of deceased former presidents, prime ministers and vice presidents shall be entitled to annual payments as shall be recommended by the Revenue Mobilization, Allocation and Fiscal Commission and approved by the National Assembly. The allowances shall be applied for the upkeep of the spouse and education of their children of the deceased former presidents, Vice Presidents, and Prime Ministers up to the university graduate level or its equivalent. However, the new law specifically provide that the deceased would seize to receive the remuneration upon the death of the last spouse of the office holder”¹⁷⁰.

This argument does not nullify the recognition of credible service. Yet, many pensioners, who waited and queued for days without getting their pension areas of many months and years have died. Democracy as a political organization, the common man understands it as a channel, which promotes public interest, to articulate the common good and an opportunity to aggregate diverse differences, diversified skills and cultural backgrounds to achieve legitimate goals. The inability of the politicians to practice what they preach as custodians of Nigeria’s laws and

¹⁶⁷ Cf. J. J. Wiatr, *Social Conflicts and Democratic Stability: Poland in Comparative Perspective*, „Institute of Sociology, Warsaw University Political Sociology Section: The Politics of Democratic Transformation: Poland After 1989” (Scholar Agency 1993), p. 7-31.

¹⁶⁸ A foreigner could be a person who does not share the same views of religion, ethnicity, nationality and other affiliations. In some cases, they are real foreigners who may not have ancestral affiliation to the place in question. But because they have the political power, they become indigenes.

¹⁶⁹ Cf. T. Vimal, *Catholic Teaching on violence, War and Peace in our Contemporary World: A Collection of Essays*, Bangalore: ATC Publications 2006, p. 29.

¹⁷⁰ U. Awom, *Life Remunerations for Nigeria’s Former Leaders*, in: *All Africa*, in: <http://allafrica.com/nigeria/> (accessed 10.02.2016).

democratic rule, consequently, the society only breeds; cabals, militias, assassins, cultists, ritualists and kidnapers. This situation produces more widows, more orphans due to hunger, diseases and deaths. For instance, the North-East, North-West, North-Middle-Belt, with demography constitute the bulk of Nigeria's population, the human indices, the number of children out of school, adult literacy, poverty, maternal and infant mortalities call for mercy.

The above analysis is to show how the political manifestoes have been compromised. Many attempts have been made to eradicate such inhuman conditions proved abortive. Moreover, gossips and character-assassination are used by politicians to fight their „enemies”, being busy building their kingdoms, corruptly enriching themselves, while the common man remains in abject poverty without moral leadership that motivates and inspires hope¹⁷¹. Politicians lose their qualities of leadership if they cannot sacrifice, offer genuine and legitimate service, inspire their people not only by their radical thoughts and radical acts of humility, which aim at bringing positive change, anchored with a wave of thinking that challenges some myths, urban-legends that kept generations under bondage for decades without freedom¹⁷². Viewing phenomenally, raising national issues backed with proposals that leads to developments easily derailed to personal issues, which produces only resentments, anarchy, and disunity of purpose, thereby creating a new empire of secularism.

2.4.3. Secularization of Mercy

Nigeria is a secular state but it has not been spared by the effects of secularization. But this does not exempt Nigerians from accepting mercy as their mission to eradicate secularization of mercy in Nigeria¹⁷³. Secularization is a noun of the word secular, perhaps derived from religious matters. Secular can also be referred to as the world in contrast to spiritual spheres. But secularization does not mean a state without God. Man has intrinsically the sense of the divine in his very nature. But the imperfect nature of man leaves him vulnerable to attitudinal change, which reflects his mortal nature. The attitudinal change triggers the revise and the review of the meaning of religion. There are two schools of thought among sociologists who study religious issues in the post-1989 World Wars. One group of sociologists believed that „the transition from totalitarianism to democracy has affected attitudes towards religion”, while the other group, believes that the calling of religious beliefs into question and adoption of a lay

¹⁷¹ Cf. T. J. Sergiovanni, *Moral Leadership: Getting to the Heart of School Improvement*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers 1992, p. 17.

¹⁷² Cf. T. J. Sergiovanni, *Moral Leadership: Getting to the Heart of School Improvement*, p. 57.

¹⁷³ Cf. S. Michalenko, *Mercy My Mission: Life of Sister Faustina Kowalska*, Stockbridge, MA: Congregation of Marians 1987, p. 112.

lifestyle is a consequence of social modernization modeled by many ideologies¹⁷⁴. Both views from the sociological and Christian points of views, suggest attitudinal change, which reflects itself in the numbers of people who go to Church, living the faith and practicing the tenets of faith. According to St. John Paul II, „To be ‘witnesses of Christ’ in words and deeds is a responsibility shared by all the baptized, and that implies different conditions”¹⁷⁵. Secularization is also an authorization given to religious with solemn vows and extension to those with simple vows to live to their religious commitments. It is a measure of kindness to religious and monks who take vows of chastity, obedience and poverty, for the sake of the Gospel message. While secularization does not annul the religious character, it rather strengthens it, so that through the Gospel message, the earthly society can be purified towards the perfection of God’s creation. Secularization is distinct from absolute dispensation from religious vows, which is not only lenient measure but it annuls both vows and their practical obligation¹⁷⁶.

Secularization of mercy points to the fact that „Sometimes we only see people as projects, and we go about working on them in a very businesslike fashion—without their uniqueness”¹⁷⁷. Secularization of mercy in Nigeria has caused many hardships to Nigerians. It promotes divisive, deceptive and false language as normal in politics or daily encounters. When people are in pain, to identify with them is an act of mercy. But to use people to achieve personal gains is secularization of mercy. The virtue of mercy is free from neglect and ideological suspicion¹⁷⁸. Mercy as a virtue is not an external agent. It is within the human conscience and attitude. The attitude of mercy is grown within and outside the individual’s heart. People do not just exist, but they live in the world with God’s intention to purify the world of its imperfect state. There is no simple or absolute dispensation from the moral obligation of implanting the mercy of God in all human areas of existence. It is almost impossible to speak of a human being without tendencies of mercy either expressed in attitude or reciprocal response to the received deeds of mercy. Since science is a living reality, an attitude of mercy can be inculcated in all scientific centers of learning and practices. For instance, in 1626, a pious association of ladies formed for the care of the sick in the hospital of St. Charles at Nancy. By 1652, it grew strong in generosity and it was constituted into a religious community. The members placed themselves under the patronage of St. Charles Borromeo, the Apostle of charity and adapted

¹⁷⁴ Cf. G. Moran, *Religious Education Development: Images for the Future*, Minneapolis: Winston 1983, p. 129.

¹⁷⁵ John Paul II, *Answer to Secularization*, in:

<https://zenit.org/articles/john-paul-ii-s-answer-to-secularization/> (accessed 16.04.2017).

¹⁷⁶ Cf. G. E. Carter, *The Challenge to Religious Education: God’s Message and Our Response*, New York: William H. Sadlier 1961, p. 245.

¹⁷⁷ C. Clark, ed., *Jesus With the People* „Shalem Institute for Spiritual Formation” (1994), p. 69.

¹⁷⁸ Cf. W. Kasper, *Mercy: The Essence of the Gospel and the Key to Christian Life*, p. 9.

the rules and constitutions drawn up by Pere Epiphane Louys, Abbot of Estival and Vicar-General of the Reformed Premonstratensians¹⁷⁹. Similarly, Nigerians must moralize Nigerian society, which creates opportunities for trust in mercy as taught by the Apostles and the Fathers of the Church.

Conclusion

Theology of mercy is the central revelation that the chosen people would find, every time they have sinned, the strength and the motive for turning to the Lord¹⁸⁰. Theology is a sign of freedom, which is encountered in the Sacraments of the Church¹⁸¹. Theology as a concept is a natural faculty, which man studies and understands God's nature and how he relates to man and the world. The traditional basis of the understanding of God, creates a passage to understanding and accepting God's Revelation to man in many ways (Heb 1:1). The Church moderates every truth-seeking idea in support of the principle of subsidiarity. The call to mercy, does not rest on the shoulders of one Nigerian, but on all Nigerians. The mercy of God can be traced in all human societies, faculties of social and economic centres, political and organizational bodies, to replace man's in-humanity to man with mercy, to replace the culture of death with mercy, which gives life and peace, to transform the potential terrorists ideologies into platforms of human dignity, and to degenerate contemporary ideologies to be governed by the principle of mercy and sense of godliness, where corruptors and insurgencies will no longer be found in the history of Nigeria. The teachings of the Fathers of the Church, Vatican Councils and Post Conciliar Documents, called for consideration of the fact that man cannot understand and know himself without God. To live in the age of technology and work without God, it calls for bitterness and self-destruction¹⁸². The nature and existence of man is the prerogative of Divine Mercy. Nigerians are called in mercy to forgive sin on behalf of God both at personal, judicial and collective levels as a moral principle built on the theology of Divine Mercy, without which truth-seeking activities and worship of God are baseless.

Fundamentally, the „Theology of Divine Mercy” is in its systematic form is a new reality to Nigerians given the fact that Nigerian society is a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic and multi-religious in nature. This is because there are different theological interpretations of mercy based on religious affiliations and cultures. However, Christ who is the light of the world,

¹⁷⁹ Cf. Ibid.

¹⁸⁰ *DM*, no. 4.

¹⁸¹ Cf. G. Martinez, *Signs of Freedom: Theology of the Christian Sacraments*, New York: Paulist Press 2003, p. 59.

¹⁸² *RH*, no. 8.

through the Church in Nigeria can purify various wrong interpretations and lead Nigerians to the truth of mercy as found in the very nature of Nigerians. Moreover, it is not an over-statement to say that in every wrong doing, there lies a lie behind it¹⁸³. Every Nigerian constitutes the divine image, which is saturated with the Divine Mercy. Therefore, since Nigerians are created because of mercy, every Nigerian is challenged to imagine mercy towards their fellow Nigerians, to think and feel mercifully, to plan and act mercifully, to live and love mercifully.

¹⁸³ *DM*, no. 33.

CHAPTER THREE

3. The Moral and Pastoral Message of Matthew 25:31-46

Introduction

In this chapter, I will use the moral lens as an instrument to be the guiding principle to ex-ray, argue and give examples on the possibility of inculturating „Mercy”¹ in Nigeria, and simultaneously articulate the fact, that the Gospel of Matthew is not only about judgement but it is also about God’s grace and mercy. To be sensitive to the need of mercy among Nigerians is not only the summary of moral compass but the poor-teeming youth, the vulnerable and defenceless are guaranteed livelihood. Furthermore, I will argue and articulate the fact that it is possible to make mercy a principle and the way of life of Nigerians. The moral and pastoral message is aimed at meeting the majority of Nigerians who need both corporal and spiritual works of mercy, which the Gospel of Matthew has provided. The Divine Mercy is not only a gift but a task, not for a few Nigerians but for all Nigerians, which St. Faustina and St. John Paul II expanded by inviting institutions and society to embrace the Divine Mercy as a moral principle.

¹ *DM*, no. 2.

However, there is a rich diversity in the NT expression of man's salvation, especially in the synoptic Gospels, which can be better expressed by Scripture scholars. In this expression, there is an underlying unity in the diverse theologies, which has been built through Christian Tradition and theological development especially from the Gospel of Matthew. Moreover, Matthew's Gospel presents Jesus the Divine Mercy Incarnate, as the true Messiah in God's plan, who came and was rejected by Israel, consequently Nigerians have been invited to embrace mercy as prerequisite and essential of the Gospel message.

Among the Synoptic Gospels, the Gospel of Luke presents the message of non-confinement to sin and calls for a response to God's mercy as in earlier chapters of Luke, Matthew etc (Lk 7:36-44). Like the Pharisee in the parable of Jesus about the repented woman, instead of rejoicing over the acts of repentance of the woman, he delimited his thoughts to her former character of sin. In the parable, Jesus Christ has to make Simon acknowledge that the gravity of the woman's sins had been in the past. But it is also clear that some debtors are greater than others. The Psalmist also teaches that if God is to judge us according to our sins, nobody will survive (Ps 130:3). In other words, sin is a debt. The human person by his vulnerable nature stands constantly in need of God's mercy, grace and healing. This means that the human person is a debtor to God Almighty—through the grace and the Cross of Christ, man can be freed from this debt. The point here, is not whether our debt be more or less, but that when human person repents and receives God's mercy. The human person cannot stand the justice of God, because it is more than what we can pay. If God is to ask our debt by justice, the human person cannot stand it. In order to accept Divine Justice is to go through Jesus Christ, who has paid with his blood. Of course, the human person has to fulfil the call to conversion and repentance in order to be worthy of salvation. There is no doubt, God is ready to forgive any sinner who comes to him. Jesus Christ has already purchased pardon for those who believe in him. His Gospel promises it to them, which his Spirit seals it to all repenting sinners, offering them hope and comfort. The parable not only invites the human person to depend on Jesus Christ, the Divine Mercy Incarnate, but challenges man to trust, obey him more zealously and recommend him to others by their way of life.

Contextually, the reality of the Biblical Revelation brings to focus on how Nigerians can best achieve this salvation. This investigation is not only theologizing but it provoked moral questioning as to how right this salvation can be attained. When rightness is involved, then, it presupposes moral standard—which reminds Nigerians to turn towards what is good and avoid evil. Thus, NT authors, especially the Gospels, have undertaken the exposition of the reality of Christianity—which is revealed through the Incarnation of Jesus Christ in the world. The Divine Revelation to man in Jesus Christ, not only brought the study of theological categories, such as

ethics, Christian anthropology, Christology, ecclesiology and eschatology but soteriological study-which sees humanity in need of salvation, and revealed Jesus Christ as the bringer of salvation, who is the hope of the community of the sanctified and life of the sanctified. The Gospel of Matthew takes up this task of exploring about the person of Jesus Christ. The teaching of Jesus Christ and the teaching about Jesus that „dominate”² the Gospel texts. Potentially, Nigeria as a community and a church in view can be traced to Matthew’s general interest and more so, he is the only one who backed up this point with the word „church” (Mt 16:16-19, 18:15-18) among all the four Evangelists. The impression one gets about Matthew is that judgement is the leading theme, yet further attention will show that this is almost completely balanced by grace and mercy. Similarly, he writes for the whole worldwide Church. However, Nigerian Community shared in the universal view of salvation. Thus, he has something to say to each part of the world. We see him insists that Gentiles are not merely tolerated but welcomed: to stand for law and forgiveness; for reward and generosity; for order and freedom; for a condition of renewal of the human person both the interior and exterior for his eternal happiness, which he yearns in his nature³.

Where there is „no mercy, no redemption”⁴ (NMNR) and such a place is an enemy to God. Mercy is a universal commodity that cannot be talked about without the consequence of sin, which expresses God’s justice. Tempering justice with mercy expresses the grace of God in his mercifulness. Moreover, the Gospel of Matthew described the last judgement situation, where man will either be acquitted as „a saint” or be condemned as a sinner. This is not a mere description but it is a strong reminder to man that he has all opportunities he needs to be happy or miserable. This judgement will sentence every man to a state of happiness or misery for his accountable deeds. Jesus Christ will come with the Father’s glory and with the glory of the Mediator, between God and man. The antithetical-paradox here, is that, the godly and ungodly live together in the same town, city, village, house, religious centre of worship, office, market place, without knowing who belongs to the category of the godly or ungodly. Similarly, the state of happiness and misery live side by side, light and darkness, life and death. Of course, such are the weaknesses of the saints and such are also the hypocrisies of the ungodly. Jesus Christ the Good Shepherd, shall separate the godly from the ungodly. The godly will inherit the state of happiness. The sacrifice of Jesus Christ brought full justification and grace, to the point that no one is excluded from this invitation. It is an opened invitation to come for life and rest. Those who respond to the invitation are ushered into the state of happiness, which they came

² L. Morris, *New Testament Theology*, Michigan: Zondervan 1990, p. 120.

³ Cf. J. Sherman, *The Theology of the Gospels*, London: Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd 1966, p. 50.

⁴ „No mercy, no redemption(NMNR)”. This means that mercy is the instrument that God considered in order to redeem man from eternal damnation because of his sins. To be merciful is to be morally upright.

from. Their knowing and willing choices cannot be thwarted. The punishment of the sinners is an everlasting punishment. Therefore, life and death (Mk 7:9-13; Mt 4:1-25; Num 6:24-26; Pr 25:26), are set before man to choose his way using his intellect, conscience and so shall it be.

Morally speaking, when I look at Nigeria, many questions come to mind. Looking at the promising young men and women, the treasures of today and tomorrow, the graduates and the under-graduates with stable and sound minds ready to give to the society, the seasoned educationists, active community builders, tested and trusted scholars in many fields of knowledge, transformers of mankind, available technologists, considerable scientists, inspired innovators and other works of life, on one hand, the message of mercy is the answer. On another hand, God will be confronted with situations where there is war against the knowledge of the Divine Mercy, he will be confronted with war against human life and dignity, war against human right and personhood. It is not begging the question of „why”, as if God is not seeing all that is happening. He will also be confronted with moral degeneration, moral decadence, political mal-functioning and mass media turning into instrument of mass destruction. He will be confronted with those who waited for the better but were defeated by schizophrenia, and the temptations of discouragements and despondency. Man, no longer loves man and accept himself. Man suffers due to a disconnection from the Divine Mercy. And yet, in recognition of God’s mercy, it was man who said:

„When I see the heavens, the work of your hands, the moon and the stars, which you have made; What is man that you take notice of him, mortal man that you care for him? You have made him a little lower than God, and you crown him with glory and majesty; you make him to rule over the works of your hands; you have put things under his feet, all sheep and cattle, the birds of the air and fish of the sea, whatever make their way through the paths of the seas” (Ps 8:3-8).

It is said: „God cannot be seen but can be followed. And man can be seen but cannot be followed”. In order to see God and follow him, he sent his only Begotten Son, so that whoever believes in him will not perish but have eternal life (Jn 3:16). God has manifested his mercies, majesty and holiness to sinners in a manner well suited to their nature and their understanding.

Contextually, Nigerians cannot afford turning their back against God’s love and mercy in the wake of political instability that caused poverty, vulnerable citizenry, more orphans and widows, due to science and technology, which are the products of man’s hand-work achieved through the mercy of God. God is waiting for the return of Nigerians to his original love and tender-heartedness. God’s relentless desire to save man from the wages of sin (Rom 6:23), expressed it when he said: „If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land” (2 Chr 7:14). Thus, the call to return to God’s trust and mercy, whoever accepts with true faith, his godly sorrow will enlarge, his hatred for sin will increase, his soul will become more active and watchful, his views about God will be

pure, his understanding of man's purpose on earth will be godly and his life will be more holy in order to take up the challenge to respond to the call for holiness and reconciliation not only for those who have the voice but for the voiceless.

3.1. The Divine Mercy: A Gift and a Task

Among other legacies left by St. John Paul II, is that „he created a new awareness of the greatness of the Divine Mercy in recent times and in the modern world”⁵. The Divine Mercy is not only a gift but a task. He put it well when he said, „The Biblical creation account offers us sufficient reasons for such an understanding and interpretation: ‘creation is a gift, because man appears in it, who as an ‘image of God’, is able to understand the very meaning of the gift in, in the call from nothing to existence”⁶. This gift of the Divine Mercy is borne of his personal experience of the mercies of God in multiple events in his life history. The Divine Mercy as a gift to humanity is also a task, which sometimes bewildered and overwhelmed by the power of evil, selfishness and fear. The Risen Lord offers his love that pardons, reconciles and reopens hearts to love. It is a love that converts hearts and gives peace. The choice of Nigerians to accept Divine Mercy is not only a credible way to achieve personal happiness but national peace, which provides opportunities for sustainable developmental goals. Standing on the premise of ‘the Divine Mercy: A Gift and a Task’, I reiterate the fact that all the spiritual and mental faculties of man constitute love, mercy and morality. St. John Paul II, not only saw and understood the Divine Mercy from the point of view of the Birth of Jesus in the world, but he accepted and lived it especially as he expressed the paschal mystery of Christ's suffering in his very life as an example for family.

Truly, Nigerians witnessed the presence of God's mercy in their very existence, the abundance of natural and the human resources. The natural and the human resources are the very gifts out of God's mercy to Nigerians. These gifts represent and indicate God's mercy to Nigerians. But these gifts are to be used for the glory of God and for the common good as patrimonial heritage. This heritage is to be placed at the service of Nigerians in their relationship to God. The merciful acts presupposed that Nigerians where ever they are, every act to reveal God's mercy in private activities, in government services to Nigerians so that the less-privileged can experienced God's mercy. The act of revealing and showing mercy is not an individual programme rather it is the divine command to love.

⁵ D. Came, *Divine Mercy as a Gift*, in:

<http://www.thedivinemercy.org/news/A-Gift-of-Divine-Mercy-3597>, (accessed 1.05.2017).

⁶ John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them: A Theology of the Body*, transl. M. Waldstein, Boston: Pauline Books & Media 2006, p. 180.

The task of giving mercy is an optional invitation. It is the primary reason why Nigerians are existing and living. This responsibility of giving mercy, is non-transferable and inevitable. The moral task on Nigerians is to participate in the revelation, the exercise and promotion of the acts of mercy not only glorify God the Giver of mercy but to build to the broken lives of Nigerians who are wounded by political and economic gladiators.

3.1.1. An Ontological Task on Families and Communities

In this section, I have two meanings of family. Firstly, I will refer to a natural family a unit. Secondly, from a family unit, I will make reference to family of families, which include institutions, communities, organizations and corporate bodies. God is the origin of family⁷. It is said: „a tree does not form a forest”. Similarly, a family in a broadest sense is an institution, which constitutes father and mother and a child, to form a one whole unit with the purpose of tending towards God’s will. However, children may be there or not as long as a legitimate marriage is brought into existence by two consented-adults, who said yes to each other, that is man and woman, there a family exists⁸. Similarly, the CBCN acknowledged the family nature of Nigeria and „emphasized the pluralistic state of the Nigerian nation being made into a united whole, where the family has to play a basic and natural role”⁹. Moreover, loving desire means that I want the other person because the other person is good for me. Love is an inner desire to unconditionally offer to a person. The comradeship means that this person and I, want to work together for the same good goal devoid of evil. While betrothed love is a total self-surrendering to the other person¹⁰. However, the family in the modern world, as much as perhaps more than any other institution, has been beset by the many profound and rapid changes that have affected society and culture to the point that many families are living together because of their fidelity to family values¹¹. Although these values are wounded by sin and they need to be healed by the grace of Christ through the Divine Mercy¹². In families, children are gifts from God (Ps 127:3) and they are not human rights or individual rights. The Greek proverb said: „The net catches while the fisher sleeps” in the night. Similarly, a German proverb also said: „God bestows his gifts during the night”, which brings the same expression, in which „he goes to bed at night and

⁷ Cf. H. Joas, *Faith as an Option: A Possible Future for Christianity*, Stanford: Stanford University Press 2014, p. 9.

⁸ Cf., G. Leyshon, ed., *Karol Wojtyla’s Love and Responsibility*, October/November 2002, Updated July 2004, p. 1.

⁹ P. Scineller, Pastoral Letters and Communiqués of the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Nigeria 1960-2002, p. 80.

¹⁰ Cf. *Ibid.*

¹¹ Cf. *FC*, no. 1.

¹² Cf. *FC*, no. 3.

gets up by day, and the seed sprouts and grows-he himself does not know” (Mk 4:27). The Psalmist also confirmed that man’s toils and skills, and care for his future, would be all in vain without the surveillance of God (Ps 127:1).

But the other side of a family is that there is a complexity of interpersonal relationship, that is connected between, fatherhood and motherhood, a filiation and a fraternal relationship, through which each human person is introduced into the „human family” and into the „family of God”, which is the Church where God is adored and glorified¹³. Marriage is a vocation within the institution of the family. Similarly, the responsibility of recognizing God as the Lord of all creation is on all Nigerians as „a family” irrespective of their affiliations. The creation and maintenance of human institutions are on the shoulders of families. Families in Nigeria, are also champions of transmitting family values to the next generations. Institutions are to be made safe by families for children in order to promote the ideals of mercy. Granted that the right conscience of children is formed through the principles of education to enable the institutions to function for the common good.

It was St. John Paul II, who taught that man must reconcile himself to his natural greatness and he must not forget that he is a person with the capacity to love and to be loved¹⁴. Man’s capacity to love, is connected with the capacity to create not only in terms of birth of children but expanding his spiritual legacy where friends and neighbours can be inspired as fruits of the Divine Mercy, create opportunities for others, create jobs and wealth for Nigerians. Corporate organizations are centres of both corporal and spiritual works of mercy in Nigeria without conditions. Love should be expressed without setting strings for the beneficiary of love. For example, it is the duty of the business managers of companies to prepare advertisements for the public consumption. If a man can budget time, resources and energy to this earthly course, what more of the eternal course, the permanent home of man where he will be secured.

Similarly, the human family being the primordial family of families, has the responsibility not only to establish human institutions but set up principle, which reflects the Divine Mercy in all its activities. The human institutions such as health, political, educational, economic and social institutions can be purified to inculturate the Divine Mercy as „the culture of life”. Truly, if a president of Nigeria has been given a collective mandate and power to rule and govern the country „for the good of the entire citizenry”, and it is morally accepted, then that means, families have even better opportunities with their collective divine mandate to bring up children who having received from their parents the right path of mercy will be better transmitters and ambassadors of Divine Mercy in Nigeria. In the same vein, today science and

¹³ Cf. *FC*, no. 15.

¹⁴ Cf. John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them: A Theology of the Body*, p. 178.

technology have become institutions for human goods and services. Since man is the co-creator of science and technology in the principle of their operations in the format we have them, with the collective will and mandate, Nigerians can re-direct the use of the divine gifts and talents, which God gave them to not only to „transform” science and technology into the instruments of Divine Mercy.

Fundamentally, families are makers of culture through narratives. Every good thing in a community is found in the crannies and nooks of a culture. Science and technology have almost become a cultural normative, without which the human connectivity with other institutions will be difficult and sometimes impossible. Consequently, the function of narratives constitute reality by setting it within a temporal framework, which orders reality in a particular way, without which the communication of this reality would be utterly impossible¹⁵. This means that, the Divine Mercy not only needs human cooperation but credible institutions and instruments, which consist of the formation and transmission of the life of the Divine Mercy in Nigeria. Through the mediation of narratives, values and norms of the way of life are passed on to the next generation. And since narratives mediate between experiences and expectations, values and orientations can contribute to the transformation of ethical and pedagogical consciousness of community¹⁶. Narratives not only create basis for common judgements, but they deliver basis for the formation of tradition, of which they themselves are part of tradition, so much so that they generate and secure continuity, information and interpretations of values. Culture prepares a lot of grounds for religious convictions to take root, which lead to spiritual and physical developments.

When institutions are not nurtured and strengthened, the consequence will be the emergence of sycophants, insensitive individuals, deceptive leadership and immoral followership that will be built on unpatriotic tendencies. Consequently, the end of a tenure of a leadership is also the end of „democratic dividends” and „good governance”. Their end, comes along with the end of policies and the citizen will inevitably go back to their „normal poverty” sorrowfully, which brings to mind the question of the natural task of parents.

3.1.2. A Natural Task on Parents and Filial Obligations

It is not enough to have children in a family, but it calls for moral tasks on parents to give them integral education, which involves genuine intellectual formation, moral formation and

¹⁵ Cf. S. Udo, *Theology of the New Testament*, p. 37.

¹⁶ Cf. M. P. Wasswa, *African Christian Theology in the Contemporary Context*, Kisubi: Marianum Publications 2002, p. 2.

technical formation¹⁷. These principles are valid and well-tested ones for the formation of human person in order to actualize his moral potentials not only to please God his Creator but to meaningfully contribute to building of a more humane world where love, mercy, peace and unity reign and radiate. Children are precious gifts and must get everything they need to function both as human beings and agents of development in the world¹⁸. Teaching children diligently signifies the manner of instruction that is to be done earnestly, frequently and discreetly (Dt 6:7). It is said, „one cannot give what he doesn't have”. But, having been beneficiaries of God's many gifts, parents that love the Lord God themselves will do what ought to be done in such a way as to transmit affection to their children so as to preserve God's love and religious values. It was one of my professors, Rev. Fr. Angelo O'Hegan, who observed that Jewish parents, thought God's laws to Israelites parents, so that every father might instruct his sons in it, and every mother giving the same instruction to her daughters. In other words, the gifts of the Divine Mercy, life, moral freedom and other good things received from God, parents must carefully transmit them to those that come after them in order to perpetuate them for the glory of God and the good of human person. All the instructions must be governed by reverence and seriousness so as not only to benefit their children, but their relations, friends and neighbours in the community. There are no boundaries in doing good by moral law. The best way to give moral instruction is by living the moral life itself before speaking it out. It could be in the farm, at business premises, at work place or market, on a journey, in the fields and at any daily conversations, good morals should always be taught to children and good moral life is lived for communities and for potential models in communities.

It is said: „when you see a child offering sacrifice, an elder has prepared it”. That is to say, most of the habits are formed by parents through their daily instructions of their children directly or indirectly. There are centres of habits, namely, family, religion, institutions of learning, politics, a village, a community etc. These centres are directly responsible for the provision and preservation of human ideals, which include good habits, character, moral life and the religious meaning of life. The CBCN affirmed this when it said: „A faithful son doe the bidding of his father; a loyal subject obeys the laws of the State”¹⁹.

Due to the importance of a habit, it must be understood as a seed that needs proper „sowing, watering, nurturing, protection and monitoring”²⁰. If a habit is not properly managed,

¹⁷ Cf. S. Sakaba, *3-Leged African Stove in Nigeria*, „Sosnowieckie Teologiczne: Amoria Laetia, WNurcie Adhottacji Amoris Laetitia” (2016-2017), p. 319-334.

¹⁸ Cf. *FC*, no. 14.

¹⁹ C. Anyanwu and O. J. Fadugba-pinheiro, *Our Concern for Nigeria Catholic Bishops Speak*, p. 1.

²⁰ „Sowing, watering, nurturing, protection and monitoring”, means that when a habit is developed and nurtured within a setting that has all it takes to form a good habit from the teachers of good habits, models of good habit and centres of good habit, definitely, people of good habit and moral character will emerge.

its product will be disastrous not only to the person, with it, but also to his family and entire community. At all times, a habit identifies and distinguishes a person from the other person when it comes to social matters. A habit gives identity, which remains a hallmark in the person's life. It is said, „a habit is a second nature of a person”. Sometimes, a description of a person can be given through an observed habit exhibited by a person. Identity is fundamentally „DNA”, which guarantees rights and privileges and about links to others in the everyday life.

Therefore, the Nigerian family is challenged to understand the self in terms of community, not only as an independent unit but also as a part of the whole of Nigerian-family in relation to unity and identity. Identity, in this sense, is a kind of communal self. One universal quality of identity is that it gives meaning to life beyond itself. Identity is a mark of uniqueness and greatness. Unless, we identify who we are, we cannot be what we ought to be. After all, reality has to be first, and foremost, before it is not. Therefore, without identity no person can defend and claim any right as it affects obligation including young people.

When I was a child, I used to see my father and my mother doing many things such as farming, fishing, hunting, making art and crafts, eating certain foods, drinks etc. Most of what they were doing I did not question why they were doing those things and the way they were doing them. And a lot of them I did not understand. But, most of the ones I understood I became more interested in doing and trying to imitate how and what they were doing. It was clear in my mind that what they were doing was something good and I had no doubt as to their moral credibility. And such actions were repeated year in and year out. In my culture, when children ask their parents and elders the „why” question, it was regarded not only as bad manners but lack of respect and distrust. Children never believed that parents would mislead them at any point in time. So, whatever parents and elders tell children it must be nothing but the whole truth. But the other side is that whether parents understood what they were doing is another thing, but that was beyond the knowing power of a child who had so much trust on parents.

Trust was the watch word in all daily affairs. Somehow parents also trusted their children as being obedient and good children. Children were not only a gift to their biological parents but they were also a gift to their community. Parent never owned children alone, rather it is a collective ownership—parents and the community are „stakeholders” of children. In this way, a child knows that if there is any exhibition of misconduct or misbehaviour, neither the parents nor the community can support any act of misconduct. Thus, children watch their behaviours because the sin of a child affects the whole community's integrity and good name. Therefore, this was a „fertile ground” to inculcate the Divine Mercy where „trust” is the first principle in a family.

Essentially, „trust is the essence of Divine Mercy”²¹. Without trust, it is not possible for a person to be true Divine Mercy Devotee, to talk less of understanding the message of the Divine Mercy Devotion. The essence of the Divine Mercy is fundamentally a theological message that God is merciful and the human person who has the image of God needs to learn its essence and live by it. Living the essence of the Divine Mercy is the trust in the Devotion, without which there can be no connection between the human person and his God. To venerate mercy is to trust in mercy²². In other words, the human person translates the Divine Mercy in the daily devotion not only to nourish attitude of mercy but it nurtures the practical devotion and veneration of mercy by acts of piety.

Children are known for their deep virtues of trust, humility and love. In the same vein, families in Nigeria are invited to participate in inculturating the way of life of the Divine Mercy. Parents live by example in order to teach their children the life of mercy. But childlikeness of a child must be protected at all cost. Due to the special beauty of childhood, Jesus taught that unless the human person converts, repents, trust and tenderly love his neighbour he cannot enter the Kingdom of God (Mt 18:2-3; Jn 14:1; Is 43:1; Jer 7:8; Dan 6:23). Without trust, human person cannot be successful or happy without confidence in his own powers and abilities²³. The capacity of a child to adapt, to adopt and to assimilate enables a child to anchor on the parental integrity and goodness, which have been developed over the years and they are also received as parental heritage knowing that there will be external influences. Love is the principle of happiness both for an individual and a community. When a family is founded on love, it begets love, which shows itself in the lives of the children in the family. The inner principle of the obligation of a family is to set love as its beginning and final goal. Thus, „man cannot live without love. He remains a being that is incomprehensible for himself, his life is senseless, if love is not revealed to him, if he does not encounter love, if he does not experience it and make it his own, if he does not participate intimately in it”²⁴, self-catastrophe and the jeopardy on the rights of others are inevitable.

St. John Paul II taught that „in the family, which is a communion of persons, special attention be devoted to the children by developing a profound esteem for their personal dignity and great respect and generous concern for their rights. This is true for every child, but it becomes all the more urgent the smaller the child is and the more it is in need of everything, when it is sick, suffering or handicapped”²⁵. Children are treasures of today and tomorrow.

²¹ T. Kotlewski, P. Szydłowski, M. A. Zelmanska, *Days of the Apostles of Divine Mercy*: DVD, Zembrzyce: 2015.

²² Cf. Ibid.

²³ Cf. N. V. Peale, *The Power of Positive Thinking for Young People*, Bandra: Better Yourself Books 1999, p. 8.

²⁴ FC, no. 18.

²⁵ FC, no. 26.

They need moral, intellectual and technical formations in the family as one of the centres of habits. These habits are not only for the good of the immediate natural family but for the other families in Nigeria. In this case, the moral implications of meeting other families are put into consideration when up-bringing children is going on. Jesus challenged all centres of habit formations, when he said: „Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them; for such belongs the kingdom of heaven” (Mt 19:14). However, there are children who are physically and spiritually children who need all the help to become an adult in soul and body. There are also „children” who are newly converted into the Christian faith, that need nurturing and nourishment to be strong in the faith.

Such „children” need pedagogical and catechetical teachings to enable them understand and live the paschal mysteries of the death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Unfortunately, families seem to have lost the essential commodities of parental responsibilities, seeking the truth, living and giving good life examples, a general nonchalant attitude toward moral values and paying more attention to earthly matters than to the spiritual values. The absence of these values poses a difficult situation for children to respond to their filial obligation as ordained by God. Children can only give what they have received from their parents. If an attitude of no obligation is given to them, they also have no obligation to give.

Nigerian children are called to fulfil their duties to their parents. These duties include, respect, obedience, humility and honour to their parents, which not only bring them long life, their prayers will be heard by God but strengthen them with every blessing they need (Sir 3:3-6,17). After all, whatever they received has been shown to be beyond human power to understand. And with the understanding that children belong to both biological parents and the community, children also have the obligation to maintain the integrity of their community by living a worthy exemplary life.

Morally speaking, children could have acquired some bad attitudes like hate speeches against others based on race, religion and cultural affiliations without humility²⁶. Sometimes, it is done as an act of duty to parents keeping what they have taught. In many Nigerian cultures, children see the elderly as stumbling blocks to „their happy life”. Such children distrust elders for reminding them to live their moral obligations. Ironically, in no distant time the children of today will be inevitably elders of tomorrow. Sometimes, filial obligations become distorted when children themselves do not understand why they should do what they have been asked to do. Therefore, unless the parents maintain the fact that they were the treasures of yesterday and today, and their children are treasures of today and tomorrow, the urgency of God’s presence in the family, the life of a double standard will be inevitable without trust in mercy.

²⁶ Cf. B. Nwoye, *The Victory of Humility*, Lagos: Citizens Interpress & Publishers 2005, p. 5.

3.1.3. Mercy as a Universal Task

For this reason, the CBCN, called for conversion and holiness as is clearly borne out by the Sacred Scripture²⁷: „Be holy, for I, your God am holy” (Lev 19:2; 1 Pet 1:15-16; Mt 5:48). To begin with God is to go on successfully in one’s affairs. Reconciliation is possible in Nigeria regardless of all the various affiliations as long as the attitude of mercy is inculturated. The attainment of attitudinal mercy in the context of change, is possible through the dialogue between opposing parties, between ethnicities and regionalism, with a capacity to listen to one another and the possibility for collaboration that builds up solidarity among people²⁸. Thus, there is need for urgent inculturation of moral principles namely, principle of double effect, principle of cooperation, and principle of totality.

First and foremost, the principle of double effect is where the overall intention of Nigerians is only towards good effect while the bad effect is humanly permitted, where an act in itself is good, the bad effect is not a means of achieving the good effect, where the act is in proper proportion between good and bad effects. Secondly, the principle of cooperation is where people knowingly, willingly to formally and materially bring evil. However, this principle must eliminate any act that knowingly and willing, which may attempt to formally and materially bring evil to individuals and communities, rather act must be turned into objective and subjective good. Thirdly, the principle of totality is where a choice is not intrinsically evil, which a part is sacrificed for the whole. In this case, it must not be a human life, human dignity or personhood that has to be sacrificed, rather any other thing can be sacrificed to develop humanity devoid of evil effects from both scientific and technological points of view. The new scientific discovering that is yet to bear much fruits is to discover the level of how much love and importance God has invested upon man out of his mercy, not only to know and love him, but to know himself and to express self-acceptance of others. The supreme instrument is religious education which can both galvanize the earth and the human person to real development and happiness. Without inculturation and imbibing the attitude of God’s mercy, the principle of human dignity, of common good, of subsidiarity, the common values of peace, unity, love, and human life will all be opened to all ungodly threats.

Importantly, God will not do the work of man, and man cannot do the work of God. Each person has his work. While on earth, with full moral accountability, God’s attribute of mastership is given to man to separate between godly and the ungodly; between love and hatred; knowledge and ignorance; between morality and immorality; between good and evil but not

²⁷ Cf. P. Schineller, ed., *A Call to Holiness and Reconciliation in: The Voice of the Voiceless*, p. 366-369.

²⁸ Cf. *Ibid.*

without consequences as a result of choices and responsibilities. Food is the first material need of man, which forms the basis and structure of his existence. It is the work of man to „feed the hungry”²⁹, to give drink to the thirsty, to welcome the stranger, to cloth the naked, to visit the sick and the imprisoned³⁰. The spiritual inclination of man gives him the capacity to know that the neglect to do these corporal works of mercy to his fellow man, under a need, which he is a beneficiary of God’s mercy has great moral accountability. In this case, he has not only rejected his work by willingly and knowingly to be merciful, but he neglected the Divine Mercy, as a gift and a task.

3.2. The Divine Mercy: From St. Faustina to Contemporary Popes

3.2.1. St. Faustina

Faith in God is the prerequisite for permanent happiness. Faith and trust in God are essential values in Nigeria. Nigerians are in dire need of the Divine Mercy for prosperity and progress. „No one can please God without faith, for whoever comes to God must have faith that God exists and rewards those who seek him” (Heb 11:6).

St. Faustina is a model of childlike abandonment to the Divine Mercy Devotion who not only had faith but trusted God beyond everything. Her faith was not only walking and being with God but provided the source of the attitude of trust in God’s mercy³¹. Faith provides the

²⁹ On one hand, there are many people who are in dire need of material and spiritual food especially, the orphans, the less privileged and the disadvantaged. But man is also made with the properties of body and soul. After all, food is the first material needs of the human person. For example, millions of Nigerians are hungry because of politicization and philosophizing of truth, insurgencies, terrorism and religious violence, which hijacked the common resources by a few individuals. The insensitivity of politicians has deepened to the point that the plight of the poor masses, absence of mercy and love in real life, reductionists tendency of life against communities, politics of semantics against conscience, those seeking for riches beyond the dreams of avarice and selfishness are glaringly seen and felt. On the other hand, millions of Nigerians are spiritually hungry. Like the Psalmist who says: „Like the deer that yearns for running streams, so my soul is yearning for you, my God. My soul is thirsty for God, the God of my life; when can I enter and see the face of God?” (Ps 42:1-6). Similarly, Saint Augustine had the same understanding when he said: „God you made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless, until they rest in you” (Cf. R. Warner, *The Confessions of St. Augustine*, New York: A Mentor-Omega Books 1963, p. 19). God is the only one who can heal the spiritual hunger of man such as: lack of faith in God; despondency; psychological trauma and campaign for godlessness. When man is healed, he receives spiritual values namely, God’s love and mercy, grace and hope.

³⁰ Cf. Mt 25:35-36. As believers in Jesus Christ, the faculties of intellect, conscience and moral law are clear enough to explain the fact that Nigerians who form of the human community, need moral and pastoral message of Divine Mercy—that is, Nigerians are beneficiaries of Divine Mercy. Thus, the task to be merciful is not an option but an obligation. The human person is naturally informed enough about the full significance of his acts of mercy and the knowledge of his strongest motives. Nigerians share the common humanity. Therefore, they know what it means to be in the state of thirst, a stranger, naked, sick and in prison. The experience of suffering is evident with the multiplication of orphans, homelessness, joblessness, the marginalized, the rejected by society, the outcast by racial, ethnic and religious segregations, and those defeated by life.

³¹ Cf. The Congregation of the Sisters of Our Lay of Mercy, *In Saint Faustina’s School of Trust*, Kraków: The Shrine of the Divine Mercy 2002, p. 9.

fundamental basis for the theological virtues to „germinate”, and to be nourished through the sacraments, nurtured and strengthened by the acts of devotions. Despite the many challenges that faced St. Faustina, she remained strong in trust and hope of her personal salvation in Jesus Christ who revealed himself to her in many occasions and in the Sacraments³². After all, „Despair is thus a culpable and voluntary renunciation of trust, which in the midst of torments and oppressing feelings bids us to seek the unfailing help of the merciful God”³³.

The *Diary* of St. Faustina forms the basis and structure of the Divine Mercy Devotion for all souls, for personal purifications and nurturing by piety. Her *Diary* is more than a „Notebook”. It is not only for personal use for the nurturing of the human soul to be merciful, but it is a compendium of the moral theological teaching of the Church in our modern times. The *Diary* contains not only the theological essentials that are needed to raise the thirst for mercy for the soul but planted promises to those who will venerate mercy and live the way of mercy.

It was St. Augustine who contemplated on the mystery of the Resurrection of Christ, wrote: „We had nothing from which to receive our life; he had nothing from which to receive death. Hence the amazing exchange: He made his, our death and ours his life”³⁴. This turns the liturgy of the Second Sunday of Easter the intuition of St. Faustina into prayer–Divine Mercy Sunday. On the Divine Mercy Sunday, God of eternal mercy, re-ignite the people consecrated to him in faith, which God increases in them the grace he has given, so that everyone, may understand by which Spirit they have been regenerated and redeemed in the Blood of Christ³⁵. I consider Divine Mercy Sunday as the „seventh day” of God’s „new creation” of humanity in mercy.

If God had allowed St. Thomas the Apostle to have doubts, it is to confirm our faith in the fundamental mystery of the Resurrection of Christ. In this regard, St. Leo the Great said:

„the Spirit of truth would not have allowed these hesitations in the hearts of his preachers if this distrust and these hesitations full of curiosity had not affirmed the foundations of our faith, and if these” uneasiness ‘had not been healed in the person of the apostles’. In them we have been shielded from the slanders of the wicked and against the arguments of worldly wisdom. What they saw enlightens us, what they have heard gives us directions, what they have touched makes us firmer, more balanced. They doubted so that our doubt is no longer possible”³⁶.

Similarly, St. John Paul II not only affirmed the Divine Mercy but considered it as a task when he said: „Right from the beginning of my ministry in St. Peter’s See in Rome, I considered this

³²Cf. *Diary*, no. 4.

³³ The Congregation of the Sisters of Our Lay of Mercy, *In Saint Faustina’s School of Trust*, p. 178.

³⁴ Francesco, *We are Invited to Share Mercy*, in:

<https://zenit.org/articles/we-are-invited-to-share-mercy/> (accessed 1.04.2016).

³⁵ Cf. A. C. Liovera, A. M. Ranjith, J. Njue, A. Tabera, eds., *Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship, Second Sunday Within the Octave of Easter: The Liturgy of the Hours*, Nairobi: Pauline Publications Africa 2009, p. 566.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

message of Divine Mercy my special task. Providence has assigned it to me in the present situation of man, the Church and the world. It could be said that precisely this situation assigned that message to me as my task before God”³⁷. He added that he felt spiritually ‘very near’ to St. Faustina, when he began writing *Dives in Misericordia*³⁸. In April 18, 1993, he gave this address: „I clearly feel that my mission does not end with death but begins Sister Faustina wrote in her *Diary*. And it truly did! Her continued trust is yielding astonishing fruit. It is truly marvelous how her devotion to the merciful Jesus is spreading in our contemporary world and gaining so many human hearts!”³⁹.

Looking at the man’s inhumanity to man in Nigeria, political instability, such wanton killings, devaluation of family values, increasing orphans, more widows, homelessness etc., the acceptance of Divine Mercy is not only the end of misery in Nigeria but inevitable moral obligation based on the teachings of St. John Paul II.

3.2.2. St. John Paul II: The Nigerian Experience

I consider St. John Paul II, as the „International Saint and Friend” and the prototype model of the Divine Mercy, not in terms of hierarchy of importance or worth, but his thirst for truth and beauty in other people and his pastoral diversity. He was not only spiritually present in all continents but physically present in human history. History, in one sense, is a collection of experience. It is a flow of experience from events, where anticipation is the hope for a fuller experience. Experience shapes a person’s identity. In other words, education, training, redirections, and mishaps as well as successes testify to a character and suitability. For St. John Paul II’s personal experience not only consisted in being a son of Poland but a „father, saint and friend” of Nigerians. If tragedy does not kill, it strengthens human person for higher values.

St. John Paul II’s intellectual experiences flourished in a life that, despite early pain and hardships, was both vibrantly athletic and devoted to academic study. He was a model and a „path” for academicians of all times. His identity was molded essentially by faith in the family setting, the experience of loss and solidarity in the face of national persecution, the strategic influence of dedicated laity, his intellectual life and the daily work of rigorous labour⁴⁰. He was an exceptional philosopher, theologian, and a devotee of the Divine Mercy. The Lublin experience forms a central dimension to St. John Paul II’s identity⁴¹. The encounters in the

³⁷ G. W. Kosicki, *John Paul II: The Great Mercy Pope*, Stockbridge MA: An Imprint of Marian Press 2001, p. 9.

³⁸ Cf. *Ibid.*

³⁹ G. W. Kosicki, *John Paul II: The Great Mercy Pope*, p. 37.

⁴⁰ Cf. W. Glasser, *The Identity Society*, New York: Perennia Library 1975, p. 103.

⁴¹ Cf. G. W. Kosicki, *John Paul II: The Great Mercy Pope* p. 40.

lecture hall allowed him to give considerable attention to what various philosophers thought about the nature of human action, identity and experience.

With his intellectual experience, St. John Paul II gained pastoral experience to the point of becoming „a shepherd” and „the Saint” to millions of Nigerians we have never witnessed⁴². He left legacies that created new awareness of the Divine Mercy. The legacies of the DMD and his person as the „Pope of Mercy”⁴³ challenged the modern Nigerians and their generations yet unborn.

3.2.2.1. Divine Mercy Legacies in Nigeria

St. John Paul II, was not only a vocal advocate for the human rights and dignity, but he created the awareness of the Divine Mercy in the world, inculturated it in Nigeria when in 1982, he said: „Be clothed in sincere compassion, in kindness and humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with one another; forgive each other as soon as a quarrel begins. The Lord has forgiven you; now you must do the same. Over all these clothes, to keep them together and complete them, put on love”⁴⁴. Similarly, in 1998 he reiterated the message of Divine Mercy when he said: Saint „Paul speaks of ‘the new creation in Christ’ and goes on to tell us: God in Christ was reconciling the world to himself, not holding men’s faults against them, and he has entrusted to us the news that they are reconciled...the appeal we make in Christ’s name is: be reconciled to God”⁴⁵. The homilies of St. John Paul II, not only asked for clemency to be extended to the prisoners in Nigeria but, a 9-year-old Philip Akabuse said: „He has come to bless us”⁴⁶. Nigeria faced serious political and socio-economic challenges at that time, that the Lord visited his people not only in Nigeria but in Africa⁴⁷. Moreover, every Gospel has the feature of God’s Kingdom and the Church’s proclamation of what God has done in Jesus Christ. The Pastors of the African Continent, in communion with the Successor of the Apostle Peter and members of the Episcopal College from other parts of the world, held a Synod, which was intended to be an occasion of hope and resurrection, at the very moment when human events

⁴² Cf. *Eaf, EAs, EAm, EO, EE, FC*.

⁴³ G. W. Kosicki, *John Paul II: The Great Mercy Pope*, p. 9.

⁴⁴ John Paul II, *Homily of John Paul II* (Lagos, Nigeria, 12.02.1982), in: https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/homilies/1982/documents/hf_jp-ii_hom_19820212_lagos-nigeria.html (accessed 10.01.2016).

⁴⁵ John Paul II, *Homily of John Paul II* (Abuja, Nigeria, 22.03.1998), in: https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/homilies/1998/documents/hf_jp-ii_hom_19980322_nigeria-beatification.html (accessed 10.01.2016).

⁴⁶ CNN, *Vatican presses Nigeria for dissidents' release, World News Story Page*, in: <http://edition.cnn.com/WORLD/9803/21/pope.pm/> (accessed 10.01.2016).

⁴⁷ Cf. *Eaf*, no. 6.

seemed to be tempting Africa to discouragement and despair due to lack of essential values: hope, peace, joy, harmony, love and unity⁴⁸.

Although, God has included Africa in Egypt (Acts 2:10) and Libya as points of contact at the Jesus' inaugural commission to go and preach to the whole world at Pentecost, the promise of mercy is for all people, as many as the Lord will call to himself⁴⁹. He taught that Christians, Muslims and ATRs share common element of prayer to one God. Therefore, there is no life that is more precious than another one because it belongs to a specific race or religion. „Therefore, no one can kill. No one can kill in the name of God; this would be a crime: against God and the person”⁵⁰ and the Nigerian community. Similarly, Jesus Christ „was a man who went about doing good, so also the followers of Christ seek to excel in works of charity and justice in their relationships with all their fellow citizens, regardless of creed or any other social distinction”⁵¹. He reconfirms the Divine Mercy on all Nigerians when he said: „Grace, mercy, and peace from God our Father and Christ Jesus our Lord”⁵² to be with Nigeria. He called on members of the Church in Nigeria who are industrialists, workers, employers and employees to use richly gifted agricultural and mineral resources, to the best advantage of all, especially „the poor, the orphans, the sick, the less privileged, the old, and those who are overtaken in the struggle for economic betterment”⁵³. Consequently, the CBCN reiterated the Holy Father's call when it said: „Our political leaders will serve this nation better if they are more accommodating towards those of other opinions and other political parties; if they are ready to work with other parties for the good of our country; if they are prepared to accept electoral defeat without rancour and co-operate with winning party in the overall interest of the nation; if they will always use honourable language and teach their supporters to do the same”⁵⁴ works of mercy to the people of Nigeria.

Furthermore, St. John Paul II turned to the young and said: „As young people, you should constantly strive to identify the ills of your society, such as bribery and corruption, the embezzlement of government or company funds, extravagant and unproductive spending, the parade of wealth, neglect of the poor and the friendless, nepotism, tribalism, political

⁴⁸ Cf. *EAF*, no. 1.

⁴⁹ Cf. *EAF*, no. 40.

⁵⁰ John Paul II, Address to Muslim Religious Leaders, (Kaduna, Nigeria, 14.02.1982), in: <https://zenit.org/articles/vatican-message-to-muslims-for-ramadan-6/> (accessed 12.05.2017).

⁵¹ John Paul II, *Address to H.E Mr. Isaac Jemide Sagay Ambassador of Nigeria to the Holy See*, 1.02.1982, in: <http://www.gloszp.pl/20101215/DK/AP1982.pdf> (accessed 12.05.2017).

⁵² John Paul II, *Address and meeting with Nigerian Bishops* (Abuja, Nigeria, 23.03.1998), in: https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/travels/1998/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_23031998_nigeria-bishops.html (accessed 13.05.2017).

⁵³ John Paul II, *Homily of John Paul II* (Lagos, Nigeria, 16.02.1982), in: <http://www.fjp2.com/us/john-paul-ii/online-library/homilies?start=1920> (accessed 12.05.1982).

⁵⁴ C. Anyanwu, O. J. Fadugba-Pinheiro, eds. *Our Concern for Nigeria Catholic Bishops' Speak*, p. 19.

antagonism, denial of the rights of the poor, abortion, contraception and other evils, which also ravage other countries. As true youth you will see, judge and act according to the criteria of the Gospel of Jesus Christ”⁵⁵. Fundamentally, St. John Paul II, addressed CBCN, priests, and religious, catechists, families, laity, Muslim leaders, press and media practitioners, where he bequeathed the legacies of Divine Mercy in these words: „All of us, Christians and Muslims, live under the sun of the one merciful God”⁵⁶ in Nigeria.

3.2.2.2. Solid Structures of the Divine Mercy

All institutions cannot survive without solid structures, which anchored on the vision and mission of the institution. The Divine Mercy Devotion is the practical living of the way of life and purification process of the human person. The DMD has solid structures propelled by the Apostolic Visit of St. John Paul II, to Nigeria both in 1982 and 1998 respectively⁵⁷. Bishop Martin Uzoukwu established DMD structures in Nigeria to promote and sustain the legacies of the Divine Mercy, namely, Divine Mercy Academy, Missionaries of Divine Mercy Congregation, Family Apostles of the Divine Mercy, Association of Priests and Religious of the Divine Mercy, Association of Seminarians of the Divine Mercy, Association of Volunteers of the Divine Mercy, Divine Mercy Youth Apostolate and Divine Mercy Reporter.

3.2.2.3. Establishing and On-going Formation of Solid Divine Mercy Devotion Structures in Nigeria: A Case Study in Minna Diocese

It is not sufficient to acquire the integral formation, but it is more urgent to establish on-going formation structures in order to maintain and sustain institutions. The Divine Mercy Academy in Nigeria offers the following courses for its candidates, namely, Scripture, Canon Law, Liturgy, Church History, Papal Documents, Communications, Divine Mercy Devotion and Message, the Life of St. Saint Maria Faustina Kowalska, Home and Parish Evangelization in the Third Millennium in the Light of Ecclesia in Africa, Collaborative Ministry and Leadership in the Church⁵⁸. In the same vein, there is the National Divine Mercy Devotion Pilgrimage/Retreat Centre, at Shakwatu, Nigeria, which was officially inaugurated during

⁵⁵ John Paul II, *Address of John Paul II* (Onitsha, Nigeria, 13.02.19820), in: <http://fjp2.com/pl/jan-pawel-ii/biblioteka-online/przemowienia/7711-to-young-people-of-nigeria-in-onitsha-february-13-1982> (accessed 14.05.2017).

⁵⁶ John Paul II, *Address of John Paul II* (Kaduna, Nigeria, 14.02.1982), in: <http://fjp2.com/pl/jan-pawel-ii/biblioteka-online/przemowienia/7715-to-muslim-religious-leaders-in-kaduna-nigeria-february-14-1982> (accessed 10.03.2016).

⁵⁷Cf. Ibid, M. I. Uzoukwu, *Keynote Address* (Owerri, Nigeria, 22-25.10.2014), p. 3.

⁵⁸ Cf. M. I. Uzoukwu, *Divine Mercy Devotion in Nigeria*, p. 44.

historic visit of Archbishop Renzo Fratini, Apostolic Nuncio to Nigeria in 2008⁵⁹. Other on-going formation centres include, 38 Minna Diocesan Educational Institutions, 7 Minna Diocesan Pastoral/Evangelization Institutions and 5 Minna Diocesan Vocational Training Institutions⁶⁰. These formation centres are not only to inculcate the way of life of the Divine Mercy Devotion but to build human capacity in order to restore the lost human potentialities.

Furthermore, the desire of Bishop Martin I. Uzoukwu to inculcate the DMD, has brought Minna in the lamp-light in Nigeria. It is not possible to speak of DMD in Nigeria without first thinking of Minna. No wonder, in Nigeria Minna Diocese is synonym to „the way of life” of the Divine Mercy. The Apostolic Visit of St. John Paul II, powered the trust in the DMD in Minna Diocese. Minna Diocese is the Centre of the Division Mercy Devotion in Nigeria. The Divine Mercy Academy in Minna Diocese provides intellectual, moral and technical formation. The graduates of the academy have also influenced others in different areas of their competence. The academy trains men and women in Nigeria, who in turn are expected to not only train others by their lives but to influence those who have not received mercy in their lives.

3.2.2.4. Apostolic Journeys

St. John Paul XXIII was the first modern Pope to move out of the Vatican to Assisi and Loreto. Paul VI went further to the Holy Land, India Uganda and elsewhere. John Paul II quickly took up Apostolic Journeys and continued to visit worldwide throughout his pontificate more than any Pope in history of the world⁶¹. St. John Paul II is an epitome of the attribute of Divine Mercy both in principle and practice. The Church is both Mother and Teacher of all nations in the ways to God. St. John Paul II was a teacher and „an apostle” of love and mercy in modern times. Analogically, his Apostolic travels were synonym to that of the Lord God walking in the Garden of Eden in the cool of the day to not only bring love but mercy to Adam and Eve (Gen 3:8). As I said earlier, the Lord mercifully called out to the man: „Where are you?” This „wake-up-call”, was the call of the Divine Mercy, with a redemptive effect. This call led to the „first Good News”⁶², which assured the redemption of man from death. Ironically, where will the man hide? Moreover, the Psalmist put it well when he said: „If I say, ‘Surely the darkness will

⁵⁹ Cf. M. I. Uzoukwu, *2017 Diary & Liturgical Calendar*, Minna: Published by Project Office 2017, p. 8.

⁶⁰ Cf. M. I. Uzoukwu, *2017 Diary & Liturgical Calendar*, p. 35.

⁶¹ Cf. B. L. Sherwin, H. Kasimow, eds., *John Paul II and Interreligious Dialogue*, Eugene: Wipf & Stock Publishers 1999, p. 208.

⁶² This is the announcement of the First Good News (*Protoevangelium*)–Gen 3:15. The announcement was about the redemption of man from death, which he incurred by disobedience. This news about the coming of someone who would redeem man was the concretized expression of God’s mercy and compassion to man. Although man is redeemed but he is still wounded and he is in dire need of grace and healing from God.

overwhelm me, and the light around me will be night’, and yet he acknowledges God as the Supreme Being when he said: ‘Lord even the darkness is not dark to You, darkness and light are alike to You. For you formed my inward parts; You wove me in my mother’s womb’” (Ps 139:12-13). And the Lord God, listened to all the man’s distrustful arguments with mercy and compassion. Similarly, Jesus lifted his eyes (Jn 17:1) of mercy and spoke on behalf (Lk 23:34) of man, which he knew man through and through, he mercifully spoke: „Father forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing” (Lk 23:34). Furthermore, there is no excess in mercy and no one can exhaust God’s mercy. Therefore, Jesus supported the fact of inexhaustibility of mercy when he said: „Truly I say to you, today you shall be with me in Paradise” (Lk 23:43). Since mercy exists because of man, God continues to ask: „Whom shall I send?” (Is 6:8). Who will carry the Divine Mercy message to the world? Jesus invited others to be with him in Paradise, but he reactivated the way of life of the Divine Mercy, when he said: „As You sent me into the world, I also have sent them into the world” (Jn 17:18), namely, St. Faustina, St. John Paul II, Benedict XVI, Francis etc., to spread the Divine Mercy message to Nigeria in particular and in the world at large.

Furthermore, as God was looking for the man in the Garden of Eden, to show him mercy over his distrust, so also St. John Paul II, looked for man to be opened to the gift of mercy, which he received in the redemptive action of Jesus Christ. In response to the spread of the Divine Mercy message, St. John Paul II went to all the nooks and crannies of continents. He personally taught by his life what it means to be merciful and compassionate. His journeys are synonyms to the „wake-up-call” of God to all continents of the world, bringing them the message of love, mercy and peace.

Thus, in order to leave the essential values of mercy to Nigerians, he became a compassionate advocate of human rights and dignity, a strong advocate for peace in Nigeria, a hero for the less-privileged, a hero for freedom, a model of uncompromising leadership, a teacher of faith per excellence and a voice that was impossible to be ignored in Nigeria⁶³. He was and he still means so much to so many Nigerians. He was a rare treasure in the Nigerian history. He became the first pope to address Muslims and Christians in Nigeria and to make an „official visit to a synagogue and a mosque in Syria, 2001”⁶⁴. The frequent themes of St. John Paul II among others include: justice and mercy, equity and peace, love and unity. He taught that „justice and peace are not abstract concepts or remote ideals. They are values, which dwell as a common patrimony, in the heart of every individual. Individuals, families, communities

⁶³ Cf. The moral power of St. John Paul II, was impossible to be ignored in Nigeria.

⁶⁴ P. Muzurczak, *How St. John Paul II Changed the Church and the World*, in: http://www.catholicworldreport.com/Item/5144/how_st_john_paul_ii_changed_the_church_and_the_world.aspx (accessed 25.10.2016).

and nations, all are called to live in justice and to work for peace”⁶⁵. When he said: „No peace without justice, no justice without peace”⁶⁶, he spoke to Nigerians, the human conscience, the human reason and moral conscience of Nigerians. Due to the fall of moral standard, he issued a Catechism of the Catholic Church, which summarizes beliefs and moral tenets of the church, which stands as the moral voice of the human person in Nigeria.

3.2.2.5. An Icon of World Community

There is no community that has developed without peace and models. St. John Paul II, taught that it must be remembered that true peace is never simply the result of military victory, but rather implies both the removal of the causes of war and genuine reconciliation between people⁶⁷. He was an icon of the World Community, not only as the symbol of unity anchored with collegiality of Catholic bishops in the world, but he was a rare world moral authority, which his advocacies remained „gadfly” to Nigerians, political institutions, family values, rights of workers and the vocation of work. He was „a saint”⁶⁸ and he is the Saint who challenged people and institutions with his moral authority, in favour for the „human life, personhood and freedom”⁶⁹. He morally challenged the political, economic, social fields, science and technology to work for the common good. He called on the academicians to shape the prevailing ideologies into moral instruments for the good of Nigerians⁷⁰. He was an advocate of basic moral principles that are contradicted by their proposals such as modern-day controversies surrounding stem cell research, abortion, contraceptives, organ transplants artificial feeding, euthanasia, and assisted suicide⁷¹. St. John Paul II, left a legacy for Nigerians

⁶⁵ John Paul II, *Message of His Holiness Pope John Paul II For the Celebration of the World Day of Peace*, (The Vatican, Rome, 8.12.1997), in: http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/messages/peace/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_08121997_xxxi-world-day-for-peace.html (accessed 25.09.2016).

⁶⁶ John Paul II, *Message of His Holiness For the Celebration of the World Day of Peace*, (Vatican, 8.12.2001), in: http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/messages/peace/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_20011211_xxxv-world-day-for-peace.html LEV, (accessed 26.09.2016).

⁶⁷ Cf. *CA, RH, DM, LE, SRS, EAf, EAs, EE, EAm, EO*; The Daughters of St. Paul, *U.S.A the Message of Justice, Peace and Love: John Paul II*, St. Paul Editions 1979; commemorative Album, *The Pope in Chicago*, Chicago: Follett Publishing Company 1979, P. Jennings, E. McCabe, *The Pope in Britain*, London: The Bodley Head 1982; *The Pope in Britain, Collected Homilies and Speeches, England: St. Paul Publications 1982*.

⁶⁸ John Paul II, was a living „saint”. His views were not only objective with the aim to cover the good will of both the good and those with tendencies of performing evil work, but one may say of him to be St. John Paul II of the world, which he introduced institutions and global links to the Divine Mercy, namely, World Migration Day (1978); World Day of the Sick (1981); World Food Day (1981); World Youth Day (1985); Exhortation Letters to all the continents in the world.

⁶⁹ John Paul II, *Address of His Holiness John Paul II*, (New York, USA, 5.10.1995), in: https://w2.vatican.va/content/johnpaulii/en/speeches/1995/october/documents/hf_jpii_spe_05101995_address-to-uno.html (accessed 17.05.2017).

⁷⁰ Cf. *CA*, no. 4.

⁷¹ Cf. A. Fisher, *Catholic Bioethics for a New Millennium*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2012, p. 206.

when he said: „The attempt to take my life has been the greatest mercy I have experienced”⁷² caused by Mehmet Ali Agca (the Vatican: 13.05.81). He continued thus: „I pray for my brother who hurt me and whom I have truly forgiven”⁷³ (Gemelli Clinic, Rome: 17.05.81).

3.2.2.6. A Theologian of the Divine Mercy

From the Catholic point of view, a theologian is a person who offers rational and systematic interpretations of the Divine Revelation as articles of faith and dogma, which are connected to Scripture, Tradition and Magisterium of the Church. Therefore, St. John Paul II initiated the theological investigation into the theological content of the writings (*Diary*) of St. Faustina to the Holy See in 1969, which led to the approval of the Divine Mercy Devotion and the subsequent canonization of St. Faustina, the Apostle of Divine Mercy Devotion.

St. John Paul II, spoke, taught and repeated his stand on the „imagination of mercy”⁷⁴ as a personal principle of life. Since all have sinned (Rom 3:23), Jesus Christ has come to redeem man through the act of mercy. He maintained that the Divine Mercy is a gift, which is anchored with obligation to be merciful as God has been merciful to man (Mt 5:7). His thoughts, his feelings, his choices and his actions are deep-seated in his conviction that „there is nothing that man needs more than the Divine Mercy—that love which is benevolent, which is compassionate, which raises man above his weakness to the infinite heights of the holiness of God”⁷⁵ from the state of sin and death, which ascends man to God’s love.

3.2.3. Benedict XVI

When Pope Benedict XVI, was celebrating one of his birthdays, in gratitude to God, he said: „In these days illumined in particular by the light of Divine Mercy, a coincidence occurs that is significant to me: I can look back on over 80 years of life. I have always considered it a great

⁷² John Paul II the Holy Man: To Ends of the Earth, Kraków: Wadtrat 2003-2006, p. 10.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ In his Encyclical Letter *DM*, he reminded us that Jesus Christ taught that man not only receives and experiences mercy of God, but that he is also called „to practice mercy” towards others: „Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy”. He maintained that „he who forgives and he who is forgiven encounters one another at an essential point, namely the dignity or essential values of the person, a point which cannot be lost”. In other words, mercy is in interpersonal relations, which occurs only when the persons offering it are profoundly convinced that they are at the same time receiving mercy from the people who are accepting it from them. „If this bilateral and reciprocal quality is absent, our actions are not yet true acts of mercy” (Cf. *DM*, no. 14).

⁷⁵ E. Siepak, *John Paul II and Worship of the Divine Mercy*, 30.03.2016, in: <http://www.pope2016.com/en/faith/mercy/news,449121,john-paul-ii-and-worship-of-the-divine-mercy.html> (accessed 20.05.2017).

gift of Divine Mercy to have been granted birth and rebirth, so to speak, on the same day, in the sign of the beginning of Easter. Thus, I was born as a member of my own family and the great family of God on the same day”⁷⁶. Moreover, „Jesus proclaim the Kingdom, what came out was the Church”⁷⁷. „Where he is, is the kingdom”⁷⁸. The theme of the Divine Mercy as a gift has been reiterated and expanded to the point that God’s multiple mercies have been received in two ways. Fundamentally, man’s natural birth is one area of receiving God’s mercy. The second area is man’s rebirth in baptism, which ushers him into the great family of God, which is the event that raises man’s dignity to share in the holiness of God. The Divine Mercy is God’s love that purifies the *eros* as a term to indicate „worldly” nature of man and love and *agape*, referring to love grounded in and shaped by faith. And the two notions are often contrasted as „ascending” love and „descending”⁷⁹ love, which charity in truth expresses in compassion to the person in need, as the second meaning of mercy⁸⁰. In other words, good governance and justice in Nigeria can remedy the situations of migrants, displaced persons and refugees⁸¹. Waking-up and breathing is God’s mercy. Therefore, Nigerians must defeat sin and crime in society as an obligation to be merciful.

3.2.4. Francis

On 8 September, 2015 to 8 September 2016, the Holy Father Pope Francis, declared the Jubilee Year of Mercy for the Universal Church and the world-society as a continuation of the message of the Divine Mercy. This pastoral call was not only to form and encourage good shepherds to live with the smell of the sheep but to „be shepherds with the smell of sheep”⁸². In other words, the shepherds as messengers of the Divine Mercy, their concern for the poor, the marginalized, the refugees, the prisoners etc., experience the love and care of the shepherd through whom God speaks to them. This also explains the fact that the shepherd will be seen not just concerned with his own congregation but is also a fisher of men to the „green pasture” where Jesus Christ

⁷⁶ D. Came, *A Gift of Divine Mercy, 80 Years of Life*, in:

<http://www.thedivinemercy.org/news/A-Gift-of-Divine-Mercy-3597> (accessed 20.05.2017).

⁷⁷ J. Ratzinger, *Called to Communion: Understanding the Church Today*, transl, A. Walker, San Francisco: Ignatius Press 1996, p. 21.

⁷⁸ J. Ratzinger, *Called to Communion: Understanding the Church Today*, p. 23.

⁷⁹ *DCE*, no. 7.

⁸⁰ Cf. *CV*, no.1, in:

http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20090629_caritas-in-veritate.html (accessed 20.05.2017).

⁸¹ Cf. *AM*, no. 84-85.

⁸² C. Glatz, ed., *Pope Francis: Priests should be Shepherds living with the smell of the sheep*, in:

<http://www.thecatholicelegraph.com/pope-francis-priests-should-be-shepherds-living-with-the-smell-of-the-sheep/13439> (accessed 10.04.2016); Cf. J. Conley, *Forming and Encouraging Good Shepherds*, in: <https://zenit.org/articles/forming-and-encouraging-good-shepherds/> (accessed 2.06.2016).

heals and comforts them. However, this doesn't mean there is „a cheap grace as doesn't also suffice our own generation”⁸³. As a shepherd in the stead of the Holy See, he mercifully turns to the attractive and compelling figure of St. Francis, his guide and inspiration, believes in caring for the integral ecology not only as a moral call to till and care for the earth but incarnating mercy on the earth as the common home for the human persons⁸⁴. Moreover, when man by his handiwork and technical skill cultivates the earth to make it yield fruits, becomes a fitting place for living in and when he consciously takes part in the various forms of social life, he carries out the design of God, manifested from the beginning, that he should subdue the earth (Gen 1:28). To perfect the work of creation, and at the same time man perfects himself as he observes the great commandment of Christ that he should spend himself in the service of his fellow men in the corporal and spiritual works of mercy⁸⁵. And making the Divine Mercy present in the context of poverty, this appeals to inculturation in moral theology, which tallied with the work of Benezet Bujo, a pioneer in fundamental African Catholic moral theology to shed light on the theology of inculturation in Africa and Nigeria⁸⁶.

3.3. Education as a Task of the Church in Nigeria

Religion as an institution and in contrast to its role is used as an instrument in Nigeria by politicians to achieve political points, which their moral life and character cannot achieve for them. After all, the image of every institution has the image of the leader and members. When we speak of a society, community or family, the natural notion of structure highlights itself in the government structures, which includes law and order. Law and order nourish an institution to unite people of many convictions, into a well-knit community of convictions, commitment and hope⁸⁷. Fundamentally, the institutions founded by God are, the family life, the human community, religion and religious life etc. Of course, man can only create an institution out of what God has created such as „education”⁸⁸, politics, economy, culture etc. The primary objective of an institution is to provide care for the goods and services to the needs of human person connected to justice and mercy.

⁸³ R. Shaw, *cheap grace won't suffice in any age, including ours*, in: http://www.catholicworldreport.com/Blog/4751/cheap_grace_wont_suffice_in_any_age_including_ours.aspx (accessed 29.10.2016).

⁸⁴ Cf. *LS*, no. 10.

⁸⁵ Cf. Paul, *Gaudium Et Spes*, transl. W. Purdy, England: Catholic Truth Society 1966, p. 58.

⁸⁶ Cf. P. Odozor, *An African Moral Theology of Inculturation: Methodological Considerations*, „Theological Studies”, 69(2008)3, p. 583-609.

⁸⁷ Cf. A. Dulles, *Models of the Church: Expanded Edition*, 1986, p. 35.

⁸⁸ *GE*, no. 1.

Avery Dulles has provided a powerful insight of what an institution is and what it should look like in concrete human terms, when he said: „the institutional model gives strong support to the missionary effort, by which the Church goes out to non-members. It seeks to save their souls precisely by bringing them into the institution”⁸⁹. Bringing people into an institution makes them feel loved, such actions raises their dignity and personhood. These are fruits of the Divine Mercy, raising the falling and restoring the damaged or lost dignity of the human person against the background of institutionalism.

The inevitable limitation of institution is institutionalism where the primary object of the institution is deformed and degenerated into institutionalism where the situation remains a danger in every age. Institutionalism is a system, which the institutional element is treated primarily. This understanding can lead to the Michellian theory where the end justifies the means, which is a moral deficiency where the human personhood is neglected. People make and manage institutions as directed by God. This also means that man is the beneficiary of the institutions of both human and divine. The institutions can be both schools and instructors. Religion as an institution in Nigeria, has power to direct Nigerians on the use of religion for the sake of the internal happiness and salvation. Even though, the importance of religious structure cannot be over-emphasized. Care should be taken in the theological and doctrinal content of Christianity and Islam since they are linked to history, traditions and theological developments with common patriarch Abraham, not to over-exaggerate their institutional element in the human context of moral education.

3.3.1. Moral Education

I wish to dissimilar myself from the views of Thomas Hobbes and others who maintained that society created morality. He based his argument on the situation when England and Scotland had civil war–1642-1651, due to what he called the „state of nature”, which refers to a universal state of insecurity, fear of violent death, where rewarding human cooperation is impossible⁹⁰. In contrast, man discovers a moral law imposed upon him inevitably that he must obey and live with it⁹¹. Morality is in the nature of man and it is not an external agent. Moral education is not only „moral discipline”⁹² but morality derives its true meaning intrinsically from the very nature

⁸⁹ A. Dulles, *Models of the Church: Expanded Edition*, p. 42.

⁹⁰ Cf. P. Caws, ed., „The Causes of Quarrels: Essays on Peace, War, and Thomas Hobbes” (1989), Boston: Beacon Press; M. Dietz, ed., „Thomas Hobbes and Political Theory” (1990), Lawrence: University of Kansas Press; K. C. Brown, „Hobbes Studies” (1965), Cambridge: Harvard University Press; D. Dyzenhaus, T. Poole eds., „Hobbes and the Law” (2013), Cambridge: Cambridge Press.

⁹¹ Cf. CCC, no. 1776.

⁹² J. F. Goodman, H. Lesnick, *Moral Education: A Teacher-centred Approach*, Boston: Pearson 2004, p. 103.

of man, connected to his intellect and conscience where he can see things and situations, judge them, and where his conscience will approve or disapprove his actions based on its moral content but not without accountability. It is a moral deception to think that a child should be allowed to discover its values and behaviours⁹³. Therefore, morality is the tension connected between human dignity and freedom in a creative sense for the overall common good. Furthermore, morality is the differentiation of intentions, decisions, and actions between those that are distinguished as proper and those that are improper. Morality can be a body of standards or principles derived from a code of conduct from one philosophy, religion, or culture, or it can derive from a standard that a person believes should be universal for moral education.

It is said, „education is a business for everybody”. This means, education is ontologically universal and divine moral mandate to all parents and to be parents (Dt 6:7, 11:19). This implies that all the adults, who have received the moral education should pass on the values of moral knowledge they have received. For example, Catholic education has bequeathed to the world a civilization of love, not just a civilization of certificate like other educational institutions, it focused on the promotion of a culture of life as against the current culture of death, in a world riddled by unselfish bullets of choices, waste and destruction⁹⁴. Catholic schools have ensured the promotion of the tradition and culture of sound morals, Catholic core values and academic excellence, in order to remain communities of faith in the world and to purify the immoral educational institutions from moral decadence⁹⁵. In the era of ecumenical dialogue, there is a high danger of social compromises, which Catholic values should not be the same „like the others” by the very nature of their historicity. But, it is not to say that the differences cannot be united into a whole to build and promote common good yet maintaining the paradigm-identity and collective good.

Due to decadence of moral values, Nigerians can see the disadvantage of waiting for my „turn to chop”. Many youths have been corrupted by their docility, inaction and fear of being killed or maimed without justice, while waiting for my „turn to chop”. Their future has been stolen by insensitive politicians whose sole purpose of governance is to enrich themselves and their families. To make things worse, political institutions have been used as instruments to legalize their mercilessness and insensitivity at the detriment of the common good, which they swore by „Sacred Books”, to defend and uphold common good for the sake of the poor-Nigerians and the disadvantaged in Nigeria. Lack of moral conscience and moral principle,

⁹³ Cf. P. Shcarf, *Moral Education*, California: Responsible Action 1978, p. 16.

⁹⁴ Cf. F. U. Anyikwa, *Moral Education of Youth in Nigeria: Implication for an Integral Formation: Extractum ex Dissertation ad Doctoratum in Facultate Theologiae, Romae*: 2002, p. 51.

⁹⁵ Cf. W. Kay, *Moral Education*, p. 323.

turns to a state of emergency in many sectors in Nigerian society. Moral education has the task of purifying and strengthening primary moral traits, moral attitudes and rational-altruism⁹⁶.

In view of the cost of education, both „Leadership as Stewardship”⁹⁷ who ought „to know” the implications of immoral activities and „the innocent parents”, will not want to be held back by any form of failure. Due to the corrupt system, there is a high possibility of forming uninformed-students thereby giving a legacy of corrupt system and a dangerous future of doom and anarchy. Consequently, moral education and literacy rates in Nigeria have declined due to the many years of neglect, compounded by inadequate attention to policy frameworks within the sector⁹⁸. Exploitations and extortions by school managers of both private and public schools in the name of enrolment fees, in collaboration with government officials. The neglect of moral-educational orientation and educational standard not only deformed moral education but gives rise to sexual promiscuity among students⁹⁹. Thus, poor education in Nigeria breeds indiscipline, which accounts for lack of accountability, transparency, good governance thereby exposing millions of citizens to poverty, hunger, disease and death. The absence of moral education bears witness to kidnapping, human trafficking, pipeline vandalism, „Boko Haram”¹⁰⁰ among other ills in Nigeria. Education is the only asset that can change every system in society and lead to moral freedom. No matter how cheap ignorance is, it is evil to try it and it is in contrast to religious education.

⁹⁶ Cf. W. Kay, *Moral Education*, p. 349.

⁹⁷ T. J. Sergiovanni, *Moral Leadership*, p. 119.

⁹⁸ Cf. S. Sakaba, *A Clash of Political Identity in Nigeria: A Violation of Personhood*, p. 14.

⁹⁹ Cf. *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ Da’awah Cooperation Council of Nigeria, *The „Boko Haram” Tragedy*, Minna: (1430/2009), p. 1-2. The name „Boko Haram”, has its origin from the media and public/community coinage. There are two words coined together. Firstly, the word „boko” in Hausa Language is popularly used to refer to all the formal schools of the Western system of education in all its content and purposes that are associated to it. The thought here is that, during the Colonial era in Nigeria, Christian missionaries, used their schools to propagate Christianity and convert Muslim children. Western education was therefore seen by some local Muslim scholars as deceptive. In classical Hausa Language, the word „book” means deception, as used in the Hausa term „amaryar boko”, which means literally „fake bride” or „bride of deception”. In the Hausa tradition and culture, sometimes there is a feature in the traditional Hausa wedding where a grandmother dresses like the bride as part of a practical joke played on the groom. Secondly, the word „haram”, is a word adapted from the Arabic Language. It means islamically unacceptable, forbidden or prohibited. Therefore, when the two words are put together that is, „Boko Haram” may be interpreted to mean that Western secular education is islamically prohibited, and it could also be interpreted to mean that Christianity deceptively camouflaged as Western education is islamically unacceptable by some Muslims. However, there is another interpretation that those who have acquired knowledge through Western education, their failure to liberate people and communities from the tyranny of poverty renders Western education evil. Still others consider the word „boko” as a corruption of the English word „book”, which was associated with Western education. These assertions are tied to religious fundamentalism in Nigeria. This sect is believed to have sponsors whose identity remains „a mystery” and bedevilled.

3.3.2. Religious Education

The theme of „religious education”, contains a general meaning-understanding. However, the purposes of religious education in Nigeria are: „ To inspire the educational forces of our country with the religious ideal; to inspire the religious forces of our country with the educational idea, and to keep before the public mind the ideal of religious education and the sense of its need and value”¹. First and foremost, the word „religious” is an adjective, which qualifies a noun that associates the meaning to religion in general and sometimes in particular. Due to the number of religions, it is difficult to give a general meaning to specific areas of religious history, understanding and traditions, because of the different theological content and interpretations². Therefore, „focusing”³ on the principle of the „Catholic Education”, which is valid for all and open to all people, within religious understanding as it affects the moral message of education in Nigeria.

Education is a moral mandate and a war against ignorance and superstition, which is a major aspect of the Church’s mission, in response to Jesus’ call: „Go teach all nations...” (Mt 28:19). A genuine education, aims at giving integral education, which is anchored on the principle of intellectual, moral and technical formations. By intellectual formation, I mean leading the learning-person to the truth, while moral formation is teaching and showing the learning-person, how to do right and avoid wrong. And the technical formation, calls for maintenance of what has been done rightly and to improve on it.

By „religious education”, I mean acquiring the education and knowledge to the point of authority, which „signifies the possession of some status, quality, or claim that compels trust or obedience”⁴ both at the public and private levels. While education is both learning and application of the acquired skills, it comprehends all the series of instruction, discipline and practical life attitude, which is intended to enlighten the understanding, correct the temper, form the good habits and fit learners into usefulness in order to reciprocate to the community as an act of gratitude to God and the community. This helps pupils to gain a clear understanding of the significance of religions and beliefs in Nigeria today and learn about the ways different faith communities relate to each other”⁵.

¹ W. F. McDowell, *Introduction*, „The Journal of the Religious Education Association” 1(1907), p. 4.

² Cf. G. Ward, *Cultural Transformation and Religious Practice*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2005, p. 12.

³ R. Geaves, *An Exploration of the Validity of Partnership between dar al-ulum and Higher Education Institutions in North West England Focusing Upon Pedagogy and Relevance*, in: „British Journal of Religious Education” 37(2015)1, p. 64-82.

⁴ P. Starr, *The Social Transformation of American Medicine: The Rise of a Sovereign Profession and the Making of a Vast Industry*, New York: Basic Books Publishers 1982, p. 9.

⁵ P. Małosa, *The Communities Providing Religious Education and Catechesis to Polish Immigrants in England and Wales*, in: „British Journal of Religious Education” 37(2015)2, p. 182-194.

Furthermore, education is not only a divine mandate but it is intrinsic in the human nature to build communities⁶. God told the people of Israel to teach their children what he taught them (Dt 6:7). The word „Children” can also be considered as one of the generic nouns, which lacks the restriction of a trademark of individuality. The term „Children of Israel” was a common term in both OT and NT (Gen 32:24-32; Jn 8:39; Rom 9:7), which refers to the Israelites as descendants of a common ancestor such as Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. In this context, religious „values”⁷ of education, which was introduced and taught by the founding fathers of education in Nigeria in 1842, aimed at moral, intellectual, technical and economic transformation⁸. There are six types and levels of schools in Nigeria, namely, Day Care, nursery, primary, ordinary secondary school, tertiary and special school for special education–physically challenged. Learning should be one of the main features of the whole human life focusing on the integral education. Religion should not merely form as an adjunct to instruction in other subjects but the centre, about which these are grouped and the spirit, which they are permeated⁹. Moreover, man’s life without God, he „vanishes”¹⁰ to nothingness. Integral education leads man to his divine potentialities.

3.3.3. Integral Education

The authentic Catholic ecclesiology, articulated in Vatican II’s retrieval of the NT and Patristic ecclesiology, teaches that the Church is purely of divine origin, founded by Jesus Christ, though of course the Church is made up of human beings¹¹. She is an assembly of communion, which came into being in response to divine summons. While Catholic education is the Church’s action in the formation of the human person in intelligence, good character and competence leading to higher levels of human developments¹².

Just as there is integral formation, there exists also „integral education” where the development of Nigerians has expanded for more exploration of the human yearnings in order to purify Nigerians of proliferation of self-destructive achievements. However, transformation is also „the imperative of organizational competitiveness-imposed merges, fusions,

⁶ Cf. R. Taylor, *Opportunities for Black People in Higher Education: Proceedings of the Education for Transformation Conference Leeds 1996*, Leeds: The School Continuing Education 1997, p. 80.

⁷ M. K. Stasiak, ed., *Values in an Era of Transformation*, Łódź: Wydawnictwo/Publishing House 2003, p. 5.

⁸ Cf. V. Dudko, *Economic Transformation in Belarus*, Deutschland: Lap Lambert Academic Publishing 2013, p. 56.

⁹ Cf. S. Sakaba, *Habit Beyond Today*, p. 89.

¹⁰ GS, no. 36.

¹¹ Cf. K. Rahner, *The Church and the Sacraments*, London: Burns & Oates 1974, p. 41.

¹² Cf. A. A. Akinwale, *The Place of Religious, Priestly and Theological Formation in Catholic Education*, „Catholic Education Summit” (typescript, 2006), p. 1.

acquisitions, automation, downsizing, re-engineering and several other ways of survival”¹³. The developments of Nigerians are categorized into theological, metaphysical and scientific stages. The theological stage of Nigerians has been attested by Scripture, anthropology and the human natural experience. However, theological anthropology in the Christian context is the study of man as he relates to God. Consequently, man’s natural properties namely, body and soul are central concepts that make up the entire personhood of man. Anthropology as a chapter of theology, seeks to highlight God’s plan for man. Thus, „the experience of morality is connected with understanding, which is true of all experience in the basic structure and dynamism of human knowledge”¹⁴. Gregory of Nyssa, affirmed that man is founded on the ontological distinction between the created and uncreated. Man is a material creation, and thus limited, but infinite in that his immortal soul has an indefinite capacity to grow closer to the divine¹⁵. On the other hand, natural anthropology is the study of the various structures and functional activities of man as a member within the animal kingdom and within a certain race, and with reference to his sex, age, profession, social conditions of ecological peculiarities, dialogue, „justice and the morality of compassion”¹⁶. The difference between theological and natural anthropology is that theological anthropology is a chapter of theology, which seeks to study how God relates with man in time and space.

The relationship between God and man provides an opportunity to search and study in depth the purpose and the meaning of this encounter. God’s relationship with man is not out of place. Man’s response to this relationship is a natural fulfilment of man’s moral call. If man does not accept God’s invitation to relate with him, man will be unable to live his theological virtues, which are the instruments that tend man to do good as a moral demand in his relationship with God¹⁷. On the other hand, natural anthropology seeks to study various structures and daily activities man, within the material and physical world of language, gender, ecology etc. At this point, I do not lose the sight of the fact that man is the embodiment of body and soul, which represents the properties of man’s substance.

Secondly, the metaphysical stage of man provides the opportunity for man to distinguish the known from the unknown, mortal from the Immortal, matter from the Immaterial, the tangible from the abstract, falsehood from the Truth and man from his God.

¹³ F. M. Tchaicovsky, M. J. Freire, V. S. Drummond, *Values in Era of Transformations: Similarities and Differences in Work Values and Achievement Motivation of University Students in Brazil and Japan*, in: *Values in an Era of Transformation*, Łódź: Wydawnictwo/Publishing House 2003, p. 197-208.

¹⁴ K. Wojtyła, *Person and Community: Selected Essays*, transl, T. Sandock, New York: Peter Lang 2008, p. 129.

¹⁵ Cf. K. Corrigan, *Evagrius and Gregory, Mind, Soul and Body in the 4th century*, p. 37.

¹⁶ D. Jacqueline, *Dialogues on the Ethics of Capital Punishment*, Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers 2009, p. 31.

¹⁷ Cf. P. Schoonenberg, *The Christ: A Study of the God-man Relationship in the Whole of Creation and in Jesus*, New York: Herder and Herder 1971, p. 28.

Thirdly, science has been defined as the intellectual and practical activity, systematic study of the behaviour of the physical and natural world through observation, experiment and verification. This level of education is normal and conventional in response to God's command when he said: „Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it...” (Gen 1:28). This is true of the inevitability of man's mortal nature and of his inability to make anything out of nothing. Both science and technology must unavoidably explain, find and discover out how matter was created by God. There is no doubt that the world is experiencing evolution of human mentality, but not God and his creation.

Similarly, Nigerians experienced homelessness, hunger, thirst, estrangement, political instability, insurgency, which called for the need of evolution to fulfil God's purpose of creation of man: to know him, to love him and to serve him in this world, so as to be happy with him in the next world. This brief and condensed theological summary speaks of the beginning and the end of integral education. A brief definition of knowledge is to have the best technic to solve problems. Lack of it can also lead to suffering and death (Hos 4:6; Job 36:12; Pr 5:23). Furthermore, the last states of the human person are namely, heaven, purgatory and hell. Although, God is infinitely good and all his works are good. Yet no one can escape suffering or evils in the human nature, which is linked to the limitations proper to creatures including the question of moral evil. St. Augustine said: „I sought whence evil comes and there was no solution”. Thus, the „mystery of lawlessness” is only clarified in the light of the „mystery of our religion”¹⁸. The Sacred Scripture and the Living Tradition of the Catholic Church, remain the principal source for catechesis on the mysteries of the „beginning”: creation, fall and promise of salvation¹⁹. „Heaven” which is the yearning of many Nigerians, refers to the saints and a „state” of spiritual creatures, the angels who surround God living happily forever²⁰. Purgatory is also a state, where those who died in God's friendship, assured of their eternal salvation, after having passed through the purification of sin to enable them enter into the happiness of heaven²¹.

Finally, hell consists of the eternal damnation of those who died in mortal sin through their own free choices (Mt 25:41). We cannot be united with God without choosing to love him and we cannot love God if we sin gravely against him, against our neighbour and against ourselves²². Moreover, man has been freely given the rationality, conscience and freedom to enable him make choices willingly and freely. At the final or universal judgment, which

¹⁸ CCC, no. 385.

¹⁹ Cf. CCC, no. 289.

²⁰ Cf. CCC, no. 325.

²¹ Cf. CCCC, no. 1030-1032.

²² Cf. CCC, no. 1033.

consists in a sentence of happiness or eternal damnation, which the Lord Jesus Christ will issue when the time comes regarding the „just and the unjust” (Acts 24:15; Mt 25:46) based on their choices. The choices of man are governed by the principle of integral education, which all accountabilities are embedded.

Intellectual education must not be separated from moral and religious education. To impart knowledge to develop mental efficiency without building up moral character is not only contrary to psychological law, which requires that all faculties be trained, but is also fatal both to the individual and to the society. Sound moral instruction is impossible without religious education. Nigerians may be drilled in certain desirable habits, such as neatness, courtesy, and punctuality; they may be imbued with a spirit of honour, industry, and truthfulness—if these duties are towards self and neighbour are sacred, the duty towards God is immeasurably more sacred to do. Thus, education as spiritual works of mercy for Nigerians, to ensure the performance of duties by inculcating a spirit of self-sacrifice, of obedience to the law, and love for people²³. Nigerians must ensure moral essentials of education, to secure science and technology anchored with God, without which man dries up with his findings.

3.4. The Irony in Society

Society is made-up of people, institutions, structures and values. These values are both physical, spiritual and abstract in nature. Life has no meaning for man without values that inspire and motivate his existence. In the face of the value of things, man expresses joy over the availability of those things he has either acquired or inherited, which are capable of making him „happy and fulfilled” person in life. However, in the bid to attain this yearning, he discovers and creates many categories of classes for himself such as the rich, the middle and the poor classes. The other category is the defenceless, the vulnerable and the sick. This category can be called defenceless or vulnerable. Although man is vulnerable by nature as a result of the Fall, yet he cannot be free without accountability of his actions and choices. With the faculties of the intellect, the conscience and the will, man can be far from being free without payment of his deeds at all times.

Man plays major parts of his problems whether he finds solutions or not. Part of the irony is that man causes his problems and complains about his predicaments. But he does not only complain of his problems he viciously looks for someone to blame. Imagine the beautiful houses built by those who are ready to rob mood on their bodies and inhale all dust of different

²³ Cf. John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them: A Theology of the Body*, transl, M. Waldstein, Boston: Pauline Books & Media 2006, p. 428.

types in order to build houses and other structures. Of course, man is gifted with many skills to meet his needs and for his survival. The talented are there at the service of community and the human family.

3.4.1. Talented Members of Society and Resources

As far as I know, Nigeria has been given many names, sometimes depending on who is calling the names such as, the „giant of Africa”, „the most populous in Africa,” „the most religious”²⁴ in the world etc. Nigeria has been endowed with human assets and human capacity to her credit. But, Nigeria is also a country in Africa, which has so many names and titles as the case may be as a result of the natural and human resources.

According to George Ayittey, Nigeria and other African countries, have „40 percent of the world’s potential hydroelectric power supply; the bulk of the world’s diamonds and chromium; 50 percent of the world’s gold; 90 percent of its cobalt; 50 percent of its phosphates...”²⁵. The above argument expresses the benevolence of Divine Mercy actions on Nigerians. Despite the level of human and natural resources, poverty has not gone out of Nigeria. There are two schools of thought, namely, the „internalist” and „externalist”. On one hand, the internalist lay the blame on the shoulders of the local systems of governance: excessive state intervention and associated corruption of institutions at all levels of government. On the other hand, the externalists ascribe Nigeria’s woes to factors beyond Nigeria’s control: Western colonialism and imperialism, the pernicious effects of the slave trade, racist conspiracy plots, exploitations by various multinational corporations, and unjust international economic system, inadequate flow of foreign aid, and deterioration terms of trade²⁶. Whatever argument either for or against, Nigerians remain the solution and the end of their poverty in conjunction with their allies.

However, most of these talented members of the Nigerian society are „seen as enemies of progress” with high and excessive programme that is capable of not only questioning the status quo but they will make personal wealth difficult to be achieved. Yet, there are millions of graduates who have both the energy and qualifications that have not been tapped, to objectively translate the Divine Mercy message where the human and natural resources can be transformed. Consequently, Nigeria suffers the inevitability of breeding of hoodlums, gangs, ritualists, kidnappers, political thugs, militias and assassins to destabilize every sense of peace

²⁴ S. P Huntington, *Who are We? The Challenges to America’s National Identity*, New York: Simon & Schuster 2004, p. 91.

²⁵ G. B.N. Ayittey, *Why Africa is poor*, in: http://ieas.unideb.hu/admin/file_6845.pdf (accessed 27.05.2017).

²⁶ Cf. Ibid.

in the society. This situation expresses the abandonment of moral and material obligations to indigenous races and to God²⁷.

The founding fathers of Nigeria were all led by love, which ever it is looked at. They were not driven by ethnic and regional affection. The subordination of Nigeria to tribal and regional concerns is the Nigerians' making and the origin of Nigeria's problems²⁸. At this stage, venting anger on the colonists as architects of the Nigeria's problems is no longer acceptable. There are many Nigerians who are talented at home and abroad. Many have distinguished themselves in many areas of medicines, politics, science, engineering, –whose imagination is very positive to human creativities. Those blaming the past are not only disowning what made them who they are, lacking objective judgement but they are self-centred, egocentric and super greedy members of the masses.

When the masses are corrupt, the first victims to be poisoned are children. Children can be corrupted in two ways either by family because the parent have no moral values or by the peer groups as they meet in schools, in the fields and play grounds. The value system of the society is driving force either of good character or of a corrupted character. When parent spend all the time and energy thinking of themselves, self-deism, gods of the land among the haves and the have-nots, they will have no time to cater moral values for their children. Thus, both children and adults think and work for themselves without the common good.

For instance, the „Okada riders”, –the commercial motorbikes, is clear example of self-belief. They portray the recklessness and lawlessness of the society, which seems to have no laws governing the citizens. But, it is interesting to note that they are too clever and smart to backlash at any one who will remind them of their moral responsibility to other road users. The masses become conscious of only what belong to them as individuals not as a common heritage. As individuals so many know what to do to preserve what belong to „me”, but suddenly becomes deaf, dumb and insular to the collective good. They represent the „institutions” of corruption, indiscipline and lack of mercy on fellow human beings. However, in the context of talented members in society, they also fall within this category but with perverse direction of good energy into any opportunity to cause harmful effects on the community and institutions. The talents may be misdirected into wrong use against the human person and God's love. Degeneration of talents will only lead to unkind activities, destruction of the human community, members of the community and installing the tyranny of poverty.

²⁷ Cf. J. F. Mali, *A Quiet Revolution: Some Social and Religious Perspectives on the Nigerian Crisis*, New York: Peter Lang 2014, p. 14.

²⁸ Cf. J. F. Mali, *A Quiet Revolution: Some Social and Religious Perspectives on the Nigerian Crisis*, p. 26.

3.4.2. The Poor Members of Society

For Christians, most of the time it seems Nigerians forget that Jesus Christ is in the poor man—the prisoner, the hungry-man, the naked-man, thirsty-man, to the point of not underscoring love, may be because emphasizing about love is morally troublesome, perhaps impossible, to focus on the love we are called to show to all in Jesus Christ and to will that people suffer²⁹. In all histories, only Jesus Christ who assured the poor of blessing rather than curses. The most dishonoured person in society is the poor man³⁰. For the poor person's life is marked out by sadness, curses, the absence of any prospects, with creditors yapping at his heels over non-performance, not performing, for performing wrongly, for saying the unsaid, etc. Although life for the poor Nigerians is little other than „crying, sighing and dying”, they are assured that „when you go to heaven, you will be blessed”, and „yes, it's all for the best”. Meanwhile, the rich live in leisure and luxury, „pulling pots of gold from thin air” and „making mountain of money”. The rich control all the resources of the land, while at the same time admitting that „Someone's got to be oppressed that is the poor”³¹.

Farmers in Nigeria are the most victimized poor members of society for many reasons. For instance, they provide raw materials to both the human person and industrial usage in Nigeria and beyond, in association with the government they preserve ecological values for the human person. They not only preserve livestock but they protect the species of creatures as a moral duty to till and care for the earth. Despite all these noble vocation of farmers, provision of fertilizer has been hijacked by the powerful-politicians, sometimes they get it in scales and measurements to a farmer, they spend the whole year working to provide raw materials for food, most of the time there are no good roads to bring the farm products to local and national markets, those who are able to get to the markets the products are sold at a giveaway price, they are forced to cultivate perishable farm products due to lack of storage facilities and most of the time they drink the same water with other creatures against their health and wellbeing. And worst still, during elections politicians charade themselves before them for votes. The culture of agrarian histories and cultures distinguished between five forms of industrial societies: hunter-gatherer societies, simple horticultural, advanced horticultural, simple agrarian, advanced agrarian and industrialization and beyond³². However, all five pre-industrial societies draw their primary resources from agricultural extraction, they are nonetheless configured

²⁹ Cf. A. Skotnicki, *Punishment and the limits of love*, in: „Journal of Catholic Social Thought: Gadium Et Spes and the Family” 13(2016)2, p. 280.

³⁰Cf. B. W. Longenecker, *Remember the Poor, Paul, Poverty and the Greco-Roman World*, Michigan: Win. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company 2010, p. 19.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Cf. B. W. Longenecker, *Remember the Poor, Paul, Poverty and the Greco-Roman World*, p. 21.

differently. The most imbalanced advanced agrarian cultures heavily channelled resources from the peasant-farmers who worked the land „upwards” to the elites who controlled the economic and administrative mechanisms. Between the elites and the peasant-farmers grew up retailers who, receiving benefits from the elite, worked to the advantage of the elite in ensuring that as many resources as possible were put at their disposal. The distribution of the population within the most imbalanced advanced agrarian societies was close to being inversely proportional to the distribution of resources and power³³. Yet, despite the clumsiness of this approach to farmers, it is time to not only act mercifully to farmers but must strive to act in the spirit of „malice toward none” and charity for all³⁴. Moreover, „in mercy, we find proof of how God loves us. He gives his entire self, always, freely, asking for nothing in return”³⁵. He also evokes the ‘the gentle rain’ when he says „may the balm of mercy reach everyone, believers and those faraway”³⁶. Domesticating mercy in Nigerian society will be the highest response to the call of mercy not only to the farmers but to the market women³⁷.

Market women are struggling with the meagre resources to make ends meet and to maintain homes. When a woman is educated, a city has been educated, when a city is educated, the children living in that city will be powerful because of the educated mothers. With educated mothers in Nigeria, we expect the best young people of trusted character. To deny mothers good treatments is a „miscarriage” of democratic ideals³⁸. This is because the welfare of mothers affects the entire Nigerian society regardless of times and generations.

Happiness goes beyond the immediate material possession. In fact, the philosophers of ancient Greece, saw beyond the material unpredictability of life and began by looking at the constant features of nature such as mountains and rivers. Yet even as they sought permanence they perceived permanent flux. Plato arrived at first educational definition of what he considered to be the permanent aspects of life and hence the idea of permanent happiness³⁹. Thus, his understanding of reality took human thought into new realms, and the river provides a good illustration of this philosophy. While the water in the river is always moving and the river always changing, but the idea „river” does not change⁴⁰. Since happiness is necessary, mothers are the best vanguards of sacrifice in order to achieve „permanent” happiness. Their

³³ Cf. Ibid.

³⁴ W. A. Galston, *God, Man and Politics—We can do better*, in: „The Wall Street Journal” CCLXVIII (2016)87, p. A11.

³⁵ *MV*, no. 14.

³⁶ *MV*, no. 15.

³⁷ Cf. P. Wedderburn, *A dog’s collar can carry its personality*, „Ireland’s Own” (2016)5556, p. 18.

³⁸ Cf. F. A. Hayk, *Law, Legislation and Liberty: A New Statement of the Liberal Principles of Justice and Political Economy* Vol. 3, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul 1979, p. 98.

³⁹ Cf. B. MacCarthaigh, *Value Education: What, Why and How*, Bonbay: Better Yourself Books 1992, p. 151.

⁴⁰ Cf. C. Jamison, *Finding Happiness” Monastic Steps for a Fulfilling Life*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson 2008, p. 14.

„determinative”⁴¹ voice can sound and be heard more in Nigeria where children of other generation of businessmen, educationists, scientists, technologists, artisans etc., can galvanize Nigeria with all round view to transform Nigerians by exploration and evaluation of services⁴². This is to accelerate not only food empowerment but to accurately collect a reliable data for economic feasibility studies, which will be supplied by economic analysts, political scientists, environmental scientists and technologists for a powerful and diversified economy.

Diversification of economy should not be left in the pages of newspapers and other media agents. Through the Divine Mercy, God has blessed Nigeria with engineers and mechanics of cars, motorbikes, motorcycles, wristwatches, electronic equipment, engineers of power and steel, aero planes, factory machines, trains etc. These are the skilled personnel and human capital. The mistake of most of the time is that the sources and areas of capitalization are abandoned in the name of building an economy from an „utopian kingdom”. The foundation is not only abandoned in search of illusionary experts that may never be but, this principle attacks the very source of economic advancement⁴³. The realization of the gift of the Divine Mercy is the beginning of wisdom and developments. It is said, „cleanliness is next to godliness”.

Moral and pastoral message of mercy includes every environmental and road cleaner who sees more what the human person needs in community. They discover more on daily basis of how important it is to have clean environment, which can be synonym to a powerful economy⁴⁴. This situation provides a sound economy, which guarantees security, good governance economic developments⁴⁵. Their work reveals God’s mercy to humanity as they work to perfect God’s work of creation in Nigeria. When „all hands are on deck”⁴⁶ with the Divine Mercy as an instrument, and Nigerians „do not relent in raging fire”⁴⁷ of change, developments are guaranteed. The highest motive of focusing on the poor members of society is not only to inculturate works of mercy but to translate justice and equity for the good of the individual and the community with the view to provide human protection and support for those defeated in life, the vulnerable and the defenceless.

⁴¹ J. Kenny, *Basic Practices of Religion in Nigeria: Part 1 Islam*, Lagos: Dominican Publications 1998, p. 2.

⁴² Cf. I. S. Amoka, *Prospects for Investments in Mineral Resources of Northern Nigeria: Marginalized but Not Broken: The Experiences of Christians in the Northern states of Nigeria the Way Forward*, Kaduna: A Publication of Northern States Christians Elders Forum 2015, p. 43.

⁴³ Cf. *Northern Nigerian Christians: Before, During, After 2015*, Kaduna: A Publication of Northern States Christians Elders Forum, 2015, p. 44.

⁴⁴ Cf. M. Owojaye, *Only Two Options: A Jesus Revolution or A Bloody Revolution*, „The Northern Christian Trumpet” (2012)1, p. 2-9.

⁴⁵ Cf. S. Ocheke, *Objectives of the King David Generation Movement*, in: „Striving for Survival” (2014), p. 5.

⁴⁶ *The Rising Hope Touched!* A Publication of the Stefanos Foundation (2007), p. 3.

⁴⁷ E. K. Mani, *Maiduguri Diocesan Anthem*, „Bishop’s Charge, 2014” (2014), p. 2.

3.4.3. The Defenceless and Vulnerable Members of Society

Most of the time, when people are healthy, materially wealthy and strong, they unconsciously super-impose themselves to be seen as „gods”⁴⁸. When people speak of „heroes of change” and „operation no mercy”⁴⁹, it leaves riddles and unanswered questions in the minds of the defenceless. Presumption is practiced not only a sin against the Holy Spirit, a sinful way of living but it stands against any form of accountability and responsibility of the unknown⁵⁰. The defence of life guarantees equal justice for all, true economic, political, technological freedom and lasting peace. Man’s great achievements today will have no meaning without guaranteeing the right to life and protect human person by: „Feeding the poor and welcoming refugees; reinforcing the social fabric of this nation; promoting the true advancement of women; securing the rights of minorities; pursuing disarmament, while guaranteeing legitimate defence; all this will succeed only if respect for life and its protection by the law is granted to every human being from conception until natural death”⁵¹. This is hard time for the defenceless⁵². Therefore, every Nigerian, „no matter how vulnerable or helpless, no matter how young or old, no matter how healthy, handicapped or sick, no matter how useful or productive for society—is a being of inestimable worth created in the image and likeness of God”⁵³.

The call for the protection of the defenceless is directed to all Nigerians. There is no better instrument to actualize this dream in favour of the Divine Mercy, love of God and neighbour than Nigerians and institutions. The defenceless and vulnerable are waiting for not only answers to their state of human condition but to act on their behalf so that they can share in the patrimony of our human inheritance. Apart from the statistics, which show „that between 7 and 9.5 million children (*Almajiri*) roam the streets of the Northern Nigeria, attending Qur’anic schools and begging for food and other means of livelihood”⁵⁴ and there are more unaccounted for across Nigeria. Among the other vulnerable members of our society is the „*Almajiri*”⁵⁵

⁴⁸ This is a situation of jurisdictional and institutionalized approach to administration. This system truncates and suffocates the human person from the possibility of rational freedom to function in society. This is also institutionalism where it exists for its own sake and serves others only by aggrandizing itself.

⁴⁹ T. Agbaegbu, *Why We Chose APC, Buhari & Oyegun as Verbatim-Man-Of The-Year*”, „Verbatim: Nigeria’s Investigative Magazine” 5(2015)1, p. 3.

⁵⁰ Cf. G. Sosanya, *Who Really Owns Lagos? Historical Links Between Eko and Benin*, in: „Flashback” (2016)1, p. 5; B. Akinlaja, *2015 Nigerian Sports: The Good, The Bad and The Ugly*, in: „Flashback” (2016), p. 45.

⁵¹ John Paul II, Address of John Paul II, (Airport of Detroit, USA, 19.09.1987), in: https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/1987/september/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19870919_congedo-stati-uniti.html (accessed 30.05.2017).

⁵² Cf. G. Carr, *Lessons of a Plague*, „The Economist”, London: Nick Blunden 2015, p. 23.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ T. B. Umaru, *Christian-Muslim Dialogue*, p. 224.

⁵⁵ The *Almajiri* are children between the ages of 5 and 17 years old without any kind of security for a decent human existence in the streets. They have no any essential means of livelihood such as stable food, shelter, water, health and clothes. They depend totally on the act of charity from almsgivers in the public domain.

syndrome in the northern part of Nigeria. The „*Almajiri* are migrant children who leave their homes and families with the latter’s consent and travel to faraway towns and cities unknown to them or their families to attain Qur’anic education with a *Mallam*”⁵⁶. To make the *Almajiri* more vulnerable, „they go into public places such as car and railway stations and market places where they are vulnerable to crimes, drugs, violence, and danger of radicalization by religious extremists”⁵⁷. This situation refused to be transformed like the Dead Sea expression, which only brings doom and gloom because of the number of cases of concerns in the overall interest of the common good⁵⁸. I have found in my research that some „Almajiri schools” built in Bauchi, Kaduna, Kano, Kebbi, Sokoto and Zamfara to tackle the high rate of illiteracy in the Northern region have been converted to conventional schools while others are replete with decaying facilities. Sometimes, religious and political suspicions question the possibility of change⁵⁹. Thus, every threat to human dignity and life must necessarily be felt in the Church, and the aspects of human community. After all, „it cannot but affect her at the core of her faith in the Redemptive Incarnation of the Son of God and engage her in her mission of proclaiming the Gospel of life in all the world and to every creature”⁶⁰ and in Nigeria in particular.

The ironic and more disturbing side of man’s inhumanity to man, to the defenceless, is that „this level of viciousness was never witnessed even in the brutal tyranny and regime of Adolf Hitler”⁶¹. What is most „intriguing is the level of sophistication of weapons like machine guns and many other deadly instruments of death, which were freely used against the law. The viciousness of these self-styled Jihadists sends shivers into the spines of our traumatized Nigerians...the military merely watched and supervised the burning of our homes. When the youths mobilized to repel the attackers, the soldiers deliberately blocked them from entering the town”⁶² to rescue some of the vulnerable and defenceless Nigerians.

⁵⁶ T. B. Umaru, *Christian-Muslim Dialogue*, p. 75.

⁵⁷ T. B. Umaru, *Christian-Muslim Dialogue*, p. 76.

⁵⁸ Cf. I. James, *Israel: The Promised Land and The Holy Land, Reminiscences and Lessons*, Kaduna: Vanguard Printers & Publishers Ltd 2012, p. 165; Cf. J. Stein, *As Beijing Expands its Efforts to Recruit CIA Spies, some fear Chinese Moles Have Dug Their Way into Langley*, in: „News watch International” 168(2017)13, p.10.

⁵⁹ Cf. D. Sanche, ed., *Orthographies of Nigerian Languages Manual XI*, Zuru: Deuce Image Brands 2015, p. 6; M. Piotrowski, *Why I Became a Catholic*, in: „Love One Another” (2009)13, p. 9-12.

⁶⁰ John Paul II, in: http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_25031995_evangelium-vitae.html (accessed 30.05.2017).

⁶¹ Cf. *Letter to All Christians From Prophet Muhammad(SA)*, „Osun Defenders, Daily Trust, Nigerian Tribune”, (11.01.2014), p. 1.

⁶² J. Shiklam, *808 Killed in Southern Kaduna Attacks, Says Catholic Church*, in: <https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2016/12/30/808-killed-in-southern-kaduna-attacks-says-catholic-church/> (accessed 30.05.2017).

Conclusion

The importance of the moral and pastoral message to the vulnerable, the wounded, the injured and the defenceless Nigerians, who are in dire need of essentials of livelihood and human dignity can never be over emphasized. Nigerians must consciously recognize, make deliberate and collective commitment to accept mercy as a principle of life, to transform institutions, pay attention to the youths and to be sensitive to the less-privileged. The educational and religious institutions must be instruments of the Divine Mercy to strengthen the weak institutions and Nigerians. The corporal works of mercy do not stop at giving material support but also pays attention to weak members in the internet community, innocent persons to a place of work and public places, who are made vulnerable and defenceless by social scammers, hypocrites and daredevil agents. To act mercifully to the vulnerable and the defenceless, not only expresses the obligation of the gift of Divine Mercy but fulfils the „golden rule, our mission”⁶³ and in mercy, „God made us alive together in Christ”⁶⁴ the way of our life in our commitment to expel hunger, thirst and nakedness in order to show mercy to the less-privileged and to welcome strangers.

The moral message of Matthew 25, challenged all Nigerians to deliberately look within Nigeria and locate those who are thirsty of love and mercy. This category of people is within the Nigerian communities but thirsty of love. They seek someone every day who will show them love and care in the midst of political instability and social challenges such discriminations due to ethnicity and indigenization issues. There are still Nigerians who are spiritually and physically sick. Such Nigerians need both spiritual and corporal works of mercy to restore their human dignity. Although, there are Nigerians who maintain that the person who is spiritually and physically sick has nothing else to do about it. Those who hold this view believe that God has predestined such people to be that way and therefore there nothing one can do about it rather than to accept it as God’s will. Yet, the imprisoned and the stranger, are also seeking for acceptance and recognition of their situation. Since Nigerians share in different categories of those in need, the moral implication of the Divine Mercy is to do unto others what you would like done to you (Mt 7:12) without condition and exception, as a fundamental moral principle. The security, the welfare and essentials of life for the vulnerable and the less-privileged in Nigeria, are in the moral responsibility of Nigerians.

⁶³ S. A. Salem, *Mission: Our desire...Our way of Life*, „A Christian Magazine Kingdom Watch”, Zuru: Anchor Publishing & Resources, 2(2012)2, p. 3.

⁶⁴ *DM*, no. 1.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. The Transformation of Personal and Family Life in Nigeria in the Spirit of Divine Mercy

Introduction

In this chapter, I will critically analyse corruption as the absence of the attribute of mercy and calling for „conversion”¹ as it affects the individual Nigerians and the family life in Nigeria. My argument is based on the original state of man devoid of corruption and how the human heart was corrupted, which not only led to a betrayal of man’s freedom but created an insatiable appetite. Due to the „cancerous” nature of corruption, I will survey and present the virtues, transformation and value system, without which the presence of „cancer” is inevitable. The CBCN acknowledged the presence of corruption when it said: „We are painfully aware that corruption has eaten deep into the very fabric of the Nigerian Society. It has so become pervasive that many now accept it as the ‘Nigerian way of life’ or the Nigerian way of doing things”².

The golden moment of man was his original state of innocence without corruption. Corruption attacks the human intellect, conscience and the will. The fundamental principle of transformation is conversion of the heart. Contextually, the hearts of Nigerians need conversion, thereby influencing the human and the divine institutions with the attitude of the Divine Mercy, in order to not only promote the principle of subsidiarity but justice, protection of lives and

¹ *RP*, nos. 2, 5, 7.

² C. Anyanwu, O. J. Fadugba-Pinheiro, eds., *Our Concern for Nigeria Catholic Bishops Speak*, p. 162.

properties³. The Divine Mercy calls for praxis in connection with the original innocence and solitude states of man where he was innocent and alone with freedom⁴. At this point, man was without sin associated with human weakness by the very fact that all God created was very good (Gen 1:31). The complex situation of man, which led to the coinage of this chapter, „The Divine Mercy and the Transformation of Individual, and Family Life in Nigeria”, is better understood in the light of the „Theology of the Body” in St. John Paul II, who noted the need for a paradigm change of attitude⁵. He discusses the idea of „original innocence”, based on the teaching of Genesis, „The man and his wife were both naked, yet they felt no shame” (Gen 2:25). „The concept of original solitude includes both self-consciousness and self-determination. The fact that man is ‘alone’ contains within itself this ontological structure, and at the same time, indicates authentic understanding”⁶. „Above all, however, without that deep meaning of man’s original solitude, one cannot understand and correctly interpret the whole situation of man, created in the image of God, which is the situation of the first, in fact primeval covenant with God”⁷. Moreover, Thomas Aquinas, who was quoting Aristotle said: „this body is a little world”, which contains all of the elements of the rest of creation that needs perpetual *metanoia*⁸. „God makes this little world out of matter, and he infuses it with a kind of life that nothing else in the universe has ever possessed”⁹. „Many schools of thought have offered explanations to show how St. John Paul II’s contribution is necessary, transformative element due to its healing effect”¹⁰. According to St. John Paul II, man’s first sense of original solitude has to do with man’s relationship with God¹¹. He discovered that he was the only creature who has this prerequisite of this relationship among all the creatures to be merciful as a beneficiary of mercy¹². This status of man in the world was dawned on man when „The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to till it and keep it” (Gen 2:25), which also set man’s vocation to work, in order not only to respond to God’s command but to realize and perfect his

³ Cf. *AM*, no. 15.

⁴ Cf. John Paul II, *Original Unity of Man and Woman: Catechesis on the Book of Genesis*, Boston: St. Paul Editions 1981, p. 44. According John Paul II, „Solitude” has two meanings. First meaning, is derived from man’s very nature, that is, from his humanity as accounted in chapter two of Genesis. Second meaning is derived from the male-female relationship and that is evident, in a certain way, on the basis of the first meaning.

⁵ Cf. P. Hocken, *Azusa, Rome, and Zion: Pentecostal Faith, Catholic Reform, and Jewish roots*, Eugene: Pickwick Publications 2016, p. 176; Cf. S. N. Jibril, *Democracy and Women* (typescript, 2002), p. 2.

⁶ John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them: A Theology of the Body*, p. 151.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ Cf. H. Wejman, *Man’s Cooperation with the Merciful God*, transl, P. Mizia, Kraków: Wydawnictwo Misericordia 2003, p. 49.

⁹ M. Coffin, ed., *Original Solitude*, in:

<http://www.bigccatholics.com/2010/01/original-solitude.html> (accessed 3.06.2017).

¹⁰ M. Coffin, ed., *Theology of the Body*, in:

<http://www.bigccatholics.com/2010/03/theology-of-body-part-1.html> (accessed 3.06.2017); Cf. G. C. Ikeobi, *The Holy Eucharist and Healing*, Kabba: Publications of Diocesan Pastoral Centre 1992, p. 3.

¹¹ Cf. M. Selmys, ed., *Original Solitude*, p. 10.

¹² Cf. L. D. Magistris, *Indulgences Attached to Divine Mercy Devotions*, „L’Osservatore Romano” (2002)34, p. 4.

humanity. In other words, work is a gift to man, which must be transmitted to others as patrimony. The spiritual inclination of man is connected to his intellect, free will and conscience, which lead him to God. The recognition of these gifts, put away from being hungry and thirsty for everything¹³.

St. John Paul II, draws our attention to the dimension of human existence before the unity of male and female, where „the Lord God commanded the man, „You may freely eat of every tree of the Garden; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day you eat of it, you shall die” (Gen 2:16-17). The man had two options to freely choose to obey or freely choose to disobey God’s commandment but not without consequences on either side. Unfortunately, self-autonomy without God was the pride of man, which caused the loss of original solitude. According to Martin Boland, „loneliness is one of the fundamental structures of human consciousness, providing a hermeneutical tool for a more accurate description of the human person. In St. John Paul II, this fact becomes clear in the first test that God presented to man: the naming of the animals. When God was aware that man was alone, he „formed every animal of the field and every bird of the air and brought them to man to see what he would call them”¹⁴. This action of God signifies that man is the second in command to God, a special creature, the centre of creation and with the capacity to transform and renew the world.

Speaking about sin in reference to Nigerians, it is always as a direct object of examination to personal sin, in reference to „original sin”, which has left its consequences in every man. Consequently, human beings are born in a state of contracted sin. „As a result, all of human life, whether individual, or collective, shows itself to be a dramatic struggle between good and evil, between light and darkness. Indeed, man finds that by himself he is incapable of battling the assaults of evil successfully... But the Lord himself came to free and strengthen man, renewing him inwardly”¹⁵ by the act of his Mercy. Corruption is the consequences of „original sin” which has left every human person incapable of defeating evil without God. Thus, the human nature has been corrupted, weakened its moral power and made man vulnerable and weak. Therefore, Nigerians are not free from the consequences of the effects of the Fall of man. Nigerians not only need conversion, the virtue of mercy in order to effectively transform themselves, the family life in Nigeria, institutions but domestication of the theological virtues, and genuine dialogue with fellow Nigerians to achieve the object of transformation over corruption.

¹³ Cf. J. S. Pobee, ed., *Exploring Afro-Christology*, New York: Peter Lang 1992, P. 62.

¹⁴ M. Boland, ed., *Loneliness, Part 3: Pope John Paul II and, Original Solitude*, in:

<http://jerichotree.com/2014/10/24/loneliness-part-3-pope-john-paul-ii-and-original-solitude/> (accessed 3.06.2017).

¹⁵ *GS*, no. 13.

4.1. Corruption: The „Cancer” of All Generations

Corruption is translated as lack of conversion, the Divine Mercy and moral attitude. Corruption both kills and exiles¹⁶. Man, is the object of the Divine Mercy in dire need of restoration and healing. Corruption is the presence of sin. The moral implication of corruption is a „generic cancer” of all generations. Therefore, corruption is a „generic cancer” attacking individuals, communities, organizations and systems. It is said, „Pride goes first before a fall”. Fundamentally, man’s mission on earth is not only to live but „to till and care for the earth” as well as taking care of both temporal and spiritual goods of his Creator. And when the sense of God is lost, the sense of man is also threatened and poisoned, as the Second Vatican Council states: „Without the Creator the creature would disappear... But when God is forgotten the creature itself grows unintelligible”¹⁷. Moreover, cancer is a disease caused by an uncontrolled division of abnormal cells in a body. It is a destructive phenomenon that is hard to be cured.

Essentially, corruption attacks three faculties of the human formation centres, namely, intellectual, moral and technical formation. When these centres are attacked, the situation becomes like „Things Fall Apart the Center Cannot Hold”¹⁸ when it comes to evident situations, judgement and actions. Corruption is the acquired nature of man, just like Adam blamed God and Eve for his sin, in turn Eve blamed serpent (Gen 3:12-13) for her sin and the serpent could not transfer its sin. The sin settled in the very nature of serpent so as to keep attracting man in its sinful nature. This is the reason why the nature of evil is sinful. In order to spread its nature, evil aims at attacking and degenerating everything that is good. Corruption is a battle between good and evil, which can only be won with God’s grace. The CBCN has recognized the „cancer” and danger of corruption when it said:

„Corruption has remained hydra headed and refused to be tamed in Nigeria. At the top, center, bottom, sides, corruption has taken firm roots that it will take more than just wishful political talk to expel it from our psyche. The elders have seemingly perfected the art of corruption and the youths as goo copy-cats have unfortunately keyed in and see no problem with it. Like a menacing cancer, it has spread even to religious bodies and judicial organizations; it is found in the market places, among officers of the law. Security agents, and those in and outside government; cascading dangerously on all aspects of our life. Today, it means nothing to swear an affidavit in a court to change one’s year of birth so as to elongate one’s civil service career; some parents pay and negotiate with school authorities so that their children who have failed exams can be facilitated to pass. Even very young school children know this and would wonder why the parents of some other children have not influenced their results! It is now clear that the culture of corruption is very deep and no single leader, no matter how well intentioned can enforce and win a war against it”¹⁹, without the Divine Mercy.

¹⁶ Cf. E. Ojakaminor, *Nigeria We Hail Thee!!: A Look at Our Immediate Past*, Lagos: The Ambassador Publication 2000, p. 225.

¹⁷ *EV*, no. 22; Cf. *GS*, no. 36.

¹⁸ „Things fall apart the centre cannot hold” is an allegorical name of the book written and published in 1959, by Chinua Achebe, to reveal the anarchic situation in Nigeria.

¹⁹ I. K., *How to end Killings by Herdsmen*, in:

<http://sunnewsonline.com/how-to-end-killings-by-herdsmen-archbishop-kaigama/> (accessed 4.04.2017).

Sadly, corruption has done a great harm²⁰. Most of the evils in the country stem from what lies behind corruption such as pressures and expectations from families, communities, personal security and comfort, and the unknown future²¹. The ugly head of the official corruption-bribery, nepotism, patronage, sale of public office etc, in Nigeria started in 1966²². In other words, the corrupt „interpretation and administration of justice”²³ has been institutionalized at the official level beyond the fight of any ordinary Nigerian. Consequently, corruption kept on fighting corruption by subsequent administrations in Nigeria. The coup plotters’ mantra has always been „in order to get rid of rotten and corrupt ministers, political parties, trade unions and the whole clumsy apparatus of the Federal systems and to gun down all the bigwigs on our way”²⁴. Yet, corruption has attained the status of „cancer”, which can only be healed by conversion and inculturation of the principle of mercy. With God’s grace, the human conscience and integrity and political persuasion, man can transform himself and his society²⁵. If man cannot hear the voice of another calling for his transformation, he can hear his voice of his conscience because he cannot tell himself a lie²⁶. Man is a custodian of his life, which belongs only to God. God is good and true, slow to anger, and governing all with mercy and through man’s life activities, God’s mercy can be expressed²⁷. When the faculties of the intellect, conscience and reason are corrupted every thinking, planning and semantics will be corrupted to the point of no truth will be found in most engagements and encounters for the common good. If the power of freedom and responsibility are corrupted, the moral judgement will also be corrupted²⁸. Truly, corruption is a „cancer” that can only be cured by accepting the Divine Mercy²⁹. The truth and bitter story of cancer is one of the ways to die³⁰.

This type of the „cancer” of corruption does not only kill the human person but also destroys institutions and relocates the place of God in the society. Corruption can metamorphose into political ideology or a party manifestoes³¹. Thus, reconstruction of moral systems, psyche and attitude, paradigm-identity and national vision are critical integral pillars

²⁰ Cf. J. F. Mali, *A quiet Revolution- Some social and religious perspectives on the Nigerian crisis*, p. 11.

²¹ Cf. Ibid.

²² Cf. J. M. Mbaku, *Bureaucratic and Political Corruption in Africa: The Public Choice Perspective*, Florida: Krieger Publishing Company 2000, p. 9.

²³ A. Ross, *On Law and Justice*, London: Stevens & Sons Limited 1958, p. 135.

²⁴ H. Woronięki, *The Mystery of Divine Mercy: Christian Doctrine of Divine Mercy and Our Response to it*, Stockbridge MA: The Marian Fathers Mercy of God Apostolate 1955, p. 31.

²⁵ Cf. C. T. Rowan, *Dream Makers, Dream Breakers: The World of Justice Thurgood Marshall*, Boston: Little, Brown and Company 1993, p. 4.

²⁶ Cf. B. Barry, *Justice as Impartial*, Oxford: Clarendon Press 1999, p. 3.

²⁷ Cf. Congregation of Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy, Kraków: Pl. Na Groblach 1990, p. 15.

²⁸ Cf. P. M. Gaiya, *Religion & Mass Media: In Kaduna State, Nigeria*, Kaduna: Prudent Printing and Publishing 2010, p. 126.

²⁹ Cf. R. Castro & M. Castro, *Jesus Wants to Heal your Life*, Campinas: Raboni Editora 1992, p. 12.

³⁰ Cf. I. Kalu, *Truth & Bitter*, Kano: Communications Department-Catholic Diocese of Kano 2007, p. 48.

³¹ Cf. *Nigeria*, here, „Nigeria” was the title of the typescript, (typescript, 1987), p. 11.

in a weak economy³². To reconstruct here means to create a complete description of collective and objective vision, through which economic and political freedoms can be achieved based on certain known facts³³.

Nigerians are the solution, remedy and the cure of this „generic cancer”. Our economic and political freedom is not only the power to choose between good or evil, between one political party to the other, between winning and losing elections, but it is acquiring the fullness of life on the existential level, by which the poor are made rich, the jobless to have jobs, the less privileged are empowered, the homeless to have homes, the models to sustain their heroic struggle, hard-work is motivated, experiencing peace, giving unconditional love, setting prisoners free, making institutions citadel of justice, feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, clothing the naked and transforming the state of the miserable Nigerian.

4.1.1. Self-transformation as a Fundamental Principle of Transformation

Conversion is the first principle of transformation. „All the beatitudes of the Sermon on the Mount indicate the way of conversion and reform of life, but the one referring to those who are merciful is particularly eloquent in this regard. Man attains to the merciful love of God, his mercy, to the extent that he himself is interiorly transformed in the spirit of that love towards his neighbour”³⁴. Transformation is not once and for all: but it is a whole lifestyle, where society can become more humane when we introduce into all the mutual relationships, which form its moral aspect the moment of forgiveness³⁵. Essentially, „forgiveness demonstrates the presence in”³⁶ Nigeria of the love, which is more powerful than sin. „Forgiveness is also the fundamental condition for reconciliation”³⁷ which transforms not only the relationship between Nigerians and God but also in relationship between Nigerians and fellow Nigerians. Importantly, „Christ’s messianic programme, the programme of mercy, becomes the programme of his people, the programme of the Church”³⁸ and the programme of Nigerians in their social lifestyle and attitude.

³² Cf. M. R. Stephen, *The Theology of reconstruction in Africa: A Study of Theology of Eugene E. Uzukwu*, Rome: 2005. p. 87; Cf. E. Mircea, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, Vol. 15, New York: MacMillan Publishing Company 1987, p. 268.

³³ Cf. E. Mircea, Ed. *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, p. 268.

³⁴ *DM*, no. 14.

³⁵ Cf. *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *DM*, no. 8.

Furthermore, transformation is a product of an attitude, which arises from „spiritual, moral, social and cultural education”³⁹. To transform is not only „setting the scene”⁴⁰, marking out boundaries, for „transformations”⁴¹, changing nature but changing the way of doing ordinary things in an extra-ordinary way. Transformation is also drawing the frontiers and encouraging experts to consider the issue of frontiers within the context of their own intellectual interests⁴². Transformation as a principle, shows that every action is to create a smile on someone else, to build, heal and restore that, which was damaged to a good status for objective or subjective good. However, it was Paschal who was reflecting on the dilemma of the human person and said: „What a chimera, is the human being! What novelty, what a monster, what chaos, what a subject of contradictions, what a prodigy! Judge of all things, and miserable worm of earth; depositor of truth, and sewer of incertitude and error! Glory and rejection of the universe! Who will ever manage to disentangle this skein?”⁴³. The question of who a human being is, has been a vexing question for the modern society. Yet, all human beings desire happiness, but they fail to agree on what it is and are incapable of attaining it without God. If they are to rely solely upon themselves in order to understand themselves, they are doomed to frustration. The human mystery can only be grasped in the light of God as the greater mystery⁴⁴. Sacrifice of the „me” is another step to transformation, organic and sensual appetites, desires, needs, tendencies, intentions, truth and ideologies, on the altar of the Divine Mercy for purification and sanctity devoid of concupiscence⁴⁵.

Concupiscence in its widest acceptance is any yearning or lack of good for the soul; in its strict and specific acceptance, a desire of the lower appetite contrary to reason. To understand how the sensuous and the rational appetite can be opposed, it should be borne in mind that their natural objects are altogether different. The object of the former is the gratification of the senses; the object of the latter is the good of the entire human nature and consists in the subordination of the lower rational faculties, and in subordination of reason to God, its supreme good and ultimate end. However, the lower appetites are not of themselves, so as to pursue sensuous gratifications independently of the understanding and without regard to the good of the higher faculties. Hence, desires contrary to the real good and order of reason may, and often do, rise in it, before the attention of the mind, and one’s reason, disposes the

³⁹ S. Bigger, E. Brown, eds., *Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Education: Exploring Values in the Curriculum*, London: David Fulton Publishers 1999, p. 3.

⁴⁰ S. Jenings, *Theatre, Ritual and Transformation: The Senoi Temiars*, London: Routledge 1995, p. 1.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

⁴² Cf. F. I. Wood, W. Pohl, I. Wood, H. Reimitz, eds., *Introduction: Drawing Frontiers*, in: *The Transformation of Frontiers from Late Antiquity to the Carolingians*, (2001), p. 1-3.

⁴³ R. R. Barr, transl, *God, the Father of Mercy*, „Theological-Historical Commission for the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000”, (1997), p. 12.

⁴⁴ Cf. *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ Cf. G. W. Kosicki, *Now is the Time for Mercy*, Stockbridge MA: Marian Press 2012, p. 42.

bodily organs to their pursuit and solicit the will to consent, while they more or less hinder reason from considering their lawfulness or unlawfulness of the „me”.

The „me” in this context, is another part of the „I”. The „me” part, looks and sounds like the „I” part of the human person that is connected to the truth. Thus, most of what comes and goes into the „me” may be true or false, which can only be ascertained by action and time. On the other hand, whatever comes and goes into the „I”, which is the human person’s self. This part of the „I”, is the part that is not possible to tell the self a lie and does not accept corruption or manipulation by any means. Moreover, in the concrete conditions of life, it is the relationship between conscience and conduct that differentiates a sage from a fool, a saint from a sinner, a good man from a bad man, a sacred cow from an unsacred cow, a friend from a foe, an our own from my own, an indigene from a non-indigene. After all, when conscience speaks, a wise person listens and a saint obeys. The Nigerian who is true to his/her conscience is true to his/her God. Consequently, judgement is the verdict of the human person’s conscience, which raises or falls a person. Thus, Nigerians have been offered good and grace, light and life to perfect Nigeria as exemplified by St. John Paul II, „the Great Apostle of the Divine Mercy”⁴⁶, who brought both private and public transformation in Nigeria.

4.1.2. Personal Transformation

The call of the CBCN for a change of heart and the rule of law in Nigeria as urgent steps for transformation, is reiterated thus: „There is widespread hunger and starvation in our country, a land so richly blessed by God but callously devastated by greedy opportunistic Nigerians”⁴⁷.

In this section, I wish to move a step further from the personal transformation to the private level. In this case, the private is used in the sense of relationship with others at social levels. At this level, a person meets another person as him or her not as „me”, but as a reflection of his/her nature and kind. People see others as instruments capable of bringing them God’s blessing or favour in any way. Private transformation requires the self-understanding of a relationship with God. For Catholics, God the Father is always in a special relationship, which exists in communion with the Son and the Holy Spirit. The primary article of the Creed is the „I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth”⁴⁸. This God who created the human person in his image and likeness is a person. He shares his divine attributes with the human person who has the divine image. Therefore, among human beings, God’s love is in

⁴⁶ G. W. Kosicki, *Be Apostles of Divine Mercy: A Leadership Formation Manual*, Stockbridge MA: Marian Helpers Press 2005, p. 5.

⁴⁷ P. Schineller, *Pastoral Letters and Communiqués of the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Nigeria 1960-2002*, p. 309.

⁴⁸ M. I. Rupnik, *Discernment: Acquiring the Heart of God*, Boston: Pauline Books & Media 2006, p. 8.

their midst, which transcends ethnic, cultural and political affiliations where human freedom is exercised in order to improve what God has created. When John the Evangelist says that God is love, he affirms that God is free and that love entails encountering the other person in love and freedom⁴⁹. This encounter is aimed at revealing the Divine Mercy and God's justice by making his mercy present among people⁵⁰.

Therefore, private transformation is where the only commodities to be sold, shared and inculturated are „justice and mercy” and „love and sacrifice”. Theologians have asked severally, how to reconcile justice and mercy? According to St. Thomas Aquinas, the word „mercy” denotes a man's compassionate heart for another's unhappiness⁵¹. In the „specific feature of the ethics of St. Thomas is that it puts compassion and justice into the closest connection possible to each other. Thus, ‘Justice without mercy is cruel’, ‘but ‘mercy without justice is the mother of dissolution’—and, one might add, therefore cruel as well”⁵². However, this is not merely the fact that people are often merciless. But it is much more due to the finite character of the human existence, which makes all the virtues in the life of the soul appear to be separated from each other and their exercise separate as well⁵³. St. Augustine's view seemed to see God's justice and mercy as alternative ways, in which he relates to his creatures, while Aquinas' view is that when God „pardon offences against God, that, in this sense, God can only be just and not merciful”⁵⁴. But, this is more complex given the fact that St. Paul says in Romans that God's will is to „have mercy on all” (Rom 11:32). In other words, mercy has psychological and moral elements. As it has been mentioned, the psychological element can be seen in the experience of pity at the situation in question while moral element is the compassionate acts to increase the victim's good and welfare.

On the notion of God's justice, it is to give man beyond what he should get by his promise. In this case, God bounds himself only without the involvement of man to this benevolent promise. In the history of salvation, narrated in the Sacred Scripture, sheds clear light on the entire history of the world and shows that human events are always accompanied by the merciful providence of God, who knows how to touch even the most hardened of hearts

⁴⁹ Cf. M I. Rupnik, *Discernment: Acquiring the Heart of God*, p. 11.

⁵⁰ Cf. The Dynamic Catholic Institute, *Beautiful Mercy: Experience God's Unconditional Love So We Can Share It with Others*, Cincinnati: Beacon Publishing 2015, p. 115.

⁵¹ Cf. Congregation of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy, *In Saint Faustina's School of Mercy*, Edition II, Kraków: Misericordia Publications 2007, p. 10.

⁵² T. H. Stark, *The Relationship of Mercy and Justice According to St. Thomas Aquinas*, in: http://www.catholicworldreport.com/Item/4304/the_relationship_of_mercy_and_justice_according_to_st_thomas_aquinas.aspx (accessed 29.10.2016).

⁵³ Cf. P. King, ed., *On the Free Choice of the Will, On Grace and Free Choice, and Other Writings*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2010, p. XV, 18.

⁵⁴ B. Davies, ed., *Thomas Aquinas's Summa Theologiae: A Guide & Commentary*, New York: Oxford University Press 2014, p. 86.

and bring good fruits from what seems utterly barren soil⁵⁵. Moreover, sin unceasingly tempts and wars against the human soul⁵⁶. St. John Paul II, taught that the biblical revelation confirms that the shattered order cannot be fully restored except by a response that combines justice with forgiveness. The notion of justice of God here is clear. „It is not commutative justice, which consists in mutual giving and receiving what is due”⁵⁷ to someone. Fundamentally, man has nothing, which he can absolutely call his own, except sin⁵⁸. Jesus taught man about this lesson of owning nothing on earth, when he borrowed boat (Lk 5:3), manger (Lk 2:16), a donkey (Mk 11:2-3), a house, bread and wine (Mt 26:18, 26-27), thorns (Jn 19:2), and tomb (Jn 19:41) not only to make them holy but to sanctify them for the redemption of man.

Essentially, God’s justice has distributive character but in the same sense as attributive justice, which this justice is considered among men. This is because for God, whatever is due to a creature from God is not due for its own sake, but rather it is owned in virtue of God’s other attributes⁵⁹. According to St. Thomas Aquinas, to reconcile justice and mercy, „God acts mercifully, not indeed by going against his justice, but by doing something more than justice. Thus, a man who pays another two hundred pieces of money, though owing him only one hundred, does nothing against justice, but acts liberally or mercifully. The case is the same with one who pardons an offense committed against him, for in remitting it he may be said to bestow a gift... Hence it is clear that mercy does not destroy justice, but in a sense, is the fullness thereof. And thus, it is said: Mercy exalteth itself above judgement”⁶⁰. Therefore, private transformation leads to public transformation.

4.1.3. Transformed Leadership as a Prerequisite of Change

Normatively, an individual forms a family, a family of families form a community, a village, a town, city and mega cities etc. This situation means that there will be many values at different levels where people live, such as cultural, religious, social and political values. Properties can belong to individual persons and families or communities as individuals or collective. This situation also presupposes pluralistic co-existence where private and common good are identified and protected for the good of all. Within the principle of subsidiarity, it underscores

⁵⁵ Cf. John Paul II, *Message of His Holiness Pope John Paul II for the Celebration of the World Day of Peace* (Rome, The Vatican, 1.01.2002), in:

http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/messages/peace/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_20011211_xxxv-world-day-for-peace.html (accessed 10.04.2017).

⁵⁶ Cf. D. W. Fagerberg, *On Liturgical Asceticism*, Washington, DC: The Catholic University Press 2013, p. xiii.

⁵⁷ T. Zaremba, *Mercy is Forever: The Story of the Devotion to the Mercy of God*, Pulaski: Franciscan Publishers 1957, p. 115.

⁵⁸ Cf. *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ Cf. T. Zaremba, *Mercy is Forever*, p. 115.

⁶⁰ T. Zaremba, *Mercy is Forever*, p. 116.

the values of peace, love, justice freedom and owning properties are highlighted to make life meaningful. Thus, the legacy of justice for public commitment to justice, development and social transformation owes much to the integral framework proposed by Pope Paul VI in *Populorum Progressio*⁶¹.

The meaning of life has been a quest of Nigerians. Apart from the moral law inscribed deep down in the human heart to do good and avoid evil, Nigerians are constantly in dire need of some power that inspires attitudes. The Gospel of Jesus Christ has proved to be that power that would have no other explanation except self-sacrifice, detachment, forbearance, commitment, peace, reconciliation and sense of God. Professor Mason, observed that politics in Nigeria and on the means to transform society, that there is the need to avoid the position of collapsed stock market in Nigeria, where the stock market is ruled by big money racketeers who, when they deem ready, will allow the market to collapse so that the average investor will loss all and they will gain⁶². Therefore, money makers will rule all over local governments, state governments and federal government, all communities, all people putting into effect a „one” monetary system, with a government ruled by leaders without mercy elected by the money-mongers of society, and thereby imposing a martial law and a society void of God and religion with tyranic ideologies against humanity. Public transformation is the collective yes to act mercifully and to trust in God’s mercy for good leadership and governance⁶³.

Sacrifice is the core moral credence for a leader⁶⁴. Trust presupposed moral transparency, accountability and responsibility. Corruption can also be the distortion of man’s understanding of God, which can lead to distrust, disobedience and rebellion against God. Within the human situation and condition, good and evil can juxtapose side by side with the aim to take control over values of human life. Ironically, when bad leadership takes control, little by little, until it is subtly taking control of the common patronage and common good. It goes further to hijack and own the individual’s moral freedom, collective actions, choices, cultures, visions and missions. Yet, the God of mercy will not allow evil to prosper over good⁶⁵. When a leadership is merciful, it leads an entire nation deeper and deeper into the very heart of God without, which there will be no transformation⁶⁶.

⁶¹ K. Ahem, *The Justice Legacy of Populorum Progressio: A Jesuit Case Study*, „Journal of Moral Theology” 6(2017)1, p. 39-56.

⁶² Cf. D. Mason, *Contemporary Ideologies* (typescript, 1989), p. 5.

⁶³ Cf. G. Kosicki, *Special Urgency of Mercy: Why Sister Faustina?* Detroit: Divine Mercy Publication 1990, p. 30.

⁶⁴ Cf. C. Straw, *Gregory the Great: Perfection in Imperfection*, Berkeley: University of California 1988, p. 179.

⁶⁵ Cf. V. Conlon, *The Everyday Miracles of Divine Mercy and Other Short Stories*, Dublin: Published by Divine Mercy Publications 2001, p. 4.

⁶⁶ Cf. G. W. Kosicki, *Revelations of Divine Mercy: Daily Readings from the Diary of Blessed Faustina Kowalska*, Michigan: Servant Publications 1996, p. 15.

Divine Mercy is the answer not only to the troubled Nigeria as a nation, but to individuals, families and communities⁶⁷. Mercy for all, calls for a national response in order to actualize transformation of poverty into wealthy society, families and communities⁶⁸. Leaders need to inculcate mercy in all sectors of the economy in order to rise above human suffering to credible transformations⁶⁹. Leaders who surround themselves with the Divine Mercy, they experience God's mercy directly and discover the existence of a personalized Absolute Being whose „dimension of creative act”⁷⁰ and usher in new insight for transformation to the point of domesticating the mercy as a virtue.

4.2. Domestication of Theological Virtues

Thus, conversion is a powerful instrument of transformation of theological virtues. A virtue is a positive quality, which guides man to tend towards good and express it in right-feeling, thinking, judging, choosing and acting. After all, the human person is a creature of habit and culture⁷¹. The human virtues are rooted in the theological virtues to enable man to adapt his faculties in order to participate in the divine nature, since theological virtues relate to God directly. Theological virtues are „pillars” and „power stores” without, which moral activities in human person will be impossible. For the Christians, theological virtues are the foundation of Christian moral activity; they animate it and give it character⁷². Theological virtues „are infused by God into the souls of the faithful to make them capable of acting as children and of meriting eternal life”⁷³ and happiness, which are nurtured and nourished through faith.

It is the Epistle to the Hebrews that says: „Without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who come to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him” (Heb 11:6). Thus, „faith is the theological virtue, by which we believe in God and believe all that he has said and revealed to us, and that the Holy Catholic Church proposes for our belief, because he is truth itself. By faith man freely commits his entire self to God”⁷⁴ in private and in public.

⁶⁷ Cf. G. W. Kosicki, *Now is The Time of Mercy: The Story of God's Mercy*, Dublin: Divine Mercy Publications, 1993, p. 64.

⁶⁸ Cf. G. W. Kosicki, *Tell My Priests: Words of Our Lord to Priests about His Mercy as Revealed to Sister Faustina Kowalska*, Steubenville: Franciscan University Press 1992, p. 27.

⁶⁹ Cf. R. A. Stackpole, *Jesus Mercy Incarnate: St. Faustina and Devotion to Jesus Christ*, Stockbridge MA: An Imprint of Marian Press 2000, p. 70.

⁷⁰ H. Wejman, *Man's Cooperation with the Merciful God*, Kraków: Wydawnictwo Misericordia 2003, p. 13.

⁷¹ Cf. R. Rohr, A. Ebert, *The Enneagram: A Christ Perspective*, Bangalore: Claretian Publications 2001, p. 29.

⁷² Cf. CCC, no. 1813.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Cf. CCC, no. 1814.

Evidently, the essential credentials and values man has for sale to his fellow man are integrity, transparency, accountability and commitment to his promise. This testimony is found in all Nigerians. For instance, politicians and the likes, can only present integrity as a commodity to the electorates in order to buy their votes. Depending on the level of value system, the electorates always risk their conscience to be battered and be trampled upon by the would be their leaders when they take possession of power. Most of the time the politicians do not even believe in themselves talk less of believing in what they promised and said. Therefore, to domesticate theological virtues is to express conversion and repentance in deeds.

Hope is strengthened by motivation. Motivation is a quality in human existence in relation to goal achievements. A large percentage of success depends on motivation, either directly or indirectly, and spiritually or physically. In fact, „Motivation is climbing a mountain, where the pressure of whether to continue climbing the mountain to stop for a while; to mediate on the better options of the venture”⁷⁵. Every good moral motivation must contain action units where plans are undertaken to attain a goal, motivating actions and directed by their ends, which require imaginative anticipation for a future orientation to focus on the particular goal to be achieved. The hope and motivation require imaginative capability, which engages the will, reason, intellect and conviction to push for transformation. Of course, hope must be sustained by sacrifice, which is a widely spoken word with different meanings. Sacrifice here, is in the context of hoping for higher values either spiritually, politically and physically. Sacrifice at its first value connotes a religious ritual. Every sacrifice has its object purpose, which is to receive a higher value than what is sacrificed. Religiously, sacrifice has its full spiritual content and quickens the external rites with a living soul. Philosophically, sacrifice connotes a religious interpretation. This is also part of the components of human life, based on the principle of good and morality. Morally, sacrifice has many dimensions based on the human dynamics in various experiences and act of practice.

Act of practice in reference to hope is an act of habit, which repeats an act of habit turning it into a character. It is disturbing when both good and evil acts are repeated. But it is important to know that all repetitions are acts of the will, which involve the whole human person. Thus, sacrificing goals purifies the human person, until a person is finally pure in terms of integrity. When someone wills to do one good thing repeatedly, knowing that whatever is sacrificed, its first value must be in the scale of preference, which is reflected in a pluralistic Nigerian community and geographical locations.

Therefore, hope is a theological virtue, which Nigerians desire for the kingdom of heaven and a better Nigerian economy. It is also a quality that is required in the earthly struggle

⁷⁵ S. T. Rehrauer, *Motivation Model of Human Action* (Typescript, 2001).

to keep it alive for higher value of human yearnings through the acts of charity and good will to other men and women in Nigeria without, which Nigerians cannot receive transformation of values⁷⁶. Individuals, families, communities and corporate groups may be guilty of fake charity for goods and services in society–politics of mercy. The guilty think that they are first-class wise people ever lived on earth. Nigerians must express the attitude of mercy and God’s love by loving one another in charity, which each person receives. Jesus emphatically says: „As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you; abide in my love. This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you”⁷⁷. Moreover, the first step to theological transformation and domesticating the theological virtues is by personal conversion and repentance.

4.2.1. Personal Authentication of Faith

The human nature is complex to the point that nobody sees the inner activities of the heart, which plans and controls human activities. But the human frailty is always assumed and inferred in history as a fact of human experience that has the option of conversion and repentance, that is the process of turning away from circumstance responsible for conscious acts attributed to the devil as known to the human person. Conversion and repentance are steps to authentic faith, which is the only mirror of the soul of the human person through, which others can see⁷⁸. This self-worth, is required for personal authentication especially to all people regardless of affiliations⁷⁹.

Importantly, repentance is the irrevocable character of choice and not a defect in the infinite Divine Mercy but an opportunity for man to regain his finite happiness with people on earth and infinite happiness with God in the afterlife⁸⁰. Not only politicians who like things in bad shape to be transformed but the electorate look forward to the transformation of every aspect of their lives by walking in the newness of life spiritually and politically (Jn 3:1-36; Lk 4:18-19; Mk 16:15; Mt 7:21; 1Cor 15:212-22; Eph 2:8-9; Gal 2:20; 2 Pet 3:9; Phil 3:10). The process of transformation is revealed by Jesus Christ when he said: „I have come not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance”⁸¹ and conversion, which expresses the changing of wrong attitude to right attitude for the common good of Nigeria, and Nigerians are stakeholders of justice, mercy, forgiveness, reconciliation, unity and peace.

⁷⁶ Cf. CCC, no. 1817.

⁷⁷ CCC, no. 1823.

⁷⁸ Cf. R. Rohr, A. Ebert, *The Enneagram: A Christ Perspective*, p. ix.

⁷⁹ Cf. R. Rohr, A. Ebert, *The Enneagram: A Christ Perspective*, p. 31.

⁸⁰ Cf. CCC, no. 393.

⁸¹ CCC, no. 588.

However, society is essential to the fulfilment of the human vocation. To attain this aim, respect must be given to the just hierarchy of values, which subordinates physical and instinctual dimensions to interior and spiritual ones⁸², which:

„Human society must primarily be considered something pertaining to the spiritual. Through it, in the bright light of truth, man should share their knowledge, be able to exercise their rights and fulfill their obligations, be inspired to seek spiritual values; mutually derive genuine pleasure from the beautiful, of whatever order it be; always be readily disposed to pass on to others the best of their own cultural heritage; and eagerly strive to make their own the spiritual achievements of others. These benefits not only influence, but at the same time give aim and scope to all that has bearing on cultural expressions, economic, and social institutions, political movements and forms, laws, and all other structures by which society is outwardly established and constantly developed”⁸³ through forgiveness.

4.2.2. Forgiveness Is Hope of Forgiveness

Christians and Muslims in Nigeria encounter each other with concerns feature in a prominent way, which do not guarantee realistic hopes for peaceful co-existence and co-operation⁸⁴. Although the concept of forgiveness is central, broad and crucial issue in both religions. I will therefore limit it to the individual human person to domesticate it in order to suitably fit into various contexts towards transformation of the human values in Nigeria. Thus, it is worth saying at the outset that I will approach it from the biblical understanding of forgiveness and explore its meaning in the teachings of the Church, and to ask about the moral implications of its practices for church and society.

Truly, „forgiveness is something no-one finds easy and yet it is something no-one can live without”⁸⁵. The concept of forgiveness is very central to the history of salvation in the OT and must be seen in the wider context of biblical theology. From the biblical accounts (Gen 3:15, 6:13ff, 8:21-22, 12:1ff), the God who forgives from the very beginning of salvation history has been active in forgiveness. According to Cardinal Robert Sarah: „Forgiveness is not possible where there is no repentance”⁸⁶. On one hand, forgiveness was the watch-word in the OT. On the other hand, the NT gives a „summary of summaries”, when Jesus said: „Father, forgive them for they do not know what they are doing” (Lk 23:34). Every act of forgiveness is not only an act of mercy but an encounter with one another, by which human person receives and gives forgiveness. In the spiritual lives, many people’s fear dominates them to the point of not being able to love⁸⁷. But, man hardly „consider carefully” that „with the measure you use,

⁸² Cf. CCC, no. 1886.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Cf. S. Grodz, *Christians and Muslims in West Africa*, in: *Christians Responses to Islam: Muslim-Christian Relations in the Modern World*, A. O’Mahony, E. Loosley, eds., Manchester: Manchester University Press 2012, p. 207.

⁸⁵ D. Montgomery, *Forgiveness in the Old Testament*, in: http://www.contemporarychristianity.net/resources/pdfs/Forgiveness_Paper_02.pdf (accessed 12.06.2017).

⁸⁶ C. Harmon, *Cardinal Sarah: „There is no Forgiveness if there is no Repentance*, in: http://www.catholicworldreport.com/Blog/4690/cardinal_sarah_there_is_no_forgiveness_if_there_is_no_repentance.aspx (accessed 29.10. 2016).

⁸⁷ Cf. B. Hume, *To be A Pilgrim: A Spiritual Notebook*, London: St. Paul Publication 1984, p. 63.

it will be measured to you... and even more” (Mk 4:24). However, before forgiveness, most of the time there is resentment and hatred, which only explains part of the moral sickness as it affects the human person⁸⁸.

Love is the „cooling” and „healing” centre, which speaks to both resentment and hatred. To love is to live. The person who loves gives life (1 Cor 13: 4-8—love is patient, kind, not envy, does not dishonor others, not self-seeking, not easily angered, keeps no wrong, rejoices in truth, trust, hope and persevere) both to himself and to the one who receives it. The beginning of life is the beginning of love. Love promotes the activities of mercy and compassion. Of course, true love takes a lot that without the grace of God is impossible to really love. For example, the conversation between Abraham and God over the immorality in Sodom and Gomorah (Gen 19:1) is an encounter, which expresses the Divine Mercy and compassion of God in action. In „*Radiation of Fatherhood*, you will recall the image of the stream from, which the grace of healing baptism flows as from its source”⁸⁹. Similarly, Abraham was aware of the source of mercy to the point that his heart is attuned to his Lord’s compassion for men and he interceded with bold confidence for them. Abraham learned what it meant to be just and compassionate, through both divine revelation and his natural intelligence⁹⁰. Abraham was satisfied that God would act justly, he did not stay to witness the salvation of his relatives but returned home⁹¹.

Love can also be expressed in the form of legitimate strike over unjust structures that undermine love and justice. Moreover, „the Church’s social doctrine recognizes the legitimacy of striking when it cannot be avoided, or at least when it is necessary to obtain a proportionate benefit, when every other method for the resolution of disputes has been ineffectual”⁹². Therefore, to forgive, is to express the greatness of a person. In other words, it is only the greatest-man that can offer genuine forgiveness, while the attitude of un-forgiveness expresses the attitude of a weakest-man. In January of 1999, St. John Paul II made a pastoral visit to St. Louis. When he met with Governor Mel Carnahan of Missouri, the Holy Father asked him to commute the death sentence of Darrel Mease, who was scheduled to be executed in the next week. Carnahan granted Pope’s wish, saying he was moved by the Pope’s appeal for mercy. The Pope did not request at re-evaluation of the merits of the condemned man’s case. Rather,

⁸⁸ Cf. J. G. Murphy, J. Hampton, *Forgiveness and Mercy*, p. 35.

⁸⁹ K. L. Schmitz, *At the Centre of the Human Drama: The Philosophical Anthropology of Karol Wojtyła/Pope John Paul II*, Washington, D.C: The Catholic University of America Press 1993, p. 90.

⁹⁰ Cf. *Ibid.*

⁹¹ Cf. *Ibid.*

⁹² *CSDC*, no. 304.

he presented a simple and straightforward petition for mercy—from death by lethal injection to life imprisonment without parole⁹³.

Carnahan granted Pope's request as a concession to human weakness, not as a positive command or ideal, like the OT. There were still more other situations of barbaric expression of justice by death meted out to maintain law and order in the ancient world. Yet, we found the Divine Mercy present, when Moses who not only spared by God, but redeemed and given a massive role in the salvation of his people (Ex 2:11-15). But this is not to say, there will be mercy without justice. Out of love for the people of Israel, Moses was ready to die on their behalf when God wanted to destroy Israel as a result of its apostasy at Mount Sinai, after the sin of worshipping the Golden Calf (Ex 32:9-14; 2 Sam 11-12; Ezel 33:11; Mt 5:38-39; Lk 23:24).

More importantly, St. John Paul II, Benedict XVI and Francis are advocates of the abolition of death penalty, as not only a recognition of the fulfilment of Jesus' teaching when he said: „I will ask the Father, and he shall give you another Paraclete, that he may abide... will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have told you” (Jn 14:16). After all, the Apostles at the Council of Jerusalem realized and recognized the purpose of ceremonial laws of Moses had been to point to the people of Israel, that the circumcision of the heart (Jer 4:4; Rom 2:29) in accepting Jesus the Divine Mercy Incarnate, is the destiny of the history of salvation, not circumcision of the skin. The Incarnation of Jesus Christ, „God pours out his own blood for the human person and accepts our appetite for vengeance against him, swallowing it all up in the infinite abyss of his mercy. When Jesus cried, ‘I thirst’ from the cross it was the thirst for the love of those who were murdering him, not for vengeance against them. He sought their redemption, not their destruction”⁹⁴. Thus, the wages of sin is death (Gen 2:17; Rom 6:23). Jesus associated himself with the sinful human nature and accepted Divine Justice to die the cross for man's salvation. Similarly, *łaska, kara, wolność*⁹⁵— there is no greater show of love, forgiveness and mercy than the one who lays down his life for his friends as an example of love (Jn 15:13).

⁹³ Cf. R. W. Finn, *Divine Mercy and the Death Penalty*, Washington D.C: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops 2010, p. 3; Cf. *Diary*, 182.

⁹⁴ M. Shea, *Why all the mercy for Scripture's murderers? – Capital Punishment*, in: <https://www.catholicweekly.com.au/why-all-the-mercy-for-scriptures-murderers-capital-punishment-part-4/> (accessed 17.05.2017).

⁹⁵ P. Bartula, *Kara Śmierci: Powracający dylemat*, Kraków: Wydawnictwo Arcana 2007, p. 77. *Łaska, kara, wolność* (Here, the death of Jesus Christ on the Cross summarized God's Justice, the Divine Mercy and human freedom from sin).

4.2.3. The Commandment of Love Exemplified

The virtue of mercy as a „second name” of love goes back to the family as a domestic church and foundation of human society. The primary centre of love and habit is the family. The family gives and nurtures love, which expresses itself in exemplary life to the members of the household. Children get good moral habits in order to participate in the life of society in the name of their families. There is a saying in Nigeria that „too much of everything is immoral”. The present situation of family life needs transformation so as to maximize the joy of family life. Children are not only gifts from God and fruits of the womb (Ps 127:3) but they are also fruits of family life. In order to effectively inculturate the Divine Mercy in society and transform it, there is urgent need to move away from the previous way of viewing life, so that its relevance will be sustained. Before the scientific revolution and after, there was no problem in having as many children as would God gave. There was enough land for farming, there was no need to travel unnecessarily beyond the known markets and responding to religious obligations and cultural duties, and there was a strong need of more children as part of the work force of the family and the need for more descendants to defend the clan against an external aggression and human replacement due to frequent outbreak of diseases. God expressed his mercy through the experts who discovered the cure and vaccines of diseases like small pox, leprosy, snake bites, malaria, which many deaths and infant mortality were recorded that sparked the age of science and technology.

With the advent of science and technology, more researches were needed but that cannot be possible without going to school. The age of going to school not only brought education for all, but it diversified numerous areas of study that aimed at enhancing the human person’s growth and developments. For instance, in Nigeria between 1955 to 1976, Chief Awolowo Obafemi introduced „Universal Primary Education” (UPE) and „Universal Basic Education” (UBE) respectively from the regional to the federal levels. Since then, the traditional family life in Nigeria started changing and with more responsibilities. With schools in almost all parts of Nigeria, the challenge to take children to school is one thing and the challenge to pay for their school fees is more disturbing as there are more problems to be solved financially than any other means in society. The attraction of science and technology with the media communities and the social media world, more people prefer to live in the towns and cities, not only to be up to date but to give testimony of the reception of „new life”, without which is equal to a life of miscalculation rather than a blessing. Still, some of these children are afraid of hard work, which is even for their own good. Most of the time hard work is perceived as a punishment on the part of the parents and guardians who know what it means to work hard as an expression of love for oneself and society in which one lives.

Today there are so many expectations of society coming from personal wellbeing and safety of its inhabitants who depend on society almost for everything as long as there are communities. The cost of life is no longer easier and simple for Nigerian society. Apart from the burden of society, the situation of eating three square meals a day is even more life threatening in many places and to many people due to the level of poverty caused by corruption and insurgencies, which their consequences are disturbing to the point almost making it difficult to live an exemplary life. This situation is expressed with a corrupted-adage, which says: „If you can't beat them, you join them". In a general loosed sense and manner, it means if one cannot change a situation one should join the trend. But this is against moral principle, where one thinks that the end justifies the means, which one gets what he wants legitimately or otherwise.

This situation can provide counter results such as, anarchy, acrimony, catastrophes, self and national corruption without any form of control. However, to streamline the sizes of their families and defeat procrastination of family planning is a positive vision. Of course, the human satiability is as old as humanity itself, which can only be controlled by the grace of God. Conscious and practical human cooperation and freedom are requisites of this exemplary show of love, which should be anchored on the legitimate human and divine institutions to dispense justice. However, „a rule of justice is natural that has the same validity everywhere and does not depend on our accepting it or not"⁹⁶. Disturbingly, „quack experts and corruption takes over where moral authority failed"⁹⁷.

Moreover, the urban planners always take cognizance of the forces of nature in terms of the various seasons that are in every human settlement. Year in and year out, life goes on with ease due to the solid plans put in place for the human survival and happiness. It is the institutions that have the capacity to transmit and enforce moral principle for the common good regardless of every affiliation. Therefore, in order to usher in Democratic principles of transformation, three powerful institutions are on focus, namely, legislative, executive and judiciary arms of government. Although, Christianity and the Church Fathers, however, typified by writings of St. Augustine (381-430), political life was corrupted by man's hereditary inclination to sin⁹⁸. Yet, maintenance of minimum state of order is necessary in Nigeria.

⁹⁶ F. E. Oppenheim, *Moral Principles in Political Philosophy*, New York: Randon House 1968, p. 46.

⁹⁷ C. Opukeme, *Quacks Takeover Healthcare in Riverine Communities*, „Vanguard" 1(2014)28, p. 1.

⁹⁸ Cf. N. Kretzmann, E. Stump, eds., *The Cambridge Companion to Aquinas*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2005, p. 218.

4.3. Fundamental Principles of Transformation in Nigeria

Moral authority is the greatest power in human person. But, it has been seen that a citizen of a corrupt country and called by a corrupt government to serve a corrupt nation, can be corrupted. Give and take is the principle by which many institutions are ran⁹⁹. The voice of moral authority can never be ignored as shown by St. John Paul II throughout modern cultures and generations in the world¹⁰⁰. Moral authority is a spiritual principle, which does not change like policy, which changes with its change of government. Moral principle begins with the recognition of the sense of sin and conversion. Yet, transformation has become an inevitable commodity in order to actualize the desired developmental goals. It is almost the situation of the principle of double effect where for example, a patient with cancer may be kept under live-machine since there is nothing to be done to get rid of the cancer. In the same way, political systems have been used against many communities to keep them retarded and out of development plans by a few sponsors because they have the powers of the institutions to guarantee their immunity. After all, „All of us, Christians and Muslims, live under the sun of the one merciful God”¹⁰¹.

Those who have the prerogative power to establish and implement the arms of government, must recognize the principle of cooperation, where few persons cooperate to willingly and knowingly bring about evil not only against themselves but against their society, the nation and the poor masses who must have been responsible for their being where they find themselves in the name of legitimate service. Ideologies that may align themselves to plan evil must be considered so that institutions may not fall into victims of the principle of totality, where they need to recognize, which part is to be sacrificed for the whole without involving human life regardless of diverse affiliations.

Democracy is a system of government where it is understood that it is a government of the people, by the people and for the people. Sometimes, people wonder whether about the definition of democracy when a few people enjoy the dividends of democracy while the rest of the population goes hungry and angry. For instance, in an event of elections, winners celebrate as if it is a personal or private office of service, while the losers not only cry for their losses but most of them leak their wounds and sometimes even deaths are recorded. For any credible and fundamental transformation, the three arms of government representing vital human institutions must be morally legitimate and credible. Essentially, the duties of the three arms of government

⁹⁹ Cf. E. Ojakaminor, *Aso Rock & The Sound of Silence: Sequel to Nigeria's Ghana-Must-Go Republic: Happenings*, Ogun: The Ambassador Publications 2007, p. 352.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. P. Bakwaph, *Leadership Styles in The Bible and Nigeria: A Quest for Moral and Credible Leaders in Nigeria*, Kaduna: Raph Printing Production 2013, p. 82.

¹⁰¹ J. Salihu, ed., *Interreligious Dialogue and The Shari'a Question*, Kano: Jaleyemi Group 2005, p. 12.

are to coordinate, direct and animate the local government system, states and boundary adjustments, mode of altering the provisions of the constitution, prohibition of state religion, public order and public security and implementation of treaties for national transformation and national identity.

However, the concept of the three arms of government and reality of identity is sacrosanct to the unity of Nigeria in diversity. Politics has been over used not only to corrupt the intended meaning but to diffuse the meaning of „who we are”¹⁰², which invariably distorts freedom and human dignity in a democratic culture where diplomacy is an essential element in partisan politics, which identity is a key word in both membership and manifestoes¹⁰³.

However, it is difficult to formulate a single definition of identity. Identity involves a person’s connection with history, which natural personality identifies the person from another person. It could mean belonging to a group by political identity, a collective common vision and mission, which is characterized by unity in diversity with the decision of who is to have power for what purpose and for how long¹⁰⁴. Therefore, the legislative, the executive and the judiciary arms of government have a duty to maintain functional paradigm-identity for the common good. The significance of paradigm-identity is to enhance the potentialities for the common good, which is built on moral and educational principles to safeguard fundamental human rights and dignity of the citizens¹⁰⁵. By paradigm-identity here, I mean uniting the differences into a whole unit of diversity. In other words, each part retains its natural identity without jeopardizing the common aims and goals. The power of paradigm-identity is another power-force, which offers democracy a vision of opportunities, self-determination, peace and moral reconstruction¹⁰⁶.

„Paradigm-identity”¹⁰⁷ is a challenge in Nigeria with „371 tribes”¹⁰⁸, with their different cultural, ethnic, religious and geographical backgrounds. For example, on „2 April 2017”¹⁰⁹,

¹⁰² W. E. May, *An Introduction to moral Theology*, Huntington: Our Sunday Visitor Publishing Division 2003, p. 23.

¹⁰³ Cf. M. A. Kaplan, *On Freedom and human Dignity, Importance of the Sacred in Politics*, Morristown: General Learning Press 1973, p. 2; Cf. A. Sen, *Identity, and Violence*, New York: W. W. Norton & Company 2006; K. W. Thompson, *Moralism, and Morality in Politics and Diplomacy*, New York: University Press of America 1(1985).

¹⁰⁴ Cf. N. Sharansky, *Defending Identity: Its indispensable role in protecting democracy*, New York: Public Affairs 2008, p. 5; A. C. Grayling, *Ideas That Matter: A personal guide for the 21s Century*, London: Phoenix Paperback an imprint of Orion Books Ltd 2010, p. 10.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. DV, *Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Instruction on Respect for Human Life, in Its Origin and on the Dignity of Procreation*, Vatican: St. Paul Books & Media 1987, p. 12; B. A. Sichel, *Moral Education Character, Community and Ideals*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press 1988.

¹⁰⁶ Cf. R. Balmer, *Encyclopedia of Evangelism*, Dallas: Baylor University Press 2004, p. 568.

¹⁰⁷ W. E. Abraham, *The Mind of Africa*, Ghana: Sub-Sahara Publishers 2015, p. 38.

¹⁰⁸ K. Sowunmi, *371 Tribes in Nigeria*, in:

<http://www.vanguardngr.com/2017/05/full-list-of-all-371-tribes-in-nigeria-states-where-they-originate/> (accessed 11.05.2017).

¹⁰⁹ V. Ajumadu, *IPOB Declares May 30 sit-at-home day to honour Igbo Victims*, in: <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2017/04/ipob-declares-may-30-sit-home-day-honour-igbo-victims/> (accessed 19.04.2017).

Eastern part of Nigeria declared sit-at-home on 30 June 2017, to mark „Biafra at 50”¹¹⁰. The Seeming consequence is that on 6 June 2017, the Northern Arewa Youths of Nigeria declared that it „will no longer be disposed to co-exist with those from the Eastern part of Nigeria”¹¹¹. In response to the declaration, „the Governor of Kaduna State gave a directive to arrest the northern youths who issued the quit notice during the declaration”¹¹². Meanwhile, on the 12 June 2017, it was said: „Government is dragging its feet to arrest who issued the threat”¹¹³. Those who issued the threat not only met again but „renewed their threat”¹¹⁴. Yet, the security agencies not only remain silent but the threat was not discussed at „the Federal Executive Council”¹¹⁵, which is the highest decision making in the country. Other solitary voices came out not only to „vow for the protection of non-indigenes”¹¹⁶, others offer their lives and still others will sacrifice the last drop of their blood to protect „the Easterners living in the Northern part of Nigeria”¹¹⁷. Furthermore, other lone voices call on others not to listen to other supposed custodian of the „values of democracy”¹¹⁸. And again, others attributed the upsurge in agitations in the country to the failure of the states to create an inclusive society under the existing constitutional arrangements to guarantee the security of lives, livelihoods and liberties by the

¹¹⁰ J. O. Nwachukwu, *Biafra: Compliance to Sit-at-home Order Shows Igbo Unity*, in: <http://dailypost.ng/2017/06/01/biafra-compliance-sit-home-order-shows-igbo-unity-group/> (accessed 13.06.2017).

¹¹¹ S. Ojo, *BREAKING: Beginning of the end! North orders Igbo out of region*, in: <http://sunnewsonline.com/breaking-beniging-of-the-end-north-orders-igbo-out-of-region/> (accessed 6.06.2017).

¹¹² J. Alechenu, O. Fabiyi, O. Adtayo et al., *Quit Ultimatum to Igbo: FG, Northern Govs, Afenifere, ACF, Others Condemn Threat*, in: <http://punchng.com/quit-ultimatum-to-igbo-fg-northern-govs-afenifere-acf-others-condemn-threat/> (accessed 13.06.2017).

¹¹³ W. Odunsi, *Quit Notice on Igbos: Lack of Arrests Show Nigerians are not Equal*, in: http://dailypost.ng/2017/06/13/quit-notice-igbos-lack-arrests-show-nigerians-not-equal-uranta/?utm_source=DailyPost+Newsletter&utm_campaign=3ec5e4cbc2-Morning_headlines&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_7c25dc3ce6-3ec5e4cbc2-227649261 (accessed 13.06.2017).

¹¹⁴ W. Odunsi, *Quit notice on Igbos: Arewa Consultative Forum breaks silence*, in: <http://dailypost.ng/2017/06/08/quit-notice-igbos-arewa-consultative-forum-breaks-silence/> (accessed 13.06.2017).

¹¹⁵ J. S. Olatunji and K. Daniel, *Quit Notice: Reps Condemn Call, as Security Agencies to be at Alert*, in: <http://tribuneonlineng.com/quit-notice-reps-condemn-call-ask-security-agencies-alert/> (accessed 13.06.2017); Cf. S. Akhaine, A. Alabi, et al., *FEC Silent on Igbo Quit Notice, Nasir El-Rufai Orders Arrest*, in: <https://guardian.ng/news/fec-silent-on-igbo-quit-notice-nasir-el-rufai-orders-arrest/> (accessed 13.06.2017).

¹¹⁶ I. Inyang, *Quit Notice: Governor Masari vows to protect non-Indigenes*, in: <http://dailypost.ng/2017/06/09/quit-notice-igbos-governor-masari-vows-protect-non-indigenes/> (accessed 13.06.2017).

¹¹⁷ J. O. Nwachukwu, *Quit Notice on Igbos: We'll Protect Nigeria with Our Lives*, in: <http://dailypost.ng/2017/06/12/quit-notice-igbos-well-protect-nigeria-lives-governor-bagudu/> (accessed 13.06.2017); Cf. S. Opejobi, *Quit Notice: I Will Sacrifice My Last Drop of Blood to Protect Igbos*, in: <http://dailypost.ng/2017/06/09/quit-notice-will-sacrifice-last-drop-blood-protect-igbos-emir-katsina/> (accessed 12.06.2017).

¹¹⁸ J. O. Nwachukwu, *Quit Notice on Igbos: Don't listen to El-Rufai's false Promises*, in: <http://dailypost.ng/2017/06/12/quit-notice-igbos-dont-listen-el-rufais-false-promises-massob-warns-ndigbo/> (accessed 13.06.2017).

agencies saddled with the responsibilities of maintaining „law and order”¹¹⁹. This situation of discord brought many lamentations, which suggested dissatisfaction, non-acceptability as part of the „one whole country”¹²⁰. The human rights are always stocked in codes for encoding to determine who gets justice¹²¹.

The prevailing attitude of the Divine Mercy is the sure solution to the complex clashes of insatiability of Nigerians to experience political freedom as poverty remains a constant tyrant. There is no human structure than the three arms of government that may put things right, which will not only build human capacity and human assets, but will lead to individual, communal, local and state governments to economic freedom and prosperity. Thus, the prevailing attitude of the Divine Mercy, will be wonderful to be enshrined in the three arms of government without, which the democratic force becomes not only a lacuna to bedevil the poor masses but incongruous system of legislation.

4.3.1. Legislative Transformation

The Senate and House of Representatives constitute the Legislative arm of government. Their constitutional duties are to make laws for the country to maintain law, order and good governance of the Federation¹²². Every law evolves from a cultural, traditional and experience of a community, which laws are made for the safety of lives, livelihoods and order. It will be disaster of all times and against nature, where there are no laws. The human excesses as the consequences of the Fall, cannot be handled with words alone. It is only through the integrity of those who formulate laws, which guarantees credible prerogative justice, the same story of lamentation will be told. Since the legislatures make laws for the country, it means that the laws must provide equity and justice. For a real transformation to happen, the makers of the laws must be top examples of conversion, integrity, transparency, accountability, openness and innocent of corruption. Laws are reviewed and amended to suit the prevailing circumstances. As human beings are dynamic, so also human structures and institutions keep changing to fit the various dimensions of human developments. Morally, legislatures are role models who become the guiding principle of patriotism as enshrined in the National Anthem: „A rise O

¹¹⁹J. Agbakwuru, *Absence of Inclusive Society Responsible for Agitation*, in: <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2017/06/absence-inclusive-society-responsible-agitations-osinbajo/> (accessed 13.06.2017).

¹²⁰J. O. Nwachukwu, *Quit Notice on Igbos: Yoruba Community Leader in Niger Laments*, in: <http://dailypost.ng/2017/06/10/quit-notice-igbos-yoruba-community-leader-niger-laments/> (accessed 12.06.2017).

¹²¹ Cf. L. H. Leigh, *The influence of the European Convention on Human Rights on English Criminal Law and Procedure*, „European Journal of Crime, Criminal Law and Criminal Justice” 1(1993)1, p. 3-19.

¹²² Cf. 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria: with Amendments 2011, no. 4.

compatriots, Nigeria call obey, to serve our fatherland, with love, and strength and faith...”. If the legislatures do not have love and faith in Nigeria, the ordinary citizens would not know, love and serve Nigeria. Of course, other factors could be possible cause of unpatriotic tendencies. It is difficult to love someone one does not know, and it is only when one has love for one, has known that the person can serve with strength and faith. It is impossible to develop a place without role models. Role models motivate and build core values, which they will be known for in order to save the country from moral degeneration and decadence. The Legislators must make and obey the laws before the Executives.

4.3.2. Executive Transformation

The CBCN has affirmed Nigeria as One-Nation, One-Constitution and One-Judiciary¹²³. We have all heard the expression „Do as I say, not as I do”. In other words, according to an online dictionary, „political orality”, is an expression used to call out hypocrites, including „environmentalists” with private jets, politicians who send their children to private schools while opposing measures to give other kids the same chance, or those who accuse others of nepotism, religious bigotry and racism while not employing, or hiring minorities¹²⁴.

The executive arm of government is devoid of the „politics of orality”, which not only centres on deception, corruption, non-transparency and accountability but subject to distortion of reality anchored on „In those days, now it was in those days, in those nights, now it was in those nights, in those years, now it was in those years”¹²⁵. Subject to the constitutional provision of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, „the executive powers are vested in the President with executive powers, which he may be exercised by him either directly or through the Vice-President and ministers of the Government of the Federation or officers in the public service of the Federation; and shall extend to the execution and maintenance of the Constitution, all laws made by the National Assembly and to all matters with respects, to which the National Assembly has, for the time being, power to make laws”¹²⁶. The executive arm of government as it were though independent yet may regulate the functionalities of all the laws of the federation through the principle of federal character.

The federal character is the political right given to each region of the federation to represent its region at the federal level in terms of distribution of the features of equity, justice

¹²³ Cf. P. Schineller, ed., *Pastoral Letters and Communiques of Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Nigeria 1960-2002*, p. 415.

¹²⁴ Cf. T. D. Athlone, *Practice What You Preach...* „Newsletter for the Parishes of English Martyrs, St. Catherine of Siena & All Saints St. Lewis”, 31 St. Sunday of Ordinary Time (5.11.2017).

¹²⁵ C. Cooper, ed., *Politics of Orality*, Leiden: Brill 2007, p. 67.

¹²⁶ 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, With Amendments, 2011, no. 5.

and resources. By the very fact of democratic definition, the government does not belong to a section or an individual part of the country. That is to say, each cranny and nook of the country should be fairly and justly represented at the decision making for the overall interest of the country. If there is an imbalanced consciously created, it only prepared a ground for moral, political, economic and social corruption at the detriment of national interest. There should be no part of the country that may be kept for slavery where such a part can only be used to achieve a political and economic advantage after, which no part of the region in question would smell the realized economic and political developments. For example, the issue of marginalization has been a national mantra in the areas of economy, development and resource control. Every part complains of marginalization except in the three arms of government. But, many complain of „cabal”, which to many Nigerians, the meaning of „cabal” has not been explained to the ordinary citizens in the street. But, the word „corruption” has been known by all adults and children in the streets. The word „cabal” is the „merciless and faceless” form of corruption, which in other words, is „a green snake under green grass”, which ordinarily may not be seen due to its deceptive coloration, which financial and government policies are distorted against the federal character.

Marginalization and „problem in blaming”¹²⁷ is not only an individual’s manipulation but it is „a class” marginalization, where the „class of the powerful”, in terms of possessions exists. The common man becomes an agent and a tool to their advantage with consequences to the collective good. The members determine the value system, which ordinarily the common man cannot effect any change in their complicated surveillance systems. In other words, such a „class” the human tendency to filter out or ignore what does not form part of the class manifesto. This tendency to be inattentive to moral law is telling it. Add to this tendency, the collective conspiracy to maintain the value system of the class come what may. Consequently, for self-preservation, the class tunes emotionally and intellectually against every call to change of attitude for the common good.

It is said: *Ba a mugun sarki sai dai mugun bafade*¹²⁸. Furthermore, undue advantages and improper altering of available choices may be conferred on the electorates. The 1999 Constitution of Nigeria,

„of the Federal Republic of Nigeria specified in section 225(1-6) conditions and scrutiny of the sources of funds and expenses of political parties. Section 225(3)(a) and (b) as well as 225(4) forbid political parties from foreign funding of any kind. Section 226 (1-3) demands annual reports of account from political parties. By extension, the Electoral Act (2010) stipulates the ceiling of expenses by

¹²⁷ S. Walther, *Problem in Blaming and Punishing Individuals for Human Rights Violations: The Example of the Berlin Wall Shooting*, „European Journal of Crime, Criminal Law and Criminal Justice” 1(1993)2, p. 104-125.

¹²⁸ This is a phrase in Hausa Language. It literally means, that „there is no bad king, except a bad adviser”. This is because the implementation of every progressive or retrogressive idea comes after consultations with advisers. An advice could be healthy or ill advice, for development or against development. The best and worst advice are with advisers.

candidates and political parties for specific elective positions. The maximum limits are pegged at: N1,000,000,000 (Naira) for presidential candidates, N200,000,000 for governorship candidates and N40,000,000 and N20,000,000 respectively for Senate and House of Representatives candidates. These provisions are necessary to make certain that political parties and candidates are properly guided with regards to the scope of party and election funding and expenses¹²⁹.

From the moral point of view, if a candidate spends such amounts of monies, in order to be a leader of his people who may be poor, jobless, homeless, vulnerable and defenceless, the moral questions and implications would only be imagined. It is only the executive that may moderate corruptive manipulations in a democratic system. Optimistically, when certain questions have not been asked, the experience of „abuse” of democracy and the „rape” of the Constitutional values across the country is worse than military dictatorship. The issues of violations, abuses, sectionalism, nepotism etc., present the fact that those would-be implementers of the laws do not seem to know what to do with the laws or they compromised.

One may be tempted to think of cursing the military regimes and others as the causes of the country’s woes. The executive arm of government should do the needful in order to change the situation of pain, corruption, manipulation and shortsightedness to the overall economic interest. Every mistake is an opportunity to not only learn but to plan, improve and avoid the repetition of the past mistakes. A constitution provides a government that is legally and constitutionally constituted. The moral authority of the executive may put the „illegitimate stamps”, to fly; that is ideas, bills or propaganda that are targeted at the exploitation of the common good. For example, those who share executive powers help build on the developments of the past regimes with same tax payers monies. Based on the economic power of the place, the officer may improve or add to what has been inherited for continuity and posterity. The executive may edit this situation for developmental and historical purposes by calling for accountability where resources are wasted and vandalized, in order to avoid the feeling that there is no moral accountability on anyone. If the executive arm of government does not function properly, there will be general malfunctioning in the Federation. „Other officers who share in the executive powers, will use their seats of offices as ‘private business’ where nobody will call them to account as long as they keep sharing corrupt practices”¹³⁰. After all, an adage says: „a young cow learns how to chew grass by looking at the mouth of the mother-cow”. Importantly, the executive arm of government has both ordinary and executive powers. This is to say, for security threats to lives and properties, the executive power can be exercised for security reasons. This provision makes it clear that there is no body above the law as long as there is a threat to the electorates who brought executives to power. But, to have powers of the

¹²⁹ A. Olorunmola, *Background Paper Cost of Politics in Nigeria*, in: <http://www.wfd.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Nigeria-Cost-of-Politics.pdf> (accessed 10.07.2016).

¹³⁰ D. Agbese, *Reckless Use of Executive Powers*, in: <http://guardian.ng/opinion/reckless-use-of-executive-powers/> (accessed 2.10.2016).

constitution is one thing, and to implement them for the common good is another thing, as result of god-fatherism ideology.

A godfather or a godmother in the Christian context, is someone who presents a child at baptism and promises to take responsibility for the child's religious and moral education. But this worthy name has been corrupted to be called godfatherism by secular society to perpetrate corrupt practices and to celebrate meritocracy for the godfathers. Therefore, godfatherism is „an evil intended sponsor” of a system would only produce evil. For instance, the „information reportedly supplied by other freed Boko Haram abductees and the reported confessions of captured fighters of the terror group, have confirmed earlier held beliefs that the insurgency has the blessing of highly placed persons in the state”¹³¹, who stand and act as godfathers. In recent times, the „virus” of godfatherism has been „incubated” in the consulting room and operational theatre of political godfathers, „to shape and create a new identity for Nigerian politics with a shift in political paradigm”¹³². The urgent attention of executive arm of government needs to focus on this phenomenon that has deprived the law-abiding citizens the good fruits of democracy, economy and governance because of the flourishing of the political godfatherism. Godfatherism is an evil „investment” both for the country and citizens, in which they will collectively destroy the country by pushing it into economic recession, poverty, hunger and war. The prevailing callings of the attitude of mercy to be achieved, integrity in the executive arm of government, which has the requisite of executive and political power to do so. Godfatherism is the highest moral decadence, which destroys integrity, honesty and truth. Godfatherism is a clog in the wheel of Nigeria's happiness and greatness. It is not possible to achieve any positive emancipation with godfatherism in a system. This type of „godfathers” only produce „servants” with characteristics of widespread poverty, blackouts, poor leadership, scuffling activities at places of work in the land and political vendetta devoid of juridical apprehension.

¹³¹ S. Atekojo, *Nigerians in Diaspora Want Investigation of Borno Political Stakeholders Over Alleged Sponsorship of Boko Haram*, in: http://dailypost.ng/2016/05/29/nigerians-in-diaspora-want-investigation-of-borno-political-stakeholders-over-alleged-sponsorship-of-boko-haram/?utm_source=DailyPost+Newsletter&utm_campaign=e5b72b20ff-Todays_headlines&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_7c25dc3ce6-e5b72b20ff-227649261 (accessed 29.05.2016).

¹³² F. V. Zeiji, *The Godfather of Nigeria's New Rule*, in: <https://www.zammagazine.com/chronicle/chronicle-12/215-the-godfather-of-nigeria-s-new-rule> (accessed 14.06.2017).

4.3.3. Judicial Transformation

Mercy is inherent in the human nature as a moral requisite. There is an adage that says: „beat a child with your right hand and use the left hand to draw the child back to you”. In other words, the judicial arm of government must be humanly just and merciful. Moreover, the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes each one he accepts as his child (Heb 12:6-7; Pr 3: 12; Rev 12:6). However, a law cannot be subjected to killing and letting lives die due to casuistry reasoning in relation to moral questions¹³³. The Divine Mercy is always with the judiciary to discharge justice and equity. Of course, the reality of Divine Mercy is not a school where sin and wrong-doing are approved or promoted. But it is a school where man realizes how much he receives mercy both from God and human beings on daily basis and reciprocally give it out. Thus, the judicial powers are vested in the courts, which they were established for the Federation¹³⁴. The Divine Mercy is a primordial gift of God to humanity to sort and solve problems in society that bedevil human person.

In 2015, Pope Francis paid an Apostolic Visit to Bangui, in the Central African Republic. In his remarks to the head of the transition government, Catherine Samba-Panza, he emphasized unity in bringing about love and peace. „He held up ‘practitioners of forgiveness, specialists in reconciliation, experts in mercy’ in contrast to those who wield ‘instruments of death’”¹³⁵. In the Christian context, „one of the essential characteristics of being a Christian is love of enemies, which protects us from the temptation to seek revenge and from the spiral of endless retaliation”¹³⁶. In the same vein, the judiciary receives mercy due to the protection granted to them by law. The immunity the law gives to the judiciary is a gift, which as human beings we receive constantly from God. As custodians of human justice system, the judiciary tempers justice with mercy in truth and fairness.

St. Thomas Aquinas does not understand divine mercy as a feeling or passion that overwhelms God. It is not affective but effective, by healing the defects of the creatures and making them participate in the divine perfection¹³⁷. According to St. Thomas Aquinas, in the general principle of justice, the individual owes something to society, society owes an

¹³³ Cf. M. J. Walsh, R. Maffat et al., *The Quality of Death*, London: Templegate Publishers 1975, p. 51.

¹³⁴ Cf. 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, With Amendments, 2011, no. 6.

¹³⁵ J. Gehring, *Faith, Fear and the Politics of Mercy*, in:

<http://ncronline.org/news/politics/faith-fear-and-politics-mercy> (accessed 8.04.2016).

¹³⁶ J. J. McElwee, *Amid Armored Tanks, Francis Urges War-torn Central African Republic to Start New Chapter*, in:

<https://www.ncronline.org/news/vatican/amid-armored-tanks-francis-urges-war-torn-central-african-republic-start-new-chapter> (accessed 15.06.2017).

¹³⁷ Cf. T. H. Stark, *The Relationship of Mercy and Justice According to St. Thomas Aquinas*, in: http://www.catholicworldreport.com/Item/4304/the_relationship_of_mercy_and_justice_according_to_st_thomas_aquinas.aspx (accessed 29.10.2016).

individual and individual owes an individual. Judicial system is not only to build and strengthen moral balance but aims at common good in society. The credibility of the judicial system lies on its ability to sustain its impartiality in the discharge of its justice. When this fails, the citizens will have nowhere to go in order to obtain justice for the security of their lives, properties and personhood. There should be no impression that indicates a merciless system in the discharge of justice for the good of all in society. It does not mean that in order to be merciful we have to reduce our emphasis on truth and justice.

St. Thomas Aquinas defines justice as the cardinal virtue, which leads a person to give respectively to everyone, which a person is entitled to¹³⁸. However, it is necessary to distinguish between different manifestations of the general principle of justice. „In the case of where the individual owes something to society, he has to follow that justice, which is in accordance with the law—*Justitia legalis*. If it is society that owes something to the individual, distributive justice—*Justitia distributiva* has to be applied. If an individual owes something to another individual, their relationship is to be regulated according to commutative justice—*Justitia commutativa*”¹³⁹. In other words, mercy is always in the centre of human affairs. When situations are made morally neutral, moral credibility of a system loses all the trust and moral authority without, which the institution of corruption and legal vendetta is unavoidable. St. Thomas Aquinas puts compassion and justice into the closest connection possible to each other to the level that „justice without mercy is cruel”¹⁴⁰ and mercy without justice is „the mother of dissolution”¹⁴¹. In the context of finite character of our human existence, the human justice can always have a solution bordering mercy and justice. This also applies to the virtues of justice and charity, which their juxtaposition highlights the fact of separation with particular clarity, which appears sometimes to be opposing intentions of the same reality. In other words, whoever is merciful, the person is not in opposition to justice as it appears to be. All the divine attributes that are shared with man formed an inseparable unity to generate good in order to perfect creation.

Indeed, mercy is a window of restoration to the human dignity and personhood realized through the justice system arm of government. „In mercy, we find proof of how God loves us. He gives his entire self, always, freely, asking for nothing in return. He also evokes the ‘the gentle rain’ when he says, ‘may the balm of mercy reach everyone, believer and those far away’”¹⁴². According to Thomas Aquinas, „mercy is not a sign of weakness, is the mark of his

¹³⁸ Cf. Ibid.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² *MV*, nos. 14-15.

omnipotence". The human person cannot grasp the entire nature of God and his unity. The human person relies totally on the shared attributes of God within the finite understanding in certain perspectives. For instance, the human person recognizes God as love, as merciful, as almighty, as omnipotent without adequately imagining that all the attributions form an inseparable unity and yet identical in their being. God's justice does not dissolve in his mercy. Rather, penalty or punishment is the manner, which the guilty experiences the fire of judicial justice and divine love expressed by rule of law. This is connected with the situation of Adam and Eve, who were not only allowed to express themselves within the context of fair hearing, but, divine justice and redemption (Gen 3:14-22) prevailed for the restoration of the human person to know, love and serve God. The Truth and human truths cannot be reduced to images. And faith is neither about feelings nor emotions, rather it is about truth.

And, true justice is not mercilessness and true mercy is not sentimental to subjective end but to a serve object good¹⁴³. Whatever needs to be done on the judiciary, without consciousness, the activities of the cankerworm of corruption, which parasites in the human bone marrow of insatiability of the human desires, will not only „hatch eggs”-of hatred but will continue to build an endless empire of injustice where the rich and the powerful in society buy justice at the „expense of the poor”¹⁴⁴. Judiciary is the last hope for the poor, the vulnerable and defenceless. The judiciary is a citadel of justice and mercy not only to discharge its noble responsibilities with sense of justice, sound and objective interpretation of the law, upholding court judgements in favour of justice and mercy, to demonstrate and curtail the excesses and political vendetta, to be an active participant of justice rather than a bystander, to remove judiciary timidity, to correct accusations and prosecutions of people without being verified and tried, to correct conflicts of power of the same courts, to turn the judicial system into an instrument of safeguarding social values, to take into account the prevailing social and cultural facts of the citizens, to avoid interpretations and applications of abstract prepositions of the law but to love judicial arm of government of the Federation. Consequently, the citizens will begin not only to be productive to the local and national development of the country, but the human person will be like „the fruit trees of all kinds growing on both banks of the river. Their leaves will not wither, nor will their fruit fail. Every month they will bear fruit, because the water from the sanctuary (Divine Mercy flows to them). Their fruit will serve for food and their leaves for healing” (Eze 47:12), so that the Divine Mercy and the human transformation will usher in a new Nigeria ruled by justice and mercy anchored with common value system.

¹⁴³ Cf. Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ O. Opeyemi, *Opinion: Our Judiciary and the Dead Ethic Nigerian Nation*, in: <http://www.nigeriannewspapers.today/2016/11/19/opinion-our-judiciary-and-the-dead-ethic/> (accessed 19.11.2016).

4.4. The Common Value System

Success and failures are phenomena present in every administrative system. Each administration has something special and peculiar to the cultural context and geographical location. In other words, the value, the regard or respect something is held to deserve; its worth; or usefulness of something is linked to collective agreement. This worth could be on a material, monetary or of some social value. For example, something that has regard could be referred to as special in terms of its status among other things in vogue. The name „special” gives that, which is called „special” a content that is desirable and durable status. This desirable and durable item can also be called „prospect” or „possibility” or „likelihood” of some future event that comes with „suitability” or „good”. There are so many things that are good but not all are good to everybody. But there are still somethings that the average of 65 to 70 percent can cut across a board. This is a good average to start with. The remaining 35 or 30 percent can be carried along with education and teaching to make sure all the remaining are covered with a collective value system.

Essentially, a system is a set of things working together as parts of a whole or a mechanism, which inter-connects a network as an instrument of service. In the case of Nigeria, we are talking about a complex whole due to „the population of 180, 859,311”¹⁴⁵ million citizens. Identification of each citizen as a national of the Federal Republic of Nigeria is the first step to the „value system” for all Nigerians as an expression of the Divine Mercy. Although I mentioned „paradigm-identity” severally, but it remains an inevitable condition for nationhood. The preposition of a „value system”, is a statement that paints a clear picture of your worth as a citizen. As individuals, people have material possessions to show at social levels, at political levels and other opportunities at functions in the entire interest of the country. But as a citizen, it is only „value system” of paradigm-identity that can guarantee the human dignity and personhood both locally and nationally.

The power of paradigm-identity cannot be over-emphasized. For instance, when travelers move from one country of origin to another, the only worth they have at immigration centres is vested on the worth of their passports, which identifies their various status. There is no any other way of a worth of a citizen than the national and international identity engraved in a passport. This means that the value system stipulates that one is first recognized as a citizen of a country before speaking of a person’s details, such as occupation, religion, ethnicity and political affiliations. The value system provides the human person with his immediate guarantee

¹⁴⁵ World Population Review 2016, *Nigeria population*, in: <http://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/nigeria-population/> (accessed 15.04.2016).

of security and positive results of being a citizen, the gains to work and live in Nigeria. Firstly, as an individual by nature, God has accorded each Nigerian a dignity that is all times sensitive to humiliations and abuse. Each time a person's personhood is threatened, negative responses and agitations are inevitable to seek personal restoration and respect. This reaction is a natural reflex, which can only be controlled by acknowledgement of its place and status in the overall interest of the human person. The great value propositions for every Nigerian must be decisive, concise and impressive, to consciously differentiate this worth from other worthiness at the global markets and economic levels.

Secondly, the value system guarantees security and rights of all holders of this „value system” to the point that the individual, family and communities have their rights and privileges. The security of these fundamental rights include religion, political associations, ownership of properties and the right to life from its very beginning to its end at natural death. The right to survive presuppose the right to have some means of livelihood and for a sustainable subsistence. There are Nigerians who are talented not only for the upkeep of the community but for the capacity to add value to Nigerians and update their lives that are naturally endowed with so many possibilities. The system provides possibilities of developing, producing, expanding and promotion of goods and services. Every potential common good is protected by the common constitution binding the citizenry and principle of subsidiarity. The constitution ensures the guarantee of intellectual and spiritual security against excessiveness in Nigeria where the principle of the Divine Mercy prevails in all human sectors and institutions to reflect our primordial moral heritage. Those who have the skills are recognized by the law and those without any skills are encouraged and supported to acquire as their natural capacity can enable them without losing their rights and privileges accorded to them by the constitution.

The value system guarantees the citizens the keys of possibilities to plan for their future, which include personal welfare, housing and retirement security. Even if it is not understood by all immediately, with positive education and mercy generated by love this message will empower many to see the reasons why they should be citizens or would be citizens. In modern society, the proliferation of visa seekers at various embassies, passengers in airports and motor parks suggest the variations of coverage of value systems on human persons. It is like having a business, which does not meet the needs of customers or outdated without taking into account the needs of the customers. These situations make human life boring and sometimes unbearable when there are known options to change the situations.

Lack of pro-activeness of a government only risks the lives and properties of its citizens, which it has been elected and voted in order to lead it to political progress and economic prosperity. A pro-active government should not only to be conscious of the different strata of

its citizens in terms of moving up in their higher careers as human assets and resources but also have the capacity to create desired good without losing the value system. The preposition of a value system is an essential element of a happy citizen. Consequently, the government should emphasize the benefits a citizen should have and the price the citizen will be charged for goods and services guided by the Divine Mercy principle where justice and equity are assured. This vision is very strong and it leaves no one in doubt on its workability for the good and fulfilment of the human person, which can be presented to the citizens with political will to improve their lives and honesty devoid of empty propaganda.

Nigeria has a large economic market in Africa with a capacity beyond compare in the human market in Africa. The centres of advertisements such as television stations, radio stations, social media and other media apparatus can be used not only to generate jobs for the jobless but provide opportunities for businesses and improvement of entrepreneurship in the overall interest of the nation. There are no any other instruments available to compare with the Divine Mercy principle, which not only give Nigerians „a wake-up-call” to rise beyond the level of corruption, insecurity, poverty, under-developments, hunger, disease, agitations, violence, wanton killings, burning houses and cars but promoting programmes of death against innocent children, the vulnerable and the defenceless without option to defend themselves in contrast to the fair hearing God gave to man (Gen 3:9-22). It is no longer news, that a bill on „Freedom of Information” (FOI), has been passed, a law guaranteeing freedom of speech to all citizens. And yet, citizens are not only denied this freedom to express themselves but they are man-hunted, brutalized and killed.

To minimize wrong interpretations of government programmes, democratically, the government should be opened, accountable, transparent, sensitive to the sufferings of its people. An abstract and imaginative government should be avoided and let the citizens know what the government wants to do and inform them of the next programme in view. It is the people’s government as part of the commodity that was sold during campaigns. Democratically, the law must be used to moderate whatever sends security signals to national good and prosperity. Human communities and organizations should have windows where friendly atmosphere is created both for the citizens and would be citizen from other countries for strengthening uni-lateral and bi-lateral agreements for the movements of goods and services in the overall national interest. This optimistic window invites friends to work together towards a common goal. In doing this, protection of integrity should be the highest assurance to be given by government in order to maintain and sustain moral credibility and just mutuality. The government should foster human-to-human connections, which offers a sound intellectual exchange and provokes every developmental strategy as a credit to the government as part of the value system.

The value system should have its moral workability and humanness, which must be checked and updated time to time to meet up and suit with the dynamics of human change. In the operational occasion of this value system, its credibility, its consistence and national value should not be compromised by any system or ideology that does not respect human life, personal security, human dignity and personhood. The constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, remains the supreme guide of all systems and ideologies that co-exists in the nation, not only for the safety of lives and properties of the citizens but as a guarantor of the „value system” and supremacy of the constitution.

4.4.1. The Supremacy of the Constitution

It is not out of place to define and explain concepts which lead to the general understanding of what brings a common good to one and sundry. First and foremost, a constitution is a body of fundamental principles of an organization, which gives law and order to its operational programme and benefits. In the same vein, the Constitution of the Federal Government of Nigeria is a basic written principles and precedents. It is not just a constitution but it has the power of supremacy, a condition of being superior to all others: authority, power, or status in Nigeria. It has a unified force with supreme commander who is most important and powerful through, which citizens obtain justice against unpatriotic citizens who for their own selfish-reasons decide to be dissidents without regards to the good of others in society. Building an anarchic society is going against man’s nature as a moral person. In the pursuit of the common good, the source of authority depends on the constitution.

„This Constitution is supreme and its provisions shall have binding force on the authorities and persons throughout the Federal Republic of Nigeria”¹⁴⁶. And, „the Federal Republic of Nigeria shall not be governed, nor shall any persons or group of persons take control of the Government of Nigeria or any part thereof, except in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution”¹⁴⁷. Similarly, if any other law is inconsistent with the provisions of this Constitution, this Constitution shall prevail, and that other law shall, to the extent of the inconsistency, be void¹⁴⁸. Therefore, Nigeria is one indivisible and indissoluble sovereign state to be known by the name of the Federal Republic of Nigeria¹⁴⁹. However, to have a good constitution is one thing. But it is another thing, to have honest professional interpreters of the constitution in order to guide the citizens and the nation against derailment from the path of the

¹⁴⁶ 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, With Amendments, 2011, no. 1, para, 1.

¹⁴⁷ 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, With Amendments, 2011, no. 1, para, 2.

¹⁴⁸ Cf. 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, With Amendments, 2011, no. 1, para, 3.

¹⁴⁹ Cf. 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, With Amendments, 2011, no. 2.

law. In a democratic system of government where freedom is assumed, individual politicians may lose their focus and start moving from one political party to another, not driven by common good but by personal profits, measured by the highest bidder. Some politicians change their minds to avoid changing their party. And there are others who change their party in order not to change their mind. „Whenever a party changes its position on major issues, legislatures have a moral obligation to take a principled stand and demand changes”¹⁵⁰. At all times, the constitutional tenets must be upheld for the human rights, dignity and personhood.

The supremacy of the constitution presupposes the presence of the Divine Mercy. The supreme power of the constitution is not meant to destroy human person in the country or suppress „the everybody” who does not have the opportunity to be a member of the various arms of government. Removing the Divine Mercy out of the constitution in a democratic dispensation, is removing all that makes human person a rational being. When democratic character and its values are removed, then there will be the emergence of timocracy– where the form of government requires the possession of property as a prerequisite for public office holders. This means, that the millions of poor people in the country will be „sold” to make the cost of holding an elective office. It is the role of the constitution to define and regulate democratic irregularities in order to safeguard the constitutional rights of every citizen. When politicians and political party manifestoes are inconsistent to the provisions of the constitution, the three arms of government should stand on the side of constitution in order to maintain the legitimacy and credibility of the constitution. The constitution must stand and defend its name by ensuring that all public and political acts are done constitutionally in accordance with the constitutional provisions.

The Constitution should not be silent, encourage or promote political suffocation of the ecology of the National Assembly who are working with other arms of government to provide development to the citizens especially at the grassroots level. The Constitution must be sensitive to the corrosive ideology of the political defections in both Houses of Representatives and the National Assembly of the political defections, thereby diverting attention from its very core mandate of bringing democracy and its government closer to citizens rather than jeopardizing democratic witness¹⁵¹. The Constitution draws attention to unwanted and unhealthy negotiations for party allegiance instead of politicians to talk about the people’s life situations or securing obligations or commitments on improving infrastructural developments. For example, educational and health sectors are hardly spoken about by government and at the right

¹⁵⁰ E. Okechukwu, I. Ogochie, Andrew, *The Legal/constitution Basis of Political Party Defection in Nigeria*, in: https://www.arabianjbm.com/pdfs/KD_VOL_3_11/2.pdf (accessed 15.04.2017).

¹⁵¹ Cf. J. Meyendorff, *The Orthodox Church: Its Past and Its Role in the World Today*, Crestwood: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press 1996, p. 3.

time. The Divine Mercy can transform the Constitution and consequently, issues of security, economy, good governance and other institutions will be history based on prioritized projects and implementations. But, it should be noted that academic qualifications are necessary prerequisites to political office holders. An un-educated politician, will run-down his place of work with imaginations instead of the truth, accountability and transparency. Lack of education, is also part of the causes for indiscriminate defections to other parties rather than promoting genuine competition and focus on objective goals beyond self-interest¹⁵². Thus, when politicians focus their energy on private issues, what energy will they use to focus on policy issues, governance, economy and developments. The Constitution must guide the nation against the driving force to capture state power for private gains, in contrast to unity, politics and economy.

4.4.2. The Unity of Nigeria: Politically and Economically

This section, has a lot of anthropological considerations, which the sources of Ted C. Lewellen, will be used as the stepping stone for this critical analysis of the political and economic unity of Nigeria. Unity without mercy is a battle field and human disaster where even God's name can be used to score political points against the political opposition. Yet, it is said: „the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom” (Pr 9:10) and no one seems in hurry to update moral environment¹⁵³. Unity and friendship, are closely related and important elements not only politically but in any anthropological setting. After all, friendship is not a reward for our discriminating and good taste in finding one another, rather it is an instrument by which God reveals to the human person the beauties of one another in the natural life¹⁵⁴. Natural anthropology is the study of the various structures and functional activities of man. In fact, ecology is the relations of organisms to one another and their surroundings¹⁵⁵. In this case, it is the relations between political parties, regions in the country, the advantaged and the disadvantaged across Nigeria, the human rights, economic rights, political rights and the dignity of the human person. In this sense, it can be called „political ecology”. But, „political gladiators

¹⁵² Cf. E. Okechukwu, I. Ogbachie, Andrew, *The Legal/constitution Basis of Political Party Defection in Nigeria*, in: https://www.arabianjbm.com/pdfs/KD_VOL_3_11/2.pdf (accessed 15.04.2017).

¹⁵³ Cf. K. Ryan, T. Lickona, eds., *Character Development: In Schools and Beyond*, Washington, D. C: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy 1992, p. 365.

¹⁵⁴ Cf. J. P. Farrell, D. Phil, *Free Choice in St. Maximus the Confessor*, South Canaan: St. Tikhon's Seminary Press 1989, p. 39.

¹⁵⁵ Cf. J. Hendry, S. Underdown, *„Anthropology a Beginner's Guide*, England: Oneworld Publications 2012, p. 10.

can turn any political platform into a theater of war”¹⁵⁶ as long as „any subject that can meet”¹⁵⁷ their agitations in the name of one Nigeria.

In the light of the agitations before and after the Nigeria’s Independence, the issues of agitations are still around bordering around marginalization, governance, economy and corruption and unhealthy agitations in 2017. The lack of the attitude of Divine Mercy is the missing link between theological and natural anthropology, without which „mankind will not have peace until it turns to the Fount of My Mercy”¹⁵⁸. Furthermore, the cardinal point here is the inmost core of the new commission, which robs the forces of destruction of their power, is the grace of the Divine Mercy¹⁵⁹. On one hand, theological anthropology seeks to study how God relates with man in time and space. On the other hand, natural anthropology seeks to study various structures and daily activities of man, within the material and physical world. This is a link, which expressed the Divine Mercy without, which man will not only go against himself but the things he created would be against him.

Since Nigeria got political independence from Britain, different political anthropology was fermenting. Political evolution became almost synonymous with political classification¹⁶⁰. These classes were not even limited to regions, communities or groups, but followed individuals through series of social dramas, which personal and community manipulations of norms and values were laid bare in different parts of Nigeria as if it were no longer a sovereign entity¹⁶¹. Between 1980s and 1990s was another period of political fermentation due to the lack of the attitude of the Divine Mercy, which was subject to intense and unflattering scrutiny and ethnic bias¹⁶². At the same time, the democratically elected governments have suffered rejections at different times without victory over the tyranny of corruption, poverty, hunger, violence, disease and deaths. Essentially, the social and political challenges of Nigeria are fermented into agitations, namely: two (2) from the North: Mohammed Marwa Maitasine between „1972-1985”¹⁶³ and Boko Haram led by Mohammed Yusuf in „2002”¹⁶⁴, till date; two (2) from the

¹⁵⁶ C. Ochayi, *Politicians Turning Elections into Theatre of War, Stakeholders Cry Out*, in: <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2016/08/politicians-turning-elections-theatre-war-stakeholders-cry/> (accessed 11.08.20216).

¹⁵⁷ T. C. Lewellen, *Political Anthropology: An Introduction*, London: Praeger 2003, p. 1.

¹⁵⁸ *Diary*, no. 699.

¹⁵⁹ Cf. J. Ratzinger, *Called to Communion: Understanding the Church Today*, transl, Andrew Walker, San Francisco: Ignatius Press 1991, p. 64.

¹⁶⁰ Cf. T. C. Lewellen, *Political Anthropology: An Introduction*, p. 10.

¹⁶¹ Cf. T. C. Lewellen, *Political Anthropology: An Introduction*, p. 11.

¹⁶² Cf. T. C. Lewellen, *Political Anthropology: An Introduction*, p. 13.

¹⁶³ T. Johnson, *Mohammed Marwa died 1980-Maitatsine* 1980, in: <http://www.breaktime.ng/mohammed-marwa-died-1980-best-known-by-his-nickname-maitatsine-and-less-comm/> (accessed 16.04.2016).

¹⁶⁴ U. Kalu, *Mohammed Yusuf: Life and Times of New Maitatsine Leader* 3 July 2009, in: <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2009/07/mohammed-yusuf-life-and-times-of-new-%E2%80%98maitatsine%E2%80%99-leader/> (accessed 16.04.2016).

West: Oodua People's Congress (OPC) in „1994”¹⁶⁵ led by Fredrick Fasehu and Ganiyu Adams (OPC) broke away and formed another branch in „1999”¹⁶⁶, four (4) from the East: Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) led by Mujahid Dokubo-Asari in „2006”¹⁶⁷, Biafra Independence Movement (BIM) and Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) led by Chief Ralph Uwazuruike in „1999”¹⁶⁸, and Indigenous people of Biafra (IPOB) led by Nnamdi Kanu in „2015”¹⁶⁹ till date who broke away from MASSOB.

Religion and politics are part of man. After all, man is a „political animal” as he relates with his fellowmen in the world. The sacredness, which underlies the nature of man, seemingly offers a divine legitimacy to political succession, which is evident in the campaign for not only votes but prayers for victory. Thus, the CBCN does not support theocratic system of government, rather it supports democratic system of government for Nigeria¹⁷⁰. Legitimately, consensual power has the advantage of being free from specific sanctions and specific rewards, and it can therefore be employed in a wide variety of situations. Consequently, people perform public duties because they trust either their leaders, or the system the leaders represent, to bring about general benefits over the long run through political teams¹⁷¹.

Political teams are divided into two: contract and moral. „A contract team is one that is united not by conscience, but by the profit or potential profit to be derived from following a certain leader based strictly on perceived material benefit. On the other hand, a moral team is united by a shared ethic: religious belief, nationalism, or a utopian political ideology”¹⁷². Essentially, power is often portrayed as a top-down imposition by elites on followers of a belief, in controlling the means of production to force others to work for them¹⁷³. Power is a force suffused through discourse and knowledge and a manner, which modern institutions surveilled, discipline, and control. However, the power at the bottom, can be almost invisibly diffuse or brutally focused¹⁷⁴. Consequently, the potential for naked violence must always be a consideration for those who wish to hold the masses at bay. Invariably, violence whether as an

¹⁶⁵ Y. Guichaoua, *Who Joins Ethnic Militia? A Survey of the Oodua People's Congress in Southwestern Nigeria*, in: <http://www3.qeh.ox.ac.uk/pdf/crisewps/workingpaper44.pdf> (accessed 16.04.2016).

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ C. Duffield, *Who Are Nigeria's Mend Oil Militia?* 4 October 2010, in: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-11467394> (accessed 16.04.2016).

¹⁶⁸ I. Okonta, *Biafra of the Mind: MASSOB and the Mobilization of History* 21 August 2014, in: <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14623528.2014.936710> (accessed 16.04.2016).

¹⁶⁹ W. Udunsi, *Biafra:Gov. Obiano Testified to Hausa Fulani Islamic Nigerian Army Panel* 8 March 2016, in: <http://www.ipob.org/2017/06/biafra-gov-obiano-testified-to-hausa.html> (accessed 16.04.2016).

¹⁷⁰ Cf. C. Anyanwu, O. J. Fadugba-Pinheiro, eds., *Our Concern for Nigeria Catholic Bishops Speak*, p. 238.

¹⁷¹ T. C. Lewellen, *Political Anthropology: An Introduction*, p. 92.

¹⁷² T. C. Lewellen, *Political Anthropology: An Introduction*, p. 101.

¹⁷³ Cf. T. C. Lewellen, *Political Anthropology: An Introduction*, p. 111.

¹⁷⁴ Cf. Ibid.

undercurrent of threat or as an explosion of killing, is only one of many instruments available to the poor and the marginalized¹⁷⁵. Thus, the poor could humiliate the rich through malicious gossip, inventing derogatory nicknames, or by boycotting a feast or only showing up for a brief time. Moreover, the refusal of loans or of charity, a prime value of religions would be the occasion for accusations of stinginess or conceit¹⁷⁶. In a sense, moral spheres of politics are the technique to leave intact existing local systems as long as such systems are not seen as threatening, adding a layer of administration at the top while leaving a broad political space for the local leadership in the overall interest and „coopting the conquered”¹⁷⁷ to allow natural and social subsidiaries.

4.4.3. Natural and Social Subsidiaries

The principle of subsidiary is a grant in monetary or political terms to alleviate the sufferings of the masses in the interest of the overall collective good of society. The word „subsidiarity” comes from the word subsidy. Subsidy is a sum of money granted by the state or an organization to help keep low a price of commodity or service. Therefore, subsidiarity is the secondary value of what is subsidized as part of the whole for the common good. But, because Nigerians are involved, it acquired a principle, which gives it a lasting value with the aim of giving it a quality or state of being subsidiary. Similarly, Nigerians have the capacity to add value to the created things by God. After all, man, as a moral being, his intellect has attested to the natural subsidiarity as divine support for his survival in the world¹⁷⁸.

Therefore, the principle of subsidiarity governs the fact that Nigerians should make decisions at the lowest-level possible and highest-level necessary, not only to judge the decision-making body but to help maintain equity and justice as hunger for roots of happiness¹⁷⁹. Subsidiarity has applications in every aspect of the moral life of Nigerians. The principle of subsidiarity stresses that Nigerians should support low associations to accomplish their goals, fulfilment of their duties in order to make conscious contribution to the national development and transformation of Nigeria. There are various associations who understood that there are other Nigerians who many potentialities, which can be pruned in order to become more productive for themselves and the Nigerian community. Such associations can be supported morally, financially and security for their safety and welfare. For instance, the Okada

¹⁷⁵ Cf. Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ Cf. T. C. Lewellen, *Political Anthropology: An Introduction*, p. 117.

¹⁷⁷ T. C. Lewellen, *Political Anthropology: An Introduction*, p. 118.

¹⁷⁸ Cf. E. A. Martens, *God Design: A Focus on Old Testament Theology*, Michigan: Baker Books 1994, p. 237.

¹⁷⁹ Cf. T. C. Oden, *Seminar 3: Africa's Gift to Global Christ*, in: *The Rebirth of African Orthodoxy: Return to Foundations*, Nashville: Abingdon Press 2016, p. 10.

Association, trade unions and business unions will certainly empower the private sector to a more productive venture. Educationally, universities and other academic institutions can be paired, which provides the student opportunities to share similar field of studies and opening up more opportunities for research. This will also promote a culture, which is necessary for classes of students and readers. This system encourages scientific discovering and technological explorations for the common good.

Conclusion

For transformation to begin and to stand, the attitude of mercy, the human life and its dignity are to be inculcated in all systems in Nigeria. Corruption is making no sense of the truth, and opposes solidarity, which „seeks to go beyond itself, to take on the specifically Christian dimensions of total gratuity, forgiveness and reconciliation”¹⁸⁰. When corruption clashes with the lone nature of man without God, it results in misunderstanding, mistrust, suspicion, manipulation, mismanagement, hunger, violence, war and death. The human law is an extension of divine order, in order to enable man to move toward perfecting God’s creation in love in every encounter¹⁸¹. When the „attitude”¹⁸² of the Divine Mercy is lacking in a democratic system of government, a government loses its responsibility to protect citizens, and giving rise to all sorts of agitations, violence and unpatriotic tendencies.

Essentially, the Divine Mercy is the recognition of God’s mercy as a link between the human person and his institutions that may be tempted to have auto-happiness and auto-salvation. „Reformation must come from within, and from without. You cannot legislate to virtue”¹⁸³. The Divine Mercy has the elements of praxis where the giver and receiver of mercy are sure of the highest assurance of healing effects on both human and structural transformations¹⁸⁴. Praxis is the practical side of transformation as opposed to the theoretical side. It advocates practical exercise that is objectively accepted practice or custom. Praxis of the attitude of mercy, on one hand gives the practitioner the opportunity to improve oneself positively, on the other hand, the practice provides the recipient the values of life, such as sustainable development, empowerment and human capacity building to further produce more goods and services for building the human community that expresses „justice”¹⁸⁵, equity, rule

¹⁸⁰ *EAF*, no. 139.

¹⁸¹ Cf. M. I Uzoukwu, *Lenten Pastoral Letter 2012 Year B*, Suleja: Evan Enterprise 2012, p. 11

¹⁸² The Congregation of Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy, *The Beauty and Richness of Mercy*, transl, P. Mizia, Kraków: Misericordia-Publications 2014, p. 30.

¹⁸³ C. C. Ibe, *Knowledge: The Wealth of the Wise*, Kaduna: Raph Printing Productions 2007, p. 23.

¹⁸⁴ Cf. S. Hahn, *Lord, Have Mercy: The Healing Power of Confession*, Bandra: St. Pauls 2009, p. 97.

¹⁸⁵ C. Anyanwu, O. J. Fadugba-Pinheiro, eds., *Our Concern for Nigeria Catholic Bishops Speak*, p. 172.

of law, rich in „National reconciliation”¹⁸⁶, rich in „forgiveness”¹⁸⁷, rich in „mercy for all”¹⁸⁸, which provides room for competition to protect lives and properties, competition to defend the less-privileged, a desire to defend the „vulnerable”¹⁸⁹ and defenceless in Nigeria. When the nationalism is involved, dying for the „cause” can assume the level of moral imperative, the grandeur of martyrdom¹⁹⁰. In the light of the attitude of mercy, it calls for urgent redistribution of power away from individuals, classes, and state bureaucracies, embedding it in the fabric discourse and knowledge¹⁹¹. But, every challenge reveals fundamental problems, which view underdevelopment as a primary condition characterized by a lack of technology, the entrepreneurial ethic and capital¹⁹².

Conversion must be the guiding principle of measuring every feeling, thinking and action for Nigerians, institutions, communities at social and national life in Nigeria. After all, „The Divine Mercy”¹⁹³ aims at creating legacy, changing mind-sets and empowering generations. Every human person is insufficient of values and desires for transcendence. But a culture of dependency on core values builds a people without history. Concepts of national transformation offers „spiritual healing”¹⁹⁴ within a scientific resource an escape from this impasse. Seeking to practice mercy by Nigerians is transformation¹⁹⁵.

Essential issue of transformation is dependent on Nigerians. Conversion is the prerogative of the transformation of institutions, structures, communities and society of Nigerians. For example, when making fire was discovered, which helped preparing different types of foods suitable for man’s body system, the art and technology of making fire was developed and sold to other human beings over the world. The reality of tending towards what is good and avoid evil is not an external agent. It is the moral implication that is innate and in-built in man. Thus, it is impossible for one to tell the self that what is not true.

The millions of Nigerian youths can be transformed into the core values of today and tomorrow. The Nigerian universities produce thousands of graduates every year. For instance, the faculty of science, may produce electronic scientists, research scientists, biochemists, physicians, computer scientists etc. Nigerians can invest in these areas, which not only provide

¹⁸⁶ The Congregation of Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy, *The Beauty and Richness of Mercy*, transl, P. Mizia, Kraków: Misericordia-Publications 2008, p. 16.

¹⁸⁷ *From the Ambassador for the Divine Mercy*, in: *Divine Mercy Reporter*” 2(2006), p. 5- 7.

¹⁸⁸ Cf. M. I. Uzoukwu, *Walking in the Light of the Extra-Ordinary Jubilee of Mercy*, Suleja: Evans Enterprise 2016, p. 5.

¹⁸⁹ V. Germace, *Priesthood: Who is a Priest?* „The Trail Blazer” 1(2007)1, p. 4.

¹⁹⁰ Cf. T. C. Lewellen, *Political Anthropology*, p. 171.

¹⁹¹ Cf. T. C. Lewellen, *Political Anthropology*, p. 201.

¹⁹² Cf. T. C. Lewellen, *Political Anthropology*, p. 206.

¹⁹³ *DM*, no. 2.

¹⁹⁴ D. Leech, *Relating Spiritual Healing and Science: Some Critical Reflections*, in: „Spiritual Healing: Scientific and Religious Perspectives” (2011), p. 153-166.

¹⁹⁵ Cf. *DM*, no. 14.

job opportunities but professionals and experts in different fields who are already available to offer goods and services to the Nigerian and international markets. In addition, the department of architecture has the capacity to train and provide electric and structural architects as experts who will serve as anti-dotes to frequent collapse of upstairs and buildings. These areas will also transform and provide jobs for the teeming youths in Nigeria. Those candidates who may not measure up mentally and academically, may be given the chance to be engaged in technical trade. Thus, the areas like carpentry, gardening, environmental cleaners, driving etc may be made juicy to attract those young Nigerians who have no courage to stand out in the struggle in life. However, other areas like political science, natural science can be put forward as areas of Nigerians' interest since politics has become not a means for livelihood but a career in Nigeria. The political scientists will take the job of setting Nigerians free from political corruption by sanitizing every corrupted area in political life of Nigerians, to the point that Nigerians are not joining politics for personal benefits but purely for nationalistic response and contribution to their fatherland and for the common good of all Nigerians. Consequently, in the spirit of Divine Mercy, Nigerians are challenged to say, corruption, political instability, insecurity, poverty, terrorism and bad governance, „Where is thy sting” (1 Cor 15:55). Moreover, transformation is the saturation of the human desires anchored on the spiritual and physical trust in God.

CHAPTER FIVE

5. God Rich in Mercy and a New Just Order of Social and Political Life in Nigeria

Introduction

The forgiving and free spirit of children is the very nature of man anchored in the attitude of mercy (Mt 18:3). Thus, man must respect the norm of morality so that he can be obedient to God's holy commandment and consistent with his own dignity as a person¹.

This chapter considers the richness of God's mercy and a new just order of social and political life in Nigeria, which Nigerians will invariably and inevitably, hand over to the next generations². Its analogical and contextual analyses and make opened the fact that the God given social factors are good in themselves. Therefore, the God given social factors could not generate any crises among Nigerians who share the human condition, unity in diversity and misery with fellow Nigerians. The human misery is constituted by sin, which makes the Divine Mercy sacrosanct and urgent³. God's mercy is the hope of human life. For example, when King David sinned, he said: „Let us fall into the hand of the Lord” (2 Sam 24:14). He chose the form of punishment, which seems to him most directly dependent on God himself⁴. He prefers to fall

¹ Cf. *VS*, no. 102.

² Cf. J. B. Benestad, *Church, State and Society: An Introduction to Catholic Social Doctrine*, Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press 2011, p. 143.

³ Cf. *DM*, no. 4.

⁴ Cf. D. A. Keating, *The Appropriation of Divine Life of Alexandria*, Oxford New York: Oxford University Press 2004, p. 144.

into the hands of God than to fall into the hands of man, who is imperfect. He envisaged the imperfect human judgement and punishment without imagination of mercy.

The imagination of God's mercy, points to the fact that the inauguration of the new covenant between God and his people, is that there will be a new community created, which people will no longer teach each other about the saying, „Know the Lord”, because they will know the Lord, from the least of them to the greatest (Jer 31:34). However, in the old covenant a person became a member of the covenant community simply by being born into that community. Of course, as they grew up, some became believers in “YHWH”—the God of Israel and others did not. Consequently, within the covenant, some members urge others to know the Lord. All members who are born into the community are expected to have faith in God as part of the covenant, which goes beyond their physical situation. In other words, only believers are members of the new community. And since all are believed to be members of the new community, and they all receive and experience God's forgiveness of sins, where all people will be taught by the Lord, and there shall be great peace (Is 54:13). Similarly, Prophet Isaiah foresaw the richness of God's mercy in nations' social and political life when he said:

„And the wolf will dwell with the lamb,
And the leopard will lie down with the young goat,
And the calf and the young lion and the fatling together;
And a little boy will lead them.
Also, the cow and the bear will graze,
Their young will lie down together,
And the lion will eat straw like the ox.
The nursing child will play by the hole of the cobra,
And the weaned child will put his hand on the viper's den.
They will not hurt or destroy in all My holy mountain,
For the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord
As the waters cover the sea” (Is 11:6-9).

In other words, the human person can be an „expert” in the discharge of mercy, which expresses the richness of God's mercy and compassion in society. „Compassion and experiencing the situation provoke the human person to bring compassion, smile and restoration personally to those in misery and hope”⁵. It is a temptation to underestimate the difficulty involved in expressing compassion⁶. It requires an inner disposition to go with others to the place where they are weak, vulnerable, lonely, broken and defeated by human condition, which requires an imagination of the Divine Mercy. However, this expression of compassion is the human spontaneous way of responding to suffering. It is human self-preservation to employ every method to do away with suffering or fleeing from it.

The human person represents leadership in all human institutions, structures and communities. The attitude of the Divine Mercy is a perfect value system, in all human

⁵ A. Obijimba, *Interview with the Author*, 4 January 2016.

⁶ Cf. M. Angold, ed., *Christianity Eastern Christianity*, New York: Cambridge University Press 2006, p. 580.

institutions, sectors and faculties. Nigerians will be placed in the root of prosperity and national development when they recognize and accept the Divine Mercy as the way of life. The human person is an agent who can bring about God's mercy⁷. Like the prayer of the „Our Father”, where God's kingdom is asked to come down here on earth (Mt 9:10), which is understood to be a kingdom of love and mercy. While it is true that such a kingdom will not be fully realized where human person exists and lives with finite qualities, it is safer to say, human person with the human intellect, conscience and free will, can upgrade the right, dignity and personhood to the level that „God will be glorified”⁸. After all, the human person marks the irreversible value, with the power to transcend beyond him, which makes bigger pictures of what it means to be merciful. Nigerians are beneficiaries of mercy. The Nigerians who God has placed in positions of authority, can intervene and rescue Nigerians in Nigeria who are defeated by life, and articulate the difference between love and hatred, and democracy and theocracy.

5.1. Democracy and Theocracy

The democratic system of government is suitable for Nigerians not only to reach every human person as a basis for mercy but to inculturate the Divine Mercy in every culture and institutions. The Incarnation of Jesus Christ, made him King of kings of the earth. All authorities are under his rule. Therefore, the existence of governments in the world, is the prerogative of the Divine Mercy. Moreover, through him all things were made, and without him nothing was made that has been made (Jn 1:3).

In this section, I will analyse why the democratic system of government is better for Nigerians, the preservation of its ecology, a deep national reflection on contemporary dialogue and how the Divine Mercy application can be synchronized in Nigeria. After all, „God has granted the earth to mankind in general, not in the sense that all without distinction can deal with it as they like, but rather that no part of it was assigned to anyone in particular, and limit of private possession have been left to be fixed by man's own industry, and by the laws of individual races”⁹. By the constitutional authority, Nigeria is a secular state where every citizen is free to practice any religion one chooses to practice¹⁰. Moreover, article 10 of the amended Constitution of 1999 states that, „The Government of the Federation or of a State shall not adopt any religion as State Religion”. Importantly, the secularity of Nigerian state does not mean that Nigerians and the government have nothing to do with God. Still, the Amended Constitution of

⁷ Cf. H. Bawa, *Interview with the Author*, 27 December 2016.

⁸ A. Zakka, *Interview with the Author*, 10 January 2017.

⁹ RN, no. 8.

¹⁰ Cf. 1999 Constitution of Nigeria of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, no. 42, para. 1a.

1999 reiterate that Nigeria is one indivisible and indissoluble sovereign nation under God. There is no ambiguity to say that there has never been a nation anywhere, at any time, whose government was not circumscribed by religion¹¹. A vague idea of what the democratic system pulls a nation into anarchy and suffocation due to conflicting interests. To harmonize this conflict, is link every institutions and sectors to the Divine Mercy. The Divine Mercy is a life-wire that gives life to every system in Nigeria.

Today more than ever before, the question of where the allegiance of Nigerians lies remains unanswered. This is because, the founding fathers of the Nigerian constitution made it clear that Nigeria is a secular state and with a democratic system of government. Thus, this does not distort the allegiance of Nigerians who are united in diversity. Yet there are three „moral authorities”, the constitution, the Bible and the Qur’an. And, the sound of democracy is unbeatable. As it were, „Democracy” has been accepted as government by the people. In other words, the intention, the aims and objectives of the system are direly desired to serve human person for exchange of goods and services¹². On one hand, the entire operations of democracy are guided by the principles of rights, justice, power, freedom and human dignity. On the other hand, „theocracy” is a system of government, which clergy, imams or any religious leadership tittle, rule „in the name of God”. The idea of mercy is about love¹³.

However, those claiming that Nigeria belongs to them because of their claim of population, they would be corrected if the nation’s basic nature was determined by a show of hands. On the contrary, that is not the whole story. Moral law and the Divine Mercy remain the fundamental principles in the life of Nigerians. To put things into perspective, it is important to find out the original intention of the Founding Fathers of Nigeria, to identify the system approved by the constitution, either a democratic or theocratic system of government. Nigerians have always identified themselves with a secular state because the writers of the Constitution voted and adopted secular state in agreement¹⁴. The power of changing the Constitution is prerogative to the Legislatures and State Houses of Assembly so that the economic and national developmental benefits can transform the entire life and safety of the ordinary citizen in the streets. Even then, the temptation to blame the founders of Nigeria and the Constitution may be there unnecessarily. Consequently, some „Nigerians act as if our own brand of religious affiliations is different and distinct and somehow, our sacred books are superior to the

¹¹ Cf. D. McEvoy, *Democracy or Theocracy: America’s Continuing Conflict Over the Role of Religion in Public Policy*, New York: iUniverse 2005, p. 31.

¹² Cf. J. G. McConville, *God and Earthly Power: An Old Testament Political Theology*, London: T& T ClarkInternational 2006, p. 50.

¹³ M. Danladi, *Interview with the Author*, 7 January 2017.

¹⁴ Cf. M. Roots, J. J. Buckley, eds., *Christian Theology and Islam*, Cambridge: James Clark & Co 2014, p. 64.

Constitution. The Constitution, which is what hold us together, has assured that Nigerians aspire to the ideals of a state where there is no favouritism of one religion over the other, or where people are discriminated against on the basis of religion... Whatever may be the case, we are running a Democracy not a Theocracy”¹⁵. However, the CBCN cleared the ambiguities thus: „We profoundly affirm the right to religious freedom and free expression as entrenched in the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. This right does not stop with freedom to choose, practice, and express one’s faith, which is fatally denied in some parts of our nation, but includes the opportunity to contribute to the building up of the society as free partners in progress. This presupposes public recognition and respect for authentic religious values that meet the human deepest concerns, capable of furnishing ethical motivation for personal and social responsibilities”¹⁶ in order to preserve the secular state of Nigeria.

The distorted use of the Nigerian colonial history and its interpretation at will by some politicians in an attempt not only to prove what they want legalized as their personal ideologies in the name of political party or group, but it misinterprets the Constitution, which is the binding force for all Nigerians. Sadly, much of this has worked to the strategic advantage of some politicians, since their opponents stay scattered, unable to agree on even what to call them, let alone what to do about them¹⁷. Consequently, the citizens are confused because the politicians have devised a culture of „free to go in, free to go out”¹⁸ from one party to another on unimportant grounds, which only create pain and poverty for Nigerians. Nigerians believe that the prospective recruits should know that politicians will select who they will impose for their personal profits, „he or she may be a perfect stranger, that the party will decide when the leader will be allowed to develop one part of the country or the other, and that they may be separated by order of the party for years”¹⁹ to come. These recruitments and indoctrination practices are not only instruments of deception and division but they produce rebels, notorious groups and secessionists. Such a tendency only fans deception and hypocrisy in the name of legitimate service. Unknowingly, dangerous elements are imported such as utilitarian, theocracy, totalitarian and permanent oligarchy. This is true of the reconstructionists who seek to replace democracy with a theocracy that would govern their version of religious practices. Two systems cannot work simultaneously for the common good. This can be likened to the story of wheat and weeds (Mt 13:24-43). However, as unbelievable as it seems, such a proposed

¹⁵ E. Ojeifo, *The State, Religion and Ecclesiastical Courts*, in: <https://www.dailytrust.com.ng/news/feature/the-state-religion-and-ecclesiastical-courts/175425.html> (accessed 24.06.2017).

¹⁶ C. Anyanwu, O. J. Fadugba-pinheiro, eds., *Our Concern for Nigeria Catholic Bishops Speak*, p. 336.

¹⁷ Cf. F. Clarkson, *Eternal Hostility: The Struggle Between Theocracy and Democracy*, Monroe: Common Courage Press 1997, p. 14.

¹⁸ F. Clarkson, *Eternal Hostility: The Struggle Between Theocracy and Democracy*, p. 69.

¹⁹ F. Clarkson, *Eternal Hostility: The Struggle Between Theocracy and Democracy*, p. 70.

government, will target democratic institutions such as labour unions, civil rights laws, educational sector both public and private schools, social sector etc., would be on the short list for deformation and elimination against the will of the citizens. Such government only believes in three main areas of governance, namely, religion, family and personal interest, at the detriment of the poor citizens, lapidated infrastructures, and unemployment of teeming youths. The Divine Mercy in Nigeria will serve as a remedy to the vague idea of democracy, which Nigerians will be governed with the ideology that the blood-letting agenda in the name of theocracy and thereby overthrowing of democratic institutions, through which politicians came into power. When the totalitarian theology turns into totalitarian politics, it only breeds agitations, terrorists, poverty, disease and death. Thus, it is apt to find out, „Who are we”.

5.1.1. Who Are We?

The present situation of Nigeria reflects an acute identity crisis anchored in „federal character”²⁰, which is characterized by not only political identity and regionalism but religious bias and ethnicity. The crises are paradoxically the manifestations of the decomposition of the Nigerian state, which calls for the missing link—the Divine Mercy²¹. Lack of acceptance of the Divine Mercy has been identified as the missing link between the personhood of Nigerians and nationhood of Nigeria. I wish to strongly depart from those who always argue that the crisis in Nigeria is always associated with the Colonial Masters. Rationally, Nigeria is not the only country in the world that was colonized. There are testimonies of the acceptance of identity and who worked towards improving the human and natural potentials that lead to economic and political independence. An example of such countries includes: United States of America, Canada, India, Australia, Ireland, South Africa, Ghana, etc. The difference here is that other nations embraced the paradigm-identity. Identity is a universal quality, which gives meaning beyond life itself. The concept of identity, is a reality that has to be „is” first, before it is „not”. God takes the first level of truth, while identity takes the second level of truth. The task is changing from identity to paradigm-identity. Moreover, democracy offers a vision of opportunity, self-determination, economic and political prosperity. It is not possible to make some particular commitments to live for, without identity. In a democratic system, a situation like that the democratic vision inevitably loses force, it becomes empty and abstract without any capacity to solve any problems, let alone to defend its values by solving other problems.

²⁰ L. T. Vinson, *Religion, Violence, and Local Power-Sharing in Nigeria*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2017, p. 86.

²¹ Cf. A. Jega, ed., *General Introduction, Identity Transformation and the Politics of Identity Under Crisis and Adjustment*, Sweden: Elanders Gotab 2000, p. 1.

Thus, „We Nigerians” face a substantive problem of national identity. The question of identity is a universal value, which gives people their rights and privileges. Nigerians need to study and know themselves about whether we are the „we” we said „we are”? Are „we” one people or several? If we say we are „we”, what distinguishes the „them” who are not us? Race, religion, ethnicity, cultures, wealth or politics? The quick link to the Divine Mercy remedies identity crisis in Nigeria.

From the above viewpoints, every source of wisdom and discernment have been closed down due to injecting and transmission of subjective ideology and belief. In a pluralistic society like Nigeria, to get it right, all levels must receive objective and balanced treatment for the good of the whole. For example, companies concern themselves with the reality of diversity, with a more diverse workforce, using the same understanding of the power of paradigm-identity, which not only increases organizational effectiveness but motivates and lifts the morale of the participants to bring new ways of good governance, economic and political developments. Economic diversity can only be possible if Nigerians embrace conversion and the Divine Mercy as „a value system” come with all the paradigm shift.

5.1.2. Paradigm-identity in Nigeria

Paradigm-identity²² is a positive instrument suitable for building, motivating and empowering people. Fundamentally, paradigm-identity has the capacity to move-up or pull-down. It is always thought that any idea or a vision that does not liberate human person from poverty of any kind is tyranic and anti-human life²³. Nigeria has experienced three paradigm shifts in history. Firstly, the Colonial Masters, brought the „Holy Books”²⁴, Secondly, education which is the most powerful weapon in the world at all times. Thirdly, health service is another level²⁵. These sectors have been upgraded and moved from the traditional way of doing things to an instant and accurate production of results. The Colonial Masters only moved to a better alternative of identity problems to achieve specific results within a diverse society.

Secondly, there is a change in the role of institutions of governance comparing the Colonial Rule and the Nigerian Rule after Independence. Although, the Nigerian rule after Independence is dovetailed with Military Rule. However, both are original but the Nigerian

²² Cf. U. J. Njoku, S. O. Anyawu, eds., *Africa and the Conflicting Paradigm of the Relationship Between Person and Society in Catholic Social Ethics*, in: *In the Service of Charity and Truth: Essays in Honour of Lucius Ugorji*, Frankfurt: Peter Lang 2012, p. 139.

²³ Cf. M. Fishbane, *Sacred Atonement: A Jewish Theology*, Chicago: The University Press 2008, p. 151.

²⁴ The Holy Bible (Christians) and the Qur’an (Muslims) for both religions who make up the two major religions in Nigeria.

²⁵ Cf. M. H. Kukah, K. McGarvey, *Muslim Dialogue in Nigeria: Political, and Theological Dimensions*, New York: Peter Lang Publishing 2013, p. 12.

Rule couldn't have been possible without the rule of the Colonial Masters. But, the fact that many elements in use are a clear fact that Nigeria recognized her dependency from other nations for prosperity and progress as witnessed in the various embassies. Thousands of Nigerians study, live and work in other countries as part of this paradigm-identity understanding among nations of the world. And this is not just about better understanding of other people and their ways of life but about exchanging potentialities that God has sown in those nations as gifts in our common humanity.

Thirdly, the transfer of democratic government consecutively shows a significant development in the history of Nigeria. But, the other side is that whether this is consciously understood is another question based on the current political policies and programmes, which are totally anti-democracy without any base of operation.

Fourthly, conversion is the key. The human person is God's representative in the world of matter and spirit through the Incarnation of Jesus Christ. The human person can only change the human programmes or problems. Man's response to God by faith must be free as a principle of „the way of our life”²⁶. God calls the human person to serve him in spirit and in truth. Man is bound to God in conscience, but not coerced. Jesus Christ invited people to faith and conversion, but never force them. „For he bore witness to the truth but refused to use force to impose it on those who spoke against it. His kingdom...grows by the love with, which Christ, lifted up on the cross, draws men to himself”²⁷. No one can escape the experience of suffering, which seems to be linked to human limitations: and above all to the question of moral evil. „Where does evil come from? I sought whence evil comes and there was no solution, said St. Augustine and his own painful quest would only be resolved by his conversion to the living God. For „the mystery of lawlessness” is clarified only in the light of the mystery of our religion”²⁸. When man is lawless, only conversion can bring him back to the track of life. Conversion and change from avarice, greediness, selfishness, self-centeredness and practices devoid of God that cut-off Divine Mercy as a link to sustainable development.

5.1.3. Changing the Differences into History (Six-geopolitical instruments of mercy)

Reality has shown that no human person thinks and plans for misfortune to befall him or her under freedom. Leadership opportunities are moments, which human person brings out the best at the service of the human community and to be thankful to God for the accomplished goals. But, there are also situations where those who are less privileged are taken for granted and for

²⁶ C. Ezeribe, *Interview with the Author*, 6 January 2017.

²⁷ CCC, no. 160.

²⁸ CCC, no. 385.

a ride by the „privileged”. Man’s inhumanity to man expresses lack of attitude of the Divine Mercy, which is a necessary link for the human survival and happiness²⁹. Nigeria has 36 States and the Federal Capital, Abuja. God has mercifully blessed Nigeria with „mineral resources”³⁰ and agricultural resources³¹.

Thirdly, the structure of democracy in Nigeria, that is the Six geo-political zones can be adapted, adopted and transformed into instruments of „weaponization of mercy”. The „weaponization of mercy” is the positive influence that it can cause in the six-geo-political zones for application and synchronization of the attitude of mercy as a national principle of life. Since mercy is in the human nature, politicians can implant and inculcate the Divine Mercy in the six geo-political zones, which also represent the crannies and nooks of Nigerian states as shown in the appendix 5b. Democratically, each zone has the democratic freedom to use the land mass and fertile soil to save Nigerians from over-dependent on external agricultural resources. This will also provide jobs for the young Nigerians especially who graduated from colleges of agriculture and natural sciences. These resources are signs of God’s mercy on Nigerians. God shows mercy on people in order to enable them as they progress to higher grands in life. Politically, the Senate, the National Assembly and House of Representatives can devote attention on these geo-political zones to enrich the Nigeria. Many people proffered to be pushed as part of education to realize the potentialities that God has blessed Nigerians. The dignity of the political organs can increase when Nigerians feel and receive attention from those representing them at the highest decision-making levels. The message of mercy is a reliable and credible instrument to bring to people together under structure for communal and national developments. The political local wards can be developed into centres of learning and education about mercy. In each community Nigerians know what it means to be merciful because they have received mercy from fellow Nigerians and the Nigerian Government in different ways. The political is highly required here to carry out the mandate of mercy. In rural areas where people have not gone to school, the local and known ways of education can be adopted, adapted and adjusted I order to achieve national cohesion on mercy.

Fourthly, the human resources can be translated into various experts and managers of institutions and organizations. However, I consider the six geo-political zones not only as instruments, „weapons” of mercy, to eradicate poverty and insecurity but for productive political activities. To change the differences of both natural and human resources into a unified

²⁹ M. Danladi, *Interview with the Author*, 20 February 2018.

³⁰ Appendix: 5a, Cf. A. O. Olakunle, *List of Nigerian States and Its Natural Resources*, in: <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/list-nigerian-states-its-natural-resources-olatunbosun-olakunle> (accessed 10.09.2015).

³¹Cf. Appendix: 5b.

whole to reflect and experience God who is rich in mercy. Mercy is the path to restoration from misery, damaged glory, injustice, and lack of love for a neighbour. Nigeria is endowed with human resources beyond compare in Africa. Nigeria not only about population but it is also about the known experts in different fields of life both at home and abroad. These are human instruments that has the capacity to provoke positive change not only for Nigeria as a nation but the very Nigerians themselves. Our differences make us great, strong and better. We become stronger in adversity and prosperous in paradigm-identity as we relate ecologically.

5.2. Theology of Ecology

The Holy Father Pope Francis exclaimed: „Praise be to you, my Lord”³², in recognition of God’s mercy to man, who despite his acts of rebellion and abuse on the earth and its resources, from which he „came” and to which he will „return”, has lost the value of mercy. Due to a disconnection between man and the Divine Mercy, the earth has been damaged by man. Consequently, man „destroys our common home, which is like our sister with whom we share our life and a beautiful mother who opens her arms to embrace us”³³. And „through our Sister, Mother earth, who produces various fruit with coloured flowers and herbs”³⁴. Now, this sister „cries out to us because of the harm we have inflicted on her by our irresponsible use and abuse of the goods, with which God has endowed her. We have come to see ourselves as her lords and masters, entitled to plunder her at will. The violence present in our hearts, wounded by sin, is also reflected in the symptoms of sickness evident in the soil, in the water, in the air and in all forms of life. This is why the earth herself, burdened and laid waste, is among the most abandoned and maltreated of our poor; she ‘groans in travail’, We have forgotten that we ourselves are dust of the earth”³⁵. In other words, if the resources that are available, are being use with the fear of God, and with the attitude of mercy towards one another and the earthly environments that are plundered daily by terrorists through the bombings of not only the environments but lives and properties. Similarly, the CBCN acknowledged the plundering of the earth and prays for Nigeria when it said: „We present our country Nigeria before you, we praise and thank you for you are the source of all we have and are. We are sorry for the sins we have committed and the good deeds we have failed to do. In your loving forgiveness, keep us safe from the punishment we deserve”³⁶. If Nigerians deliberately use their God given

³² *LS*, no. 1.

³³ *Ibid*.

³⁴ *Ibid*.

³⁵ *LS*, no. 2.

³⁶ M. I. Uzoukwu, *Divine Mercy Devotion a Manual for Priests and Religious*, Minna: Unic Industrial Press 2000, p. 68.

potentialities, the available opportunities and resources, they can heal the wounded parts of the earth in their custody. Personal connection to the Divine Mercy is the beginning of the restoration of our home. When the earth is secured, the inhabitants and ethnography are also secured in order to experience the ultimate love, which flows from God the Creator to man and man to man.

However, the theology of ecology is the fact that man is constantly relating with in his life and religious practices. Due to man's relation to God by his image and likeness of God, he becomes morally bound to care for the earth which God has created not only for God's purpose of creation but for man's good and survival. Nigerians materially depend on what God has created and given them including oil, gas, agricultural resources etc.

5.2.1. The Values of Ethnography in Nigeria

The ethnographic environment, geographic location, religious affiliation and cultural background are all goods in themselves according to God's plan. The chief catalyst of all crises is man and his agents. Man is the maker of culture and human institutions, but he is also a betrayal, arbitrator and a builder. Ethnology is the study of characteristics of different peoples and the differences and relationships between them. In the same vein, it studies cultural and customary lives of people like in Nigeria where hundreds of tribes, dialects, cultures and different social life, co-exist and creating variety in the community and the nation. Ethnographically, God's mercy is being revealed to Nigerians. The differences in language, customs, traditions and cultures show how God is happy when people are different in many affiliations. The differences make people strong and better. Each people has special gifts that are unique to each person. This uniqueness creates not only positive varieties but declares God's glory over his mercy for all he has done and given to Nigerians.

The different ethnic groups dispel boredom and monotony both in private and public life. Like every academic faculty, there are departments, which study areas that are related either in content or have some similarities in terms of philosophy of life or meeting at the same destination or cross-meeting points. It is possible to create or adopt a single ethnicity, for all, for the purpose of unity and peace. So, ethnicity may be made a compulsory dialect that every child should be brought under that understanding and enforcement should be sustained by the adults and elders of the community. If the adults do not know „the values of peace, tolerance, mutual love and mutual co-existence”³⁷, the children will not know and they will be the worst agents, and gangs of their societies tomorrow with a strong agenda of vendetta without any

³⁷ A. Zakka, *Interview with the Author*, 10 January 2017.

benefits. However, paradigm-identity can be taught at all levels of education to foster inclusive language and co-opting the defeated into the ethnologic system.

5.2.2. Benefits of Geography in Nigeria

Pope Benedict XVI, taught a lesson on creation when he said: „if you want to cultivate peace, protect creation”³⁸. However, history is both theological and human. History is theological, because God is the led to all divine and human events. Each geographical location in Nigeria has a history of its own and for its own sake as stepping stones for other Nigerians to climb and go higher. Geography is very significant, which many have not realized it. Geography is much more than just facts and figures about planets, but it is about the earth, our home.

Geography is not only about the spatial patterns and processes or about Nigeria’s states and ethnicities but it is about the Glory of God. „Through the mercy of God, Nigerians have the divine privilege to experience God’s wonderful nature, which can be understood in Jesus Christ the Divine Mercy Incarnate”³⁹. The sense of geography talks about tourism centres, about frontiers, centres and peripheries, tourists, terrorists and refugees, trading of many goods and services, etc. This is not to say that no one has his needs. We depend totally on one another for survival and existence. With geography, we know what is happening in other parts of Nigeria and thereby keeping connected with scientific and technological culture. Without geography, people would get lost and not knowing even the location of danger. Naturally, man is invited to learn and know about the earth his „home”. Man becomes a witness of what God has done, even if he claims not to know God, at least he described many locations, which in itself is an opportunity to reflect on the mystery of man eating plants in order to survive.

Other plants, die in order for man to live. Man is not made for himself. He is made for God to proclaim his wonders and to whom he will return. For instance, according to an adage: „Why do we undermine the worth of others when we so depend on others”. The purpose of geography is to say no to any tendency of xenophobia, to treat migrants and refugees with mercy that they never experienced before as a mark of enculturating the Divine Mercy in Nigeria. This is also to remind those who have the tendencies of hate speeches to remember that „no man is an island”. Experiences sharpen experiences and man becomes wiser for his good. Thus, geography has a depth of discipline, which seeks to understand man’s community and environment, namely, physical features, which indicate locations and natural values

³⁸ Benedict XVI, *Message of His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI for the Celebration of the World Youth Day of Peace* (Rome, 8.12.2009): LEV, no. 1.

³⁹ Y. Bamai, *Interview with the Author*, 10 January 2017.

therein. In an event of hunger or lack, man can locate where there are other open alternatives for his survival and existence. Geography helps Nigerians to know ethnicity, religion, politics, social life, rich class, middle class and poverty class as consequences of man's culture.

5.2.3. The Consequences of the Culture of Death

An adage in *C'lela* says: „When a man eats to his fill, most of the time he loses the sense of rationality even for his good”. But it is clear that there is the „reality of God's justice and mercy”⁴⁰. And Nigerians have no immunity of the culture of death. Man uses the human limitations due to sin as an escape window in order to continue politicizing, philosophizing and trivializing serious issues to serve the mundane part of man's greedy life. Moral centres have always been the targets of these agents of the culture of death so that no one reminds them to do the right thing or call them to moral responsibility and accountability. One of these moral centres is religion as an institution. In the name of these attacks they create a man-made world, which they operate without any boundary. For the Greeks, the concept of dualism of body and soul, which filtered into the Church via the Patristic Fathers, the human body and soul would have been receiving equal attention. In St. Thomas Aquinas, *Anima mea non est ego* that is, neither the body nor the soul is the human person. A human person is spirit in matter, a composite of body and soul constitute human person⁴¹ (*corpore et anima unus*).

From the Christian point of view, death is a path through, which man goes back to God. This is inevitable philosophy of life for man⁴². Theologically, death is not an end of man rather it is a historical fact that have come to stay with man and his fellow creatures on earth. In the beginning of creation, there was no „death” (Rom 5:12ff, 8:20) because there was no sin. And in the future hope of man, there will be no more „death” (Rev 21:4) because the Lord God will take away the mourning veil and replace it with the veil of mercy full of joy forever⁴³. Mysteriously, death has become temporary part of history but it is not the whole history. This is because God is the determinant of history who gives meaning to history. As the Church teaches the message of the Divine Mercy, emphatically, the Church is the ark on the turbulent waves of our times, capable of accommodating all those who seek shelter. The tower can then

⁴⁰ R. Imelo, *Interview with the Author*, 10 January 2017.

⁴¹ Cf. C. C. Ibe, *Church and Humanization: A Viable Possibility*, Kaduna: Raph Printing Productions 1998, p. 7.

⁴² Cf. R. P. George, *Conscience and Its Enemies: Confronting the Dogmas of Liberal Secularism*, Wilmington: ISI Books 2013, p. 233.

⁴³ Cf. M. O. Ekpenyong, *Flickers of Mercy: In the Sonoran Desert of Arizona*, Arizona: United States of America 2016, p. 61.

be treated as a lighthouse guiding the pilgrims to where the peaceful part of the land, is their destination. One that they have reached when they enter the sanctuary⁴⁴.

If one were to list the commentators and thinkers in the last 200 years who predicted the end of religion in Nigeria, it would constitute a world-book in contemporary thought. They attack religion from five main platforms mounted on science, morality, psychology, politics and philosophy. Putting it in the words of Professor D. Mason: „that God has become intellectually superfluous, morally intolerable, and psychologically dispensable, politically ineffective and philosophically he is dying the death of a thousand distinctions⁴⁵”. However, reality as a whole is that, man can only think correctly when he keeps his link to God’s mercy.

Unfortunately, humankind does not live in a spiritual vacuum. Many people today have created new deities and worship at new altars. The new gods are materialism and individualism, which eliminate the supernatural, consumerism – which cultivates appetites, which are never satisfied, commercialism where everything has a price including the sacred and people, militarism where might is right and power rules the skies. It has been forgotten that the Lord said through the Blessed Virgin Mary that „the Almighty has put down the mighty from their thrones and raised the lowly, the hungry he has filled with good things and the rich he has sent away empty” (Lk 1 52-53). And Jesus said: „Take care to guard against all greed, for though one may be rich, one’s life does not consist of possessions” (Lk 12:15).

When this happens, there is the conviction that it is in human native powers alone that the solution to humankind’s problem may be found. In a situation where humans are alone, they act for themselves and abide by the logic of results guided by reason. If the Bible is removed and replaced by human thinking, then this method becomes a dogma of doom in the Christian Spirituality to the point that „Without me you can do nothing” (Jn 15:5).

Man has made a lot of progress so far in Nigeria. But there are many things to be prayed for, to be done and be thought about. Consequently, those who are placed at the hem of affairs, ordinary citizens, rich and poor citizens, feel that the God of the pre-modern man is dead, the God who was feared, respected, revered and adored. Many „thinkers” have connived and removed the virtues of truth, justice, honesty, sacrifice, the fear of the Lord and hard work among others. Sadly, these virtues have been replaced by vices such as lack of respect for human life and dignity via many systems in the name of modern life. Yet, in the culture of science and technology, the cry and the sound of lack of integrity, injustice, bribery, corruption, tribalism, racism, nepotism, partism, indigenization etc, are so loud that they have become threats to Nigerians’ lives and „happiness”.

⁴⁴ Cf. A. Bujak, *Łagiewniki: An Opportunity for the World*, Kraków: Leszek Sosnowski 2012, p. 8.

⁴⁵ D. Mason, *Contemporary Ideologies*, (typescript, 1989), p. 10.

The consequences of this kind of man-made-world, is leading many to suffer the boredom of economic activities, their powerlessness in the political world, their loss of self-respect in a world of competition where they are always the losers. This emptiness, sense of powerlessness and meaninglessness of life, which cast such a heavy shadow across the individual, families, communities, local governments, state governments, federal government and the nation. According to CBCN, the Nigerian situation paves the way for the rediscovery of the power in the Divine Mercy as an inevitable link to the kind of „the Nigeria we want”⁴⁶.

In order to have the kind of a country Nigerians want, the family values need to be saved and protected. The CBCN cited the family erosion as a description of the problems and abuses that threaten the family. „There is erosion of family-ties, of family-life and of virtuous home life...A man separated from God becomes inhuman towards himself and towards others for the well-ordered relations between men presuppose well-ordered relations of the person with God the source of truth, justice and love”⁴⁷. The vision of God rich in mercy is where the Lord says: „I have observed the misery of the people. I have heard their cry. Indeed, I know their sufferings. I have come down to deliver them” (Ex 3:7-8). Similarly, the CBCN reiterated its teachings thus: „We know their suffering. We sympathize with their cries that often go unheard. In response to the cry of the people and the call of the Lord, we pledge our efforts and energy to ‘bring good news to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives, and to the blind new sight, to set the downtrodden free, to proclaim the Lord’s year of favour’”⁴⁸, so that the contemporary man can communicate the richness of God’s mercy.

5.3. Contemporary Dialogue in Nigeria

Naturally, man cannot not communicate. In other words, man is always communicating whether knowingly or unknowingly. Nigerians have dialoguing before and after Independence of Nigeria from the British Colony. Due to the dimensional nature of man, there is no permanent mode of communication, which expresses his form of dialogue to resolve both internal and external conflicts in order to achieve some happiness. Dialogue is witnessing to a reality with the view to participate in the life of another, which governs the encounter of human happiness. The aim and objective of every dialogue is to establish or restore the lost connection to happiness as it relates to man with his God and his community. The element of awareness is

⁴⁶ P. Schineller, ed., *Pastoral Letters and Communiques of the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Nigeria 1960-2002*, p. 230.

⁴⁷ P. Schineller, ed., *Pastoral Letters and Communiques of the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Nigeria 1960-2002*, p. 81.

⁴⁸ P. Schineller, ed., *Pastoral Letters and Communiques of the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Nigeria 1960-2002*, p. 420.

not an option but a necessary part of the dialogue. Thus, awareness means to watch yourself during the dialogue. There is always a high temptation during the dialogue, which prompts some questions, such as „When you talk to someone, are you aware of it or are you simply identifying with it? When you got angry with somebody, were you aware that you were angry or were you simply identifying with your anger? Later, when you had time, did you study your experience and attempt to understand it? Where did it come from? What brought it on? You only change what you understand”⁴⁹.

The true dialogue is expressed in the teachings of the Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria when it said: „Dialogue is witnessing to the love of God”⁵⁰ and „to call the attention of all our dear people of Nigeria to the fact notwithstanding the lapse of time, many important issues...continue to face Nigeria today”⁵¹. Thus, „Only a free people can look other peoples in the face: only an atmosphere of freedom makes possible the blossoming of those social institutions and cultural efforts that express the genius of a people; only a free country can make its contribution towards the building up of world economy and social order...freedom alters the mental climate of a country and inspires the pursuit of spiritual and material greatness”⁵² which is transmitted from one generation to another as their primordial patrimony from society. However, the most marginalized are the wretched of the earth found among all the ethnic groups, located in all geographical-zones of Nigeria and who are adherents of ATRs, Christianity and Islam.

5.3.1. The Costly Negligence of Youths

Truly, adults were the treasures of yesterday and today; youths are the treasures of today and tomorrow. A popular saying affirmed that: „today’s youths are the leaders of tomorrow”. It is not an exaggeration to say that St. John Paul II was one of those who acknowledged the value of the youths, by inviting the youths into the World Youth Day, regardless of their various affiliations in the human community⁵³. In his address and teaching he said: „You come from schools, parishes, clubs, institutes and Catholic associations to manifest to the Pope your Christian ideals and the good will to prepare for your future and your coming responsibilities as Christians and citizens with seriousness and generous dedication. For this, too, or rather above all for this, I repeat to you my hearty thanks, which I wish to extend also to your parents,

⁴⁹ A. D. Mello, *Awareness*, p. 56.

⁵⁰ C. Anyanwu, O. J. Fadugba-Pinheiro, eds., *Our Concern for Nigeria Catholic Bishops Speak*, p. 291.

⁵¹ C. Anyanwu, O. J. Fadugba-Pinheiro, eds., *Our Concern for Nigeria Catholic Bishops Speak*, p. 293.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ Cf. M. S. D. Azevedo, *Men of a Single Book: Fundamentalism in Islam, Christianity, and Modern Thought*, Bloomington: World Wisdom 2010, p. 31.

your educators, your teachers and your parish priests, who have guided you to this meeting”⁵⁴. St. John Paul II, made the youth to know how the Church cherished and valued them by taking into account their various stages of life and experiences, which are known to be challenging and breath-taking. He gazed at the youth again with deep love, inspiration, motivation and encouragements and said to them: „Returning to your homes, your schools and your associations, tell everyone that the Pope counts a great deal on the young. Tell them that the young are the comfort and the strength of the Pope, who wishes to see them all, to let them hear his voice of encouragement in the midst of all the difficulties that integration in society involves. Tell them, finally, to reflect both individually, and at their meetings, on the meaning of the new liturgical period and on the implications, that results in the daily commitment of the necessary spiritual renewal”⁵⁵.

The importance of youths cannot be over-emphasized because they are the future presidents, governors, senators, lawyers, medical doctors, engineers, pilots, scientists, technologists etc. The position of youths in society is not only inspiring, but „it is a vision anchored on to transformation of the potentialities, talents and capabilities of the youths into practical accomplishment. Encouraged by this positive hope, every generation tends to see its youths as the builders of a greater tomorrow, the leaders of a brighter future, the moral crusaders of the future church, and the proud responsible parents of the generation to come”⁵⁶. In the same vein, St. John Paul II, during his address to young people in Rome at the jubilee 2002, reminded them of their Christian responsibility in these words: „the mission I entrusted to you is to become, at the dawn of the new millennium, fearless witnesses to the Gospel”⁵⁷ and to make the World Youth Day as an opportunity to bear witness to Christ in his presence in today’s society, and to become builders of „civilization of love and truth”⁵⁸.

Sadly, but not despaired, young people in Nigeria can say no to various crimes namely, drug pushers, armed robbery, prostitutions, bribery and corruption, social miscreants, secret cult, sexual promiscuity, assassins, political thugs, abortionists, drunkenness, indolence etc. Young people can stop moral decadence and loss of patrimonial family values. Before we hold anybody accountable, there is a need to survey a few areas. For instance, society is mute about many things young people are doing in the name of giving them freedom but without a guide

⁵⁴ John Paul II, *Address To the Young People Gathering in The Vatican Basilica* (Rome, 29.11.1978), in: http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/1978/documents/hf_jpii_spe_19781129_giovani.html (accessed 28.06.2017).

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ E. K. Kure, *Youths Formation: A Challenge for the Church and Civil Society, the Way Forward for the 21st Century*, Kaduna: Tymbid Communication 2005, p. 24.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ E. K. Kure, *Youths Formation: A Challenge for the Church and Civil Society, the Way Forward for the 21st Century*, p. 25.

to many mysteries of life, which society witnessed. Science and technology have both the moral and the immoral commodities for sale and to also to be given freely without charge. The youth have the „poisoned-truths”⁵⁹ and „falsehood”⁶⁰ on their fingertips in the public domain. And it is presented as if it is a legal license to own anything without moral implications.

Corruption is inevitable and unavoidable when parents have no time for their children’s moral upbringing. There are contextual sayings in Nigerian society in reference to children and their family responsibilities. Thus: „You cannot eat your cake and have it back”. It is another way of saying „spare the rod and spoil the child”. Thus, young people are often used as agents. It seems like young people copy and copy until they over-copy whether good or bad. Consequently, accusations and counter accusations between parents and young people on the ill state of society. Parents must remain parents and young people must always learn and represent members of their society. In most families, the common scarce commodities are prayer-less life, lack of love and care for neighbours, honesty, integrity, respect for others and their goods etc. When these qualities are lacking, society can suffer from marginalization.

5.3.2. The „Marginalized-democrats” in Society

The strong commodity sold by the democratic system of government is the campaign of the fact of government of the people, by the people and for the people. People make history and propel their survival based on the foundation of their history. The values of livelihood, ethnicity, culture, religion and social are fundamental realities in people’s history. When people are treated insignificantly or peripherally in relation to these values that make their history, they feel marginalized either by a government or a constituted group. The treatment of persons, groups or concepts as unimportant in the affairs of the community is „marginalization”⁶¹ at the social, political and economic levels. The word „marginalization”, is a very vital word used by some Nigerian tribes, ethnic groups and communities based on their historical experiences. This notion is barked up with many factors as a result of unequal distribution of resources, power sharing, leadership issues, employments, school admission processes, resource control, insincerity, selfishness and greed of individuals, institutions and deceptive campaign.

⁵⁹ When a truth about something is poisoned, what it means is that it will be presented with an intention to harm, either morally or psychologically, and spiritually or physically. The recipient may not even be disposed to understand the implications or not in position to know the contrary approach to such a danger.

⁶⁰ When the reality about something is distorted, and it is presented legitimately to others, it’s aims and objectives are to deceive and corrupt the original reality of that what makes it what it is. For example, planning to kill or take life in any form is „Falsehood” against true value of human life, dignity and personhood.

⁶¹ A. Akosile, ed., *How Can Nigeria Tackle Marginalization?* in: <https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2017/07/13/118226/> (accessed 22.07.2017).

The democrats who accepted and bought the concept of democracy and its principles, are democrats who believe that the essentials of life, which is paramount for the people would be nurtured, empowered and be brought to another level. Seasoned democrats usually come out not only to promote the campaign of democratic principles but its basic manifestoes. Yet, the democratic values and principles are not „only founded on paper promises”⁶², which turns out to be seen as deceptive and lie-telling system, but its policies and programmes float and truncate the very fabrics that hold its democrats together. The practitioners of the democratic system compromise callously to the point of creating gaps for the democratic spies who exploit the yawning gap between the stuffy external campaign promises that would never be and coupled with its seedy selfishness and greed, which propagate the myth of marginalization⁶³. The notion of power is more than the individual who is vested with the authority to make things happen. However, the person with the collective power is delimited by those that control official discourses and the general populace. This re-conceptualizing the „notion of power even within the most authoritative of polities, people will find niches of autonomy and control”⁶⁴ of democratic dividends or create them through the talented members of the community.

However, „the causes of marginalization are the propagation of the stubborn myth of marginalization that one’s ethnic community is marginalized by all other ethnic communities, when in fact every ethnic community is marginalized by the incompetence of leaders; the acceptance of this myth by the young people, discontented but gullible Nigerians: these and many other indices offer little or no hope to even the most incurable optimist in the land”⁶⁵. The instrument of propaganda, which was used to propagate the democratic values and principles, has degenerated to the instrument of propagating divisive speeches, anarchy, hatred and suspicion to the point that everyone is on a blame ride and game. Some have been absolved of blame and sacrifice by their ethnic, religious and political allies. Many have been made „saints”⁶⁶ even by the legitimate institutions. Unfortunately, the highest form of marginalization is the psychological blindness, which has eaten up any possible space of further developments. However, there are more deadly concepts that have been put forward for further propagandists to ride on the promotion of the myth of marginalization, which include; tribalism, inequality, land disputes, unhealed or unresolved historical disputes, ignorance and unemployment of youths. Youths become the willing tools to be used as free instruments of riots and violence. It

⁶² P. Coggan, *Paper Promises: Money, Debt and the New World Order*, London: Allen Lane 2011, p. 114.

⁶³ Cf. G. Corera, *The Art of Betrayal: Life and Death in the British Secret Service*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson 2011, p. 219.

⁶⁴ T. C. Lewellen, *Political Anthropology: An Introduction*, p. 127.

⁶⁵ A. Okogie, *What Do We Make of a Country Where an Individual Owns a Fleet of Private Jets...?*, in: <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2017/07/nigeria-nation-without-leaders-okogie/> (accessed 11.07.2017).

⁶⁶ The „saints” here are referred to those who should be investigated over the ills of the society but they are covered and given immunity by their ethnic, religious, political allies.

is never in record that those who sponsor violence and other nefarious activities involved their spouses, children, relations or parents.

The effects of marginalization are more than the causes. The effects of the psychological marginalization are the sickness of mental closure, which expresses itself in a destructive and violent manner. The ongoing destructive activities of the insurgencies, unitarists, secessionists and agitators in Nigeria, are the highest form of marginalization not only of the self, the human capacity but the human will to expand positively. There is a huge army of unemployed youths in Nigeria who are ready for a better tomorrow by attaining various levels of educational status. This situation reveals a fundamental problem with much modernization theory, which views under-development a primary condition characterized by lack of technology, capital and the entrepreneurial principle. Under-development in itself is a form of marginalization, which is a man-made structure to keep a particular people under various forms of slavery. Thus, under-development has a massive history which is connected to lack of mercy. Moreover, the under-development of the Third World and the development of the First World are not isolated and discrete phenomena⁶⁷. Sometimes, those who are marginalized and those who are not can be seen as two sides of one coin. „The political permutation in Nigeria is nothing beyond the desire of some self-serving and satanically inclined religious and political leaders, to create chaos, anarchy and violence in the guise of representing the interest of Nigerians. Our elites have exploited the innocence and vulnerability of Nigerians, to create this confusion to ignite an eventual ethno-religious conflagration”⁶⁸.

People can be marginalized by themselves, by not doing anything about their situation, where they keep waiting, as if there are special agents whose duty is to work for the development of their areas even they are being offered the opportunities to develop themselves. Those who sit back without doing anything not only marginalized themselves but they under-develop themselves and their communities. For example, „United States of America, Taiwan and South Korea used import substitutions and extensive government strategic planning devoid of corruption”⁶⁹, which gave them opportunities to employ a number of strategies such as massive land reforms, universal access to education, government ownership of key industries, and redistribution of wealth before industrialization. These were the internal initiatives by the governments to ensure a strong domestic economy, which keep the governments in stable

⁶⁷ Cf. T. C. Lewellen, *Political Anthropology: An Introduction*, p. 207.

⁶⁸ A. C. Godwin, *Middle belt group blasts Danjuma, Dogonyaro over claim of Jihad in Nigeria*, in: http://dailypost.ng/2017/07/18/middle-belt-group-blasts-danjuma-dogonyaro-claim-jihad-nigeria/?utm_source=DailyPost+Newsletter&utm_campaign=1230177758-Todays_headlines&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_7c25dc3ce6-1230177758-227649261 (accessed 18.07.2017).

⁶⁹ G. C. Nnorom, *How Can Nigeria Tackle Marginalization?* in: <https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2017/07/13/118226/> (accessed 22.07.2017).

conditions in order to expand and contract by checks and balances. For the safety of the economy, the establishment of government's control agencies over these sectors is necessarily, which also provides economic power to open to the global economy. It is not for the national interest or for the Federal Government to privatize not only the Federal assets but the states and local government assets. The only hope for the common man in Nigeria is in the assets of the governments. When people do not have the common ownership of the government by definition of „democracy”⁷⁰, it derails the essential principles of the entire purpose of the government and its programmes. Wounds and hurts are always created in most administrations, and sometimes without reconciliation and healing. Yet, the government must need other people to actualize many of its developmental programmes. The Constitution is the national guide. For people to take a government serious about its propaganda and myth of unity and oneness, it must be serious in tackling and changing the syndrome of self-interest first and national interest second, to national interest first and self-interest second. Certain values must be made national values such as leadership, federal character, transparency, accountability and equal distribution of wealth across the country regardless of any affiliation to the point of silencing all „gossips and hate speeches”⁷¹.

When the government is in the hands of „a few people without a structure”⁷², one is sure of all kinds of gossips, mundane or sublime plausible outrageous. Every junk and gobble up into any news in sight, no matter how ridiculous far-fetched it may be. Consequently, any news around can be lumped together, which only create more confusion and anarchy as the desired results by the unpatriotic agents.

However, the solution to marginalization calls for sensitization at the national, state and local government levels about the evil effects of „selfishness, insincerity and avarice”⁷³. For a government to be credibly regarded, it must „be honest”⁷⁴. Lack of honesty attacks every sense of good intention especially when unity remains a „positive force”⁷⁵. When jobs are created and distributed to everybody without discrimination, it douses the tensions and the „myth of marginalization”⁷⁶. Thus, integration is necessarily in Nigeria where the past administrations

⁷⁰ E. I. Chukwudi, *How Can Nigeria Tackle Marginalization?* in: <https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2017/07/13/118226/> (accessed 22.07.2017).

⁷¹ O. Olorunsomo, *How Can Nigeria Tackle Marginalization?* in: <https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2017/07/13/118226/> (accessed 22.07.2017).

⁷² A. Onesi, *How Can Nigeria Tackle Marginalization?* in: <https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2017/07/13/118226/> (accessed 22.07.2017).

⁷³ D. Stephen, *How Can Nigeria Tackle Marginalization?* in: <https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2017/07/13/118226/> (accessed 22.07.2017).

⁷⁴ A. P. Eneyeme, *How Can Nigeria Tackle Marginalization?* in: <https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2017/07/13/118226/> (accessed 22.07.2017).

⁷⁵ G. Duj, *How Can Nigeria Tackle Marginalization?* in: <https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2017/07/13/118226/> (accessed 22.07.2017).

⁷⁶ I. Nnorom, *How Can Nigeria Tackle Marginalization?* in:

were devoid of reconciliation, national healing and integration. The patriotic citizens have no intention to hold onto power rather, they desire to provide opportunities to nurture, to build human capacity, to empower the powerless and to provide the path of attaining the positions of power for the common good and history.

5.3.3. The History and Future

History is a necessary element in man's existence. History is inescapable. History connects man to the gift of mercy without, which man cannot refer to his origin, purpose and vision. The human person has no name and place without history. Without history, nothing can be established and inferred, which constitute nonexistence. Today depends on yesterday, while the future depends on today.

Divine Mercy is the cause of history and presents the future to man as a window of opportunity to turn and make amends of his failed history. The divine providence provides man the favour to experience the flow of chronological record of significant events. In such events, knowledge is being acquired where the past is explained. Whatever that is explained, forms the subject matter of history with serious consequences as it affects human person in time and space. The consequences of history are not far-fetched from the failed history of man. History of man is huge. It embodies the „'why history', which it refers to the past with many meanings of the past. „History with a capital 'H', which refers to a field of study. History reviews the long-term past study of the present of human species, which directs human person's attention to the mixture of continuities in the different forms of change in human history"⁷⁷, such as revolution and evolution, which anchored on the Divine Mercy as inevitable human history, moral history, Divine Mercy history and future history.

The recorded failure of humanity was revolutionary and evolutionary. As it has been mentioned, the divine justice stung humanity to consciousness to the point of conversion and repentance. Using the various forms of knowledge, Nigeria and her communities can accept a rethink of the past legacies in order to experience a concrete transition of growth and change. Proper understanding of history helps to establish a secure footing within the unfolding saga of time and space with the situation of the modern society. To rethink over history is not a fixation, like trying to halt or drop the flow of time, but a powerful ability to sustain right footing within

<https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2017/07/13/118226/> (accessed 22.07.2017).

⁷⁷ „History”, as a field of study can be seen in the study of geography, mathematics, biology, zoology, theology, political science, chemistry, physics, etc.

history's mysterious maneuvering. Indeed, nothing can be more relevant here-and-now than to make history „the great teacher” of all generations for moral principles.

Moral history is connected with the principle of right and wrong within the dimension of human activities. Man is a moral being with the power to know when things are not working correctly in his society. The principle of right and wrong is a tension connected with the human dignity and freedom, which puts man at the centre of human struggle to grow, develop and change situations to the better in society. Nigeria never shaded blood to get her Independence, which serves as a moral foundation where as it were, human life and dignity have normatively become a national value. There is a disconnection between the human life and the Divine Mercy to the point that individuals are at the mercy of individuals, where suddenly the human person metamorphosed to an instrument of pain. Moral history has incurred failure due to human greed and selfishness in society. The aim and objective of moral history is to acquire the fullness of life at the existential level where every sphere of life is subjected to the Divine Mercy in freedom.

The Divine Mercy is the history of God who is the beginning and the end of human rationality. It is a divine invitation to Nigerians to redress the failed steps and step on the path to life, growth, development and peace. The history of the Divine Mercy is the history of God stretching out his moral-hand of salvation to Nigerians' restoration and redemption. The history of mercilessness in Nigeria brought about untold hardships, diseases, hunger, despair and death in the midst of natural resources, human resources in conjunction with the international communities. There is no administration that is completely a success or a failure. In each case, justice and mercy are the permanent moral values that stand the test of all times. Thus, it is not an over-statement to say the beneficiaries of justice and mercy, are in all administrations, institutions, leaders and the led inculturated by time⁷⁸. The constant exchange of mercy for the good and happiness of whoever is concerned, is an invitation to families, communities, local and state governments, and Federal Government to unite: and expel corruption; poverty; bad governance; insecurity and enthrone true justice; rule of law; corruption free society; equity and security for all. The credibility of Nigerian community or administration, depends on her credible institutions and administrators to guarantee safety of lives and properties of its people.

The future history can only bounce and parasite on the past history. There can be no future if there is no past. The human language and many subjects of studies undergo diachronic securitizations until they reach human perfection and put them into use. Similarly, the attitude of the Divine Mercy can be synchronized as a moral force linking all the centres that are connected to Nigerians. After all, synchronic is always in the diachronic not only to purify but

⁷⁸ Cf. P. Odozor, *An African Moral Theology of Inculturation*, p. 583-609.

to link all centres of importance. The mystery of the future is in the present, which is part of the unfolding realities. In other words, the diachronic is always in the synchronic, the past always contributes to the immediate present as it affects the implication of receiving and giving of mercy to the next Nigerian. Just like the heat, which synchronizes in a diachronic gradual way, so also the experience of the reward of the Divine Mercy attitude can be inculturated in all human families and institutions.

The language of the Divine Mercy and history is that no matter how bad the past is, it is possible to begin again. After all, history is like a circle, which every ending is continuously followed by a new beginning. In life, every end has a new beginning. Nigerians will not end like a story in a book. But, Nigeria will begin again and in order to bounce back to prosperity and greatness through the Divine Mercy application.

5.4. Divine Mercy Application

The Divine Mercy is the „divineness” of God’s sovereign power and it is his prerogative to grant justice and mercy to human person. The Divine Mercy application(DMA) can be likened to the analogy of God and conscience. St. Bonaventure and the Franciscan school, following Augustine, spoke of conscience as the imperishable ‘spark of the soul’, which reflects God’s creative wisdom and shines in the heart of man. „Conscience is a fundamental mode of self-awareness”⁷⁹, which confronts man with the moral law to do good and avoid evil. Conscience is not the source of moral law. „Conscience puts man in contact with the Source of moral law and Lawgiver, God Himself”⁸⁰. Importantly, „conscience does not decide good and evil: it discerns”⁸¹ them more accurately. It is a detector of the moral voice. By analogy to radio, it serves as a receiving set, and it does not transmit message of the voice. Thus:

„Conscience is not an independent and exclusive capacity to decide what is good and what is evil. Rather there is profoundly imprinted upon it a principle of obedience vis-à-vis the objective norm, which establishes and conditions the correspondence of its decisions with the commands and prohibitions, which are at the basis of human behaviour”⁸².

„Conscience is about freedom in the truth, not freedom from the truth”⁸³. Here, conscience acts like an adviser who sees the truth of a matter and freely offers clear information about the particular truth for an action to be taken.

⁷⁹ GS, no. 16.

⁸⁰ VS, no. 60.

⁸¹ CCC, no. 33.

⁸² P. Watson, *Introduction to Moral Theology*, Birmingham: Maryvale Institute 2007-2008, p. 35.

⁸³ Ibid.

Similarly, the application of the Divine Mercy in practical terms, needs both conscience and attitude, so that conscience influences the will and the application of an attitude. On one hand, conscience is required to serve as a radio receiving set and detector of the voice of God to man. On the other hand, attitude is required to serve not only as transmitting station but as an instrument without, which it is impossible to express the work of mercy. When conscience detects and receives the voice of God, it does not only provoke „fundamental a mode of self-awareness”, basic personal awareness of moral principle and truth, and the judgement of practical reason, but it connects with the virtue of prudence for moral judgement to morally approve or object⁸⁴. Conscience stands as a „witness” to man of his own faithfulness or unfaithfulness to God with respect to the moral law, of his own morally correct behaviour or his conscience bears witness and his conflicting thought accuses or perhaps excuses him⁸⁵. Prudence perfects the intellect, guiding it to discern and make choices on all matters of importance as they affect the attainment of good end. Prudence as a general virtue, includes clear-sightedness, or a quick, accurate perception of the true value of the good means to good end. Man’s imperfection, makes him constantly dependent on God to achieve perfect means to a good end. The primordial Fall of man makes him vulnerable even to the things he made. Man’s nature has been wounded by the contracted sin and not the sin he committed in his life. Of course, no sin is condoned in all circumstances. The contracted state of sin makes man unable to attain perfection without God. He stands in dire need of God’s „actual grace”. The „actual grace” is God’s intervention in his life, whether at the beginning of conversion or in the course of work of sanctification. Grace is divine favour, the free and underserved help that God gives man to respond to his call to become children of God-participating in the Trinitarian Life. Grace escaped human experience and cannot be known except by faith.

However, faith is a free gift that God makes known to man in order to please him⁸⁶. We can lose this priceless gift, as St. Paul indicates to St. Timothy: „Wage the good warfare, holding faith and a good conscience. By rejecting conscience, certain persons have made shipwreck of their faith”⁸⁷. Moreover, respect for laws inscribed in the creation derives from the nature of things is a principle of wisdom and a foundation for morality⁸⁸. Therefore, for Nigerians to live, grow and persevere in the faith pleasing to God (Heb 11:6), they must nourish and nurture it with the Word of God, prayer life and works of mercy.

⁸⁴ Cf. *GS*, no. 16.

⁸⁵ Cf. *VS*, no. 57.

⁸⁶ Cf. *CCC*, no. 162.

⁸⁷ *Ibid*.

⁸⁸ Cf. *CCC*, no. 354.

5.4.1. Prayer of Mercy

Prayer is a quality conversation with God and a key to many doors. It attracts divine wisdom to the wise in order to be wiser. All prayers are said from the point of view of God's mercy on human person. When man was justly condemned, but he was redeemed through Jesus Christ¹. The prayer of mercy purifies, disposes the human person to answer the call of Jesus when he said: „Watch and pray so that you will not enter into temptation” (Mt 26:41). The prayer of mercy draws attention, to be sober-minded and to be alert, because „Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking for someone to devour. Resist him, stand firm in your faith and in the knowledge that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kinds of suffering” (1 Pet 5:8). Among those who suffered was a blind man who needed to see again, he called Jesus with a cry of mercy, „Jesus Son of David, have mercy on me” (Lk 18:38). Through his prayer for mercy, which he offered with faith, Jesus immediately said to him, „receive your sight; your faith has healed you” (Lk 18:42). Through the Fathers of the Church's times and our time, Jesus spoke to St. Faustina and said: „write, the greater the sinner, the greater the mercy. Summon all those to confidence in the incomprehensible depth of My Mercy for I desire to save all. The well of Mercy was opened wide with a lance on the Cross, for all souls. I do not exclude anyone”².

The prayer of mercy is urgent due to imminent monster of addiction of evil, which does not discriminate between „culture, class, or race”³. Addiction is not only to drugs but to mercilessness, replacing truth with falsehood, violence, uprooting human values we know from time immemorial and the monster has gripped families and their children, communities, Nigerians, institutions and their values. Addiction has now affected not only the young people who are more vulnerable but affects the adults and the surroundings. It was not out of place for Jesus to say, „Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?” (Lk 2: 42). Jesus taught us that it is only through prayer that human person can access and connect to God's mercy. Addiction has bedeviled Nigerian society, which can be expelled by the prayer of mercy anchored in good works. For example, the couple who wedded in Cana was almost at the point of shame and disgrace in the presence of his guests. Here, the Blessed Virgin Mary did not only launch a prayer of mercy and good works when she said, „They have no wine” (Jn 2:3), but she affirmed her faith and good works when she said: „Do whatever he tells you” (Jn 2:5). With the prayer of mercy by the Blessed Virgin Mary on behalf of the couple, Jesus mercifully responded immediately when he said, „Fill the jars with water” (Jn 2:7), and „Now draw some out and

¹ Cf. J. F. Whealon, ed., *Weekdays II P38*, in: „The Vatican II Weekday Missal” (1975), p. 888.

² D. Connell, *Will You Help Me? Handbook of Devotion to Divine Mercy*, Ireland: Val Colon 1995, p. 17.

³ M. Fenelon, *The Drug Addict Next Door*, in:

<http://www.ncregister.com/blog/mfenelon/the-drug-addict-next-door> (accessed 29.07.2017).

take it to the master of the feast” (Jn 2:8). At the request of the Blessed Virgin Mary, her prayer of mercy for the couple did not only „trigger” another celebration but brought divine grace, joy, hope, healing and restoration.

The doctors can only treat, God heals through his mercy and love. Furthermore, when Jesus arrived at Peter’s house, he saw Peter’s mother-in-law sick in bed with a fever. He touched her hand, and the fever left her, and she got up and began to serve them (Mt 8:14-15). Similarly, on his arrival, Jesus found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days (Jn 11:17). With a merciful voice Jesus called out in a loud voice, „Lazarus, come out!” (Jn 11:43). Consequently, the dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face (Jn 11:44). One can imagine the level of human desire and joy that were restored by God’s merciful acts of healing, raising the dead to life and winning grace against disgrace. The Blessed Virgin Mary was the first doer of the prayer of mercy.

In the same vein, as part of the Celebration of the Year of Mercy and the Year of Mary Mother of Mercy, all are encouraged to join Mary in the practice of the Deeds of Mercy⁴. Morally, man is not only bound by nature to keep in touch with God in prayer, but he must emphasize the morality of prayer. Bishop Martin Uzoukwu put it well when he said:

„Fast from problems that overwhelms: feast on prayer that sustains; fast from bitterness: feast on forgiveness; fast from self-concern: feast on compassion on others; fast from personal anxiety: feast on total trust; fast from discouragement: feast on hope; fast from facts that depress: feast on verities that uplifts; fast from lethargy: feast on enthusiasm; fast from suspicion: feast on truth; fast from thoughts that weaken: feast on promises that inspire; Fast from shadows of sorrow: feast on the sunlight of serenity; Fast from idle gossip: feast on purposeful silence; fast from judging others: feast on Christ dwelling in them; fast from emphasis on differences: feast on the unity of all life; fast from apparent darkness: feast on the reality of all light; fast from thoughts of illness: feast on the healing power of God; fast from words that pollute: feast on the phrases that purify; fast from discontent: feast on gratitude; fast from anger: feast on patience; fast from pessimism: feast on optimism; fast from worry: feast on God’s providence; fast from complaining: feast on appreciation; fast from negatives: feast on affirmatives; fast from hostility: feast on non-resistance”⁵.

Jesus is the Divine Mercy Incarnate. In other words, the Name of Jesus forms the theological foundation of every prayer. Thus, the Acts of the Apostles affirms that there is no other name under heaven given among men, which we must pray to obtain salvation (Ac 4:12). Therefore, Nigerians are challenged to embrace prayer of mercy as unbeatable key to Nigerians’ consolation and peace. Prayer is a divine instrument for Nigerians. Prayer empowers, energizes and nurtures hope. Lack of prayer not only lead to suffocation of happy life but despondency will be inevitable.

⁴ Cf. M. I. Uzoukwu, *Walking in the Light of Mary Mother of Mercy*, in: *Lenten Message of 2017*, Suleja: Ezvan Ent 2017, p. 5-7.

⁵ Ibid.

5.4.2. Works of Mercy

Work is not only a vocation of man to reveal God's love, mercy and faithfulness, but it contains characteristics, features and elements that describe man as a created-creature by Uncreated-God. When man works, he leaves an imprint of his good work or bad. Man's main purpose of work is to reveal God's glory in the midst of all creatures and things on earth. God leaves his image and likeness in man. Similarly, man leaves his image in the things he creates and the works he does. Thus, man's work must contain the features of God's mercy from age to age.

God is the author and beginning of work. He works at all times and he fills every work with the attitude of Divine Mercy. God made man with the moral mandate to work. Man works in order to eat and to develop and realize his potentials making him special among all creatures. Work is a vocation for man to through, which wisdom and knowledge are expressed in the art of working and attaining the human perfection, which man is morally mandated to achieve by his moral virtues, which are connected to God's works. The author of the Book of Revelation put it well when said: „How great and wonderful are all your works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are all your ways, King of nations, who would not revere and praise your name, O Lord? You alone are holy, and all the pagans will come and adore you for the many acts of justice you have shown” (Rev 15:3; Ps 92:5, 98: 1).

Every work that brings healing and restoration contains features of mercy, which not only continues the work of God in the attitudinal life of human person but respond to God's love in his mercy. To do the works of mercy is to please God in faith. It is not enough to receive mercy without gratitude to God by whose mercy is the reason for man's existence. Jesus has affirmed man in reference to continuous work as the light of the world and also likened him as a city on a hill that cannot be hidden. In other words, people's work should have the character and feature of light, which should not only be lit but should not be hidden from people as a reflection of God's love and mercy. Moreover, a lamp is not lit and put under a basket. Instead, people set it on a lampstand, which gives light to everyone in the house. Similarly, every human work should have the capacity to express mercy. Human work is to express God's mercy, which is similar to light shining before men so that they may see the works of light and glorify God in heaven (Mt 5:15-16). Doing good works is not only to do what God has commanded but to continue tilling and caring of the human and ecological values of earth in different ways to the point that the ecology is saturated with God's love and mercy at work.

Work is not only man's vocation but a response to the biblical call to work and subdue the earth. „Work is a good thing for man-a good thing for his humanity- because through work man not only transforms nature, adapting it to his own needs, but he also achieves fulfilment as

a human being and indeed, in a sense, becomes, more a human being”⁶. Man’s response to this call is always in the context of spiritual and physical work. Man is an evidence of God’s image. In his work, he re-creates new ways to respond to God’s call on him to love and to be loved in mercy. In love, man expresses his real image of God, and also expresses his dependence on God his Creator. Humanity is recreated when love is expressed as doing works of mercy and human act. On the one hand, man uses the human body to work and to give God glory, as the Perfect Maker of all things. On the other hand, the soul: which is the second property of man, the spiritual part of man will go back to God having fulfilled all righteousness to be with God forever. The human heart and body are designed to rest in God’s love and to be restless without God while carrying out the works of mercy on earth. In 1981, St. John Paul II wrote on human work, in his Encyclical Letter *Laborem Exercens (LE)*, in honour of 90th anniversary, and makes reference to *Rerum Novarum (RN)* and to several of the subsequent writings. The Encyclical focused on the dignity of work and personal dignity, labour and capital, the indirect employer, and rights of workers and spirituality of work⁷. The Encyclical pointed some of the trends, which serve as predictions namely: increased use of technology, especially information technology, which would bring changes comparable to the industrial revolution of the previous centuries; environmental issues, particularly oil scarcity and the need to protect the environment; and people in the developing world wanted to be involved in the global economy⁸.

St. John Paul II, taught that man’s engagement in the global economy, there „emerges the meaning of work in an objective sense, which finds expression in the various epochs of culture and civilization. Man dominates the earth by the very fact of domesticating animals, rearing them and obtaining from them the food and clothing he needs, and by the fact of being able to extract various natural resources from the earth and the seas. But man ‘subdues the earth’ much more when he begins to cultivate it and then to transform its products adapting them to his own use”⁹. Man’s spiritual superiority over matter, places him on an edge „to subdue the earth and dominate it”, because with the „image of God” in him, he is a person, that is to say, a subjective being capable of acting in a planned and rational way, capable of deciding about himself, and with a tendency to self-actualization. As a person, man is therefore the subject of work. As a person he works, he performs various actions belonging to the work process; independently of their objective content, these actions must all serve to realize his humanity, to fulfil the calling to be a person that is his by reason of his very humanity¹⁰.

⁶ *LE*, no. 9.

⁷ Cf. *Ibid*.

⁸ Cf. *LE*, no. 1.

⁹ *LE*, no. 5.

¹⁰ Cf. *LE*, no. 6.

Fundamentally, both spiritual and corporal works of mercy are not only vocational to man but they are intrinsically moral implications of being human. These implications are applied only to the human person. On one hand, man has benefited spiritually when he found answers to his desires, which many of his prayers are associated with thanksgiving, praises, gratitude and expression of joy over achievements, which have been recorded, prayers answered by God or fulfilment of personal desires. God has also made people available who would continue to bring assistance to man's spiritual and bodily predicaments in life. Many people believe that those who helped them in life are God-sent-messengers in answer to their prayers in times of needs. On the other hand, for Christians, spiritual works of mercy „confirm the indispensability of the Cross in the spirituality of human work... the Cross, which this toil constitutes and reveals a new good springing from work itself, from work understood in depth and in all its aspects and never apart from work”¹¹. According to Paul VI, in human work: „technical expertise is necessary, but it must be accompanied by concrete signs of genuine love. Untainted by overbearing nationalistic pride or any trace of racial discrimination, experts should learn how to work in collaboration with everyone. They must realize that their expert knowledge does not give superiority in every sphere of life”¹².

Today, economy and politics are the masters of man and the human community. Apparently, they are real forms of idolatry. In the centre of this idolatry, money, ideology, technology and class are worshipped and adored with new names and symbols specific to each idol as the case maybe. Unfortunately, man makes for himself gods out of his handwork, which are idols of „silver and gold, products of human skill, they have mouths, but they cannot speak; they have eyes, but they cannot see; they have ears, but they cannot hear; they have noses, but they cannot smell; they have hands, but they cannot feel; they have feet, but they cannot walk; they make a sound with their throats” (Ps 115:5-7). Man's self-autonomy and unlimited-freedom are not only illusionary but destructive. Expanding on this, St. John Paul II put it well when he said: „When man disobeys God and refuses to submit to his rule, nature rebels against him and no longer recognizes him as its ‘master’, for he has tarnished the divine image in himself. The claim to ownership and use of created things remains still valid, but after sin its exercise becomes difficult and full of suffering”¹³. Disobedience to God's rule and dire need of autonomy deformed man's ability to understand himself and the world, which he lives in. The difficulty comes as a result of the rebellion of the products created by man. The rebellion of the products of man against man is promoted by agents, which are made-up-of elite and politicians.

¹¹ *LE*, no. 27.

¹² *PP*, no. 72.

¹³ *SRS*, no. 30.

Moreover, the elite tell Nigerians exactly what they want to do. In other words, if they get their way, the common patrimony is going to look different from what we know it to be.

For example, these elitists ideology of „sustainable development” in Nigeria, share a dream of friendly dystopian socialist paradise without God, where the individual freedom is restricted in the name of the „collective good” and without respect to the principle of subsidiarity. However, this „collective good”, has not been defined and how it is attained and shared among the stakeholders of a belief or faith, to the point of attaining a „collective good”. This totalitarian nightmare aims at establishing a central control where nobody questions or challenges the status quo under pain of abuse and of death. Everything will not only be considered as a product of human work but will be metamorphosed into service, which is to be carried out by human products. Consequently, the costs of such mentality of totalitarian life are never seen or envisaged. Thus, an acquired state of regret will be inevitable both at the local and national levels, where the majority of Nigerians will become helpless, vulnerable and more defenceless at the mercy of human ideologies. Thus, because God is not involved in human work, this mentality only leads to mercilessness and work-less-ness’ society in Nigeria, where an attitude will be developed to look like thinking-time, better-time, creation-time, sustainable development-time, service-time, every-product-recycling-time, human-recycling-time and recording-time of every Nigerian activity, legitimate or illegitimate acts against God and man. Man must think mercifully to avoid a tyranny of the elite at the detriment of the poor, simple and defenceless Nigerians. Notably, elite are needed to shape and add value to the human society and the world for better expression of God’s mercy and love and raising human dignity and personhood to recognize God’s kingdom on earth. But, politicians constantly come with a friendly language under the guise of sacrifice for the „grassroots developments”, „sustainable development”, „consolidation of achievements”, and for the good of „our country and our party”, which will only lead to a „socialist paradise”¹⁴. Jesus warned humanity against the ideology of work when he said: „I demand from you deeds of mercy, you must not shrink from this or try to excuse or absolve yourself from it. I give you three ways of exercising mercy, the first by deed, the second by word, and the third by prayers”¹⁵. In other words, the jobless receive acts of mercy as deeds of the employers. Those who provide labour is not enough to have them as workers without dignity. The employees are to maintain their dignity given to each worker by God, giving pensioners their due, while treating them well as a form of prayer-wish of the

¹⁴ M. Snyder, *Agenda 2030: A Global Society with No Possessions, No Privacy and No Freedom*, in: http://www.prophecynewswatch.com/article.cfm?recent_news_id=885 (accessed 20.12.2016).

¹⁵ *Diary*, no. 742.

employers, not only for the workers but to their families by extension. In this way, the demand of the deeds of mercy is realized.

The Church is convinced that work is a fundamental dimension of human existence on earth. Man, who had been created „in the image of God...male and female” (Gen 1:27) hears and responds to the words, „Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it” (Gen 1:28). However, these words do not refer directly and explicitly to work, but they indirectly indicate work as an activity for man to carry out in the world, which Nigeria is not an exception. Essentially, work is part of human nature, which man is the subject of work. The personhood of man connects him to rationality where he has the capacity to see, judge, and decide on action-plan. His capability to act in a planned and rational way, sharpens his consciousness and tendency of self-realization to transcend not only beyond himself, but to reconnect himself with his Creator-God, the author of work. According to Genesis, work is the consequence of sin. Yet, work remains an integral part of human nature, which the two cannot be separated and work makes man „more a human being¹⁶”. In the same vein, St. John Paul II, teaches that the human body is human and living precisely because it is animated by a spiritual soul. So closely united are body and soul in human person that one must consider the soul to be the „form” of the „body” through, which work is performed by man. It is only because it is animated by a spiritual soul that the body in question is a living, human body. The human person’s „rational soul is *per se* and essentially the form of his body”, and the „person, including his body, is completely entrusted to himself, and it is in the unity of body and soul that a person is the subject of his own „moral acts”¹⁷. St. John Paul II, wasn’t merely drawn to the theme of work by chance. But, his attraction for it emerged spontaneously from his experiences of hard labour, pedagogy of marriage, family loss, laity, intellectual life, and prayerful theological exposure.

Work is connected to the natural state of man. God did not only transmit this nature through the act of his work, but commanded man to till and care for the earth with its moral implication towards the completeness of the intention of God. But, the natural state of man has been damaged by sin, which requires him to reconcile himself to his natural greatness in faith, which is embodied in the „image of God” and he must not forget that he is a person¹⁸. In reference to work, faith must be understood as a cognitive virtue and event, which we believe something to be true with sure sense of God’s presence where man anchored his being. This is because, man can only find meaning of life when he is connected with work in total surrender

¹⁶ John Paul II, *Love and Responsibility Foundation*, New York: Summer Edition (2002), p. 2.

¹⁷ W. E. May, M. J. McGivney, *What Is a Human Person and Who Counts as a Human Person: A Crucial Question for Bioethics*, in:

<http://www.christendom-awake.org/pages/may/humanperson.htm> (accessed 20.05.216).

¹⁸ Cf. *Ibid.*

to God's will. As a person, it also implies that the integral love and its elements of true love is a virtue expressed at work in the full sense of the word, not just the expression of emotions and excitements, but expression of the daily efforts to achieve objectivity showing the responsibility in service of love and to participate in the economy of salvation.

Morally, no one can escape from the fundamental questions: What must I do? How do I distinguish good from evil, light from darkness, life from death? The answer is only possible if man goes back to his conscience where he will confront a moral call to participate in truth and love in the economy of salvation, which the truth shines in the human spirit. The Psalmist put it well, when he said: „There are many who say: „O that we might see some good! Let the light of your face shine on us, O Lord” (Ps 4:6). When man works, he releases some energy, which carries the stamp of divine image in him. This is like a „trademark” of a company. This stamp is to recognize God's glory and makes it known in all of man's works. The subsequent actions of man demonstrate works of mercy in the world where man is first and foremost, God's only representative with the command to work in his body and in his spirit to attain human perfection.

According to St. Thomas Aquinas, God influences man with his love, truth and beauty in the world¹⁹. Consequently, moral freedom exists when moral options are provided to a choice of an action, which carries moral authority to influence every aspect of human work with love, truth and beauty. Side by side with its exaltation of freedom—to choose or not, modern culture radically questions the very existence of this freedom. However, a number of disciplines grouped under the name of the „behavioural sciences”, have drawn attention to the many kinds of psychological and social conditions, which influence the exercise of human freedom. These conditions arise as consequences of corruption, which can only be cured by corporal and spiritual works of mercy. Influencing every work with love, truth and beauty has become a hard-nut to crack. Some people have gone to the conclusions, which can be drawn legitimately from these observations, to question or even deny the very reality of human freedom²⁰. Similarly, when man does not possess himself in freedom, the very products he re-created will turn against him. In other words, he does not only become the centre of battle between materialism and evil, which eventually weakens his capacity to act morally, but he does not understand himself and his purpose of living in the world. Thus, boredom, depression, inevitable loneliness, diseases, sickness, suicide and death creep in the midst of plenty with technology, science and knowledge. Like a young man who came to Jesus with a question,

¹⁹ Cf. D. R. Ebner, *Leadership Wisdom from the Beatitudes Blessings for Leaders*, Collegetown: Liturgical Press 2012, p. xiv.

²⁰ Cf. *VS*, no. 33.

„Teacher, what good must I do to have eternal life”? (Lk 18:18). Fitting this question within the moral freedom, there can be no morality without freedom. Thus, „It is only in freedom that man can turn to what is good”²¹. Leaning on St. John Paul II’s teaching, the Council Fathers, considering our contemporaries who „highly regard” freedom and „assiduously pursue” it, but who „often cultivate it in wrong ways as a license to do anything they please, even evil”, speaks of „genuine” freedom, which is an outstanding manifestation of the divine image in man²². God, in his mercy leaves man in the power of his Counsel (Sir 15: 140), so that he would seek God, his Creator, out of his free will and would freely arrive at full and blessed perfection by cleaving to God in his work.

The Church’s proclamations of the truth of God’s mercy, for instance, revealed in the crucified and risen Christ. She seeks to practice mercy towards people and through people, which she sees it as indispensable condition not only for the work of salvation of an individual, but for a more humane society in Nigeria. God has shown his work of mercy to nations that he gave his Only Begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life (Jn 3:16). These words spoken by Christ in his conversation with Nicodemus, introduced us into the very heart of God’s salvific work. Furthermore, these words not only express the very essence of Christian soteriology, but call man to participate in the transmission of the message of the corporal and spiritual works of mercy to emancipate and liberate the teeming unemployed youths, men and women from human trafficking, joblessness, homelessness, cattle rustling, political violence, multiple bloody communal crises, ethno-religious conflicts and life of idleness into a productive and fruitful life, which human work guarantees.

The works without mercy in Nigeria, are the issues of injustice in political appointments, imbalanced employments, inequality in the distribution of local and national resources, lack of due process in the polity resulting to unemployment and idleness, which give rise to agitations, pressure, compromise, blackmail, intimidation, conflicts, breakdown of law and order. The work of destroying the established infrastructures and defacing the beauty of peace and co-existence has only established the fact of evil-work, which calls for works of mercy to change the situation. The works without morality and mercy, have produced groups of agitation to the point that there is no geographical part of the country that has no group that is not associated with agitation. Thus, „it is useful to recall the spirituality of communion proposed by St. John II to the whole world at the threshold of the new millennium: the ability to perceive the light of the mystery of the Trinity shining on the faces of brothers and sisters around us; the ability as well to recognize all that is positive in the other so as to welcome it and prize it as a gift that

²¹ Ibid.

²² Cf. Ibid.

God gives me through that person or group, in a way that transcends by far the individual or group concerned”²³.

Jesus preached and taught the work of mercy on the Cross. The witnesses of the Cross and his Resurrection, have been handed to the Church and to mankind a specific Gospel of suffering. Above all, Jesus accepted the work of morality and mercy by his own suffering in love, so that man should not perish but be emancipated from tyranny of evil and have eternal life²⁴. God rich in mercy and just order, is possible, by connecting to the „missing link”²⁵ of attitude of mercy, which brings food on the table, stay securely and move freely in Nigeria, is recognized and upheld in private and public life of Nigerians. There is no greater work of morality and mercy than the change of attitude and repentance. Change of attitude go hand in hand with conversion and repentance. Conversion is the first principle of transformation and renewal.

There is no transformation that is possible without transforming the attitudinal-mind-set from of the self-ego. In order to put perspective in line with freedom is to bring works of morality and mercy into the hearts to be aligned with God as its focus leading the hearts to his Mercy. Dialectically, man is not first and foremost the subject of work and its effect cause of the production process, but he is God’s representative on earth, with the responsibility to care for the earth with divine mercy as he approaches all aspects of the earth and its creatures, participating actively in the spread of the Divine Mercy. The consequent of the material production is not the main purpose of work for man. Man’s vocation to work is to show God’s glory, but the resultant products of man’s work have been envisaged and approved for the use of man for his subsistence. The joy of love for human person and work is dead when the truth is not told. Thus, the power of human words, is capable of building and destroying, which draw their power from the divine command during the creation.

5.4.3. Words of Mercy

The power of messengers lies on their truthful articulation of a language, words, narrative, analysis and description of a message. A language is one of the great gifts of God to humankind. Every field of knowledge is powered by a language, narrative and systematic descriptions of not only what the message is, but for proper understanding of the content of the message, which lead to framework meaning-formation of hypothesis, in some cases for testing and verification

²³ L. I. Ugorji, *An Address*, (typescript, 2017).

²⁴ Cf. John Paul II, *Salvifici Doloris On the Christian Meaning of Human Suffering* „Apostolic Letter”, 1984.

²⁵ The „missing link” here means morality and the attitude of mercy of man. The restoration of this missing link is when the human dignity and personhood are recognized and respected as part of the Nigerian social life, local and national cultures.

of hypothesis to collect the certitude results, which serve as facts and evidences. The fields of science, technology, humanities, philosophy, theology etc., become possible due to the use of words and language, which produced experts who build on the basis of developed systems articulating and seeking truth and reality in various areas of human endeavours. The activities of these experts in different fields of knowledge, keep on passing not only a language, words, narratives, concepts and descriptions, which are suitable to each area of knowledge, but the technical know-how is passed on to the next generation for further research. The use of a language entails not only saying and telling the message, but it also involves hearing of the message, which is received by the intended-recipient of the message. The acts of encoding and decoding messages are done through a language for the purpose of communication. Words and faith share common source of a message, which in this case, from the human person who said the words in question prompted by faith. For instance, Jesus taught his disciples when he said: „I tell you the truth, you can say to this mountain, ‘May you be lifted up and thrown into the sea’, and it will happen. But you must really believe it will happen and have no doubt in your heart” (Mk 11:23). However, „the power of words”²⁶ and faith are rooted in the messenger and dependent on a messenger. Moreover, „How then can they call on the One they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the One of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone to preach? And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!’” (Rom 10:14-15). Furthermore, a man met Jesus and said: „Tell me so that I may believe in Him”—the One who has the power to save man from sin and death. „You have already seen Him”, Jesus answered. „He is the One speaking with you”. „Lord”, I believe, he said. And he worshipped Jesus (Jn 9:36-38).

The human words are so powerful because of man’s image of God and his rootedness in God. After all, it was God who said: „Let us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth. God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them” (Gen 1:26). Fundamentally, to say the words of mercy is living and responding the moral duty of man not only to continue to reflect God in making things from what God has made but showing „human-mercy”²⁷. Human-mercy is the unconditional energy released from the human

²⁶ Y. D. Prince, *Yoruba Philosophy and the Seeds of Enlightenment: Advancing Yoruba Philosophy*, Wilmington: Vernon Press 2018, p.15.

²⁷ The „human-mercy” here, is giving the mercy received by man, that is, man in turn gives back to fellowman in love and compassion. The „human-mercy” is the reciprocal compassion where the dignity and personhood is lost as a result of the human condition of pain, suffering and anguish. In other words, the „human-mercy” may not be perfect, but within the human understanding it is capable of bringing hope, healing and restoration.

heart to adopt, to adapt, to adjust, to affirm and raise the meaning of love, truth and beauty to the dignity of God in action, which influences the human attitudes, cultures, institutions, structures and degeneration of prudence expressed in semantics, which targets at new meanings for the attitude of morality and mercy: to build or edify; heal or restore; reconcile or harmonize; appreciate or affirm; uplift or inspire; motivate or encourage; inform or educate on the dignity, good name and the way of life in the Christian praxis. God invited Adam to name all he has created. And whatever name Adam gave to each creature, that was its name, which expresses the power of the human words (Gen 2:19-20). Similarly, parents give their children names, which most of the time go with them through their life time.

The Christian praxis is a practice that is accepted or Christian custom that promotes the human dignity and personhood. In other words, the human-mercy is not only reciprocal but it promotes the pattern of Christian praxis in society and the world in which the principle of subsidiarity is assured. Here, the praxeology of the Divine Mercy is its practical translation of the moral and pastoral message of Divine Mercy accounted (Mt 25:31-46). The praxeological result of it is that, the person who says the words of morality and mercy to another person, both share in the healing and building of each other at the same time. It is like a smile. When a smile is given out, the giver of the smile receives a life-giving reciprocal-smile as well. This is the praxeology of the Divine Mercy. After all, it is said: „Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap” (Lk 6:38a). Praxis emphasized the practical more than the theory. It is said „practice makes perfect”. The practical acts are not only limited to the spiritual or physical life of man, even in the secular society, politicians have come to know that it is not enough to politicize or philosophize issues to their electorate. Thus, modern political praxis is now thoroughly permeated with productive programmes to the society. This is in line with the Divine Mercy of the government to express its political mercy to citizens on whose mandate most governments come to power where its power is not only felt in theoretical life of the citizens but it is also felt at the practical-social level. It has become an ethos of government or would be government to make sure practical programmes are not only promised to develop the people but such programmes are executed for local and national developments.

Socially, for example, an ordinary bag used to have one strap, which a bag can be hung on the right or left shoulder. But through praxis, man is able to make two straps to hang both on the two shoulders at the same time making it easier to carry a bag with ease rather than over-labouring the either shoulders. This new idea of making bags is supported by many people including students to carry their books and stationaries while going to school. This is not an analogy of the benefit of saying words of mercy as such but explaining the development that

are possible to happen. Look at the social media, people in engage in practical and useful exchange of ideas. A person connects with another person in text-chats, video-chat exchanging ideas that are capable of building and raising the human dignity. If people can do this successfully in the ordinary normal life platforms, the human person can do better when God is involved and engaged in every human activity for the sake of inscribing the attitude of the Divine Mercy in every Nigerian culture. Similarly, individual Nigerian, religious institutions and all social aspects of the life of Nigerians are to be connected to morality and mercy by saying words of mercy, which is the principle of the human life.

Conclusion

Optimistically, no matter how best your idea is, it must be sold to others. No idea can survive without being bought by others who in turn would sale it to others. Such is the message of the Divine Mercy, it needs to be „sold and bought” by Nigerians. It is in this context, the lovers, friends and ambassadors of the Divine Mercy are found. The Divine Mercy is seen at the time of hate and iniquity²⁸. The human person’s existence and living are anchored on the Divine Mercy, which sustains his spiritual and bodily life. His essence is rooted in the image of God with its intellect and free will to rationally act and transcend beyond the present to God. To realize and recognize the richness of God’s mercy is to participate in the establishment of the new just order where social and political life of Nigerians is governed by the principle of the attitude of morality and mercy in all private and public sectors. In other words, the human acts present a message through appearance. But the physical act in appearance, reveals the message passed, in this case the attitude of mercy. The actor may not intend it, but because it is the principle of the attitude of mercy, the recipient who sees or receives such acts of service, will get it in the context of the attitude of mercy in his life. Mercy is so contagious in that it appeals to every human heart the indispensable need for restoration and healing where misery, pain and disadvantage situations exist.

The human person knows, loves and serves God in his body together with his soul. Theocracy and democracy share in the common existence and participating in God’s existence as concepts. On one hand, theocracy is the strict belief that God is in-charge of all human affairs through his commandment and directives. On another hand, democracy as a system of government, is the strict belief that a government is made up of people. The system and its principle not only promote freedom, justice, equity but defends fundamental human rights. Therefore, democracy can stand on the principle of paradigm-identity, where Nigerian society

²⁸ Cf. G. Górný, J. Rosikoń, *Trust in Saint Faustina’s Footsteps*, San Francisco: Ignatius Press 2014, p. 202.

as it were, that is pluralistic can be changed into history connecting human rationality and diversity into a unified-instrument of God's richness in mercy.

Nigerians need to not only to accept *Ibakkanafication*²⁹ (Lk 19:42-44), to recognize the fact that disease, sickness, death, hatred, hostility, kidnapping, arm-robbery, violence, bad roads and poverty do not discriminate, that the action of A will attract consequences on B regardless of affiliation, but to take national unity and development to be indispensable projects for the good of all Nigerians regardless of where they are. A nation that is committed to the language of inclusion, in alternative interpretation of her own history and reality, knowing that disaster does not discriminate either in human person or geographical context.

The ecological, ethnographical, geographical and cultural values are the human patrimony, which man received as gifts from God not only to care for them to see and appreciate God's mercy on the human person but invariably, the human dialogue, the preservation of these values is to form the basis and structure, which are handed over to the next generation of young

²⁹ *Ibakkanafication*(IB) is a word, I coined from the word *Ibakkana* in *C'lela* Language. *C'lela* is my language and it is also one of the minor languages in the North-Middle-Belt of Nigeria. The word, means a recognition of a fundamental moral ought duty, which presupposed grave consequences if not observed. Thus, the importance of freedom is not only the ability to choose among options, but to do what ought to be done to achieve the moral good. Freedom also means responsibility. Analogically, Jesus said to His disciples: „If you knew only today what is needed for peace! But now you cannot see it! The time will come when your enemies will surround you with barricades, blockade you, and close in on you from every side. They will completely destroy you and the people within your walls; not a single stone will they leave in its place, because you did not recognize the time when God came to save you” (Lk19:42-44). However, Matthew Henry in his commentary viewed this text in another way differently when he said: „Who can behold the Holy Jesus, looking forward to the miseries that awaited his murderers, weeping over the city where his Precious Blood was about to be shed, without seeing that the likeness of God in the believer, consists much in good-will and compassion...But let everyone remember, that though Jesus wept over Jerusalem, he executed awful vengeance upon it. Though he delights not in the death of a sinner, yet he will surely bring to pass his awful threatening on those who neglect his salvation. The Son of God did not weep in vain and causeless tears, nor for a light matter, nor for himself. He knows the value of souls, the weight of guilt, and how low it will press and sink mankind” (<http://biblehub.com/commentaries/mhc/luke/19.htm>, accessed 5.11.2017).

On the contrary, I viewed his argument as against law and order. His argument seeks to dismiss the reality of justice and mercy. It also attacks the human capacity to reason and be accountable for his actions. The fact that man has the divine image that even increases his accountability over his action. Whether man decides to choose an option or not he has made a choice with no less accountability. If someone decides to commit a civil or criminal offence, the appropriate legal justice system will not in justice, narrow the offence or dismiss it on the ground that the offender is a citizen of a country. Being a citizen or someone who has the legal permission to live in a country, increases more accountability on patriotism of the offender. Otherwise, if the security departments doors are let loosed or doors of prisons are let loosed, the consequences may be better imagined. Because, safety and peaceful-sleep will be scarce commodities and history.

IB has a strong suggestive moral element on someone who is more privileged than the other to care for him. It suggests giving out twice of the care to the less privileged because one portion of the care is for the sake of God's mercy and the second portion is to express common humanity that anyone may be privileged or less.

Furthermore, IB has strong element of oneness. This element is expressed at meals where two or more people eat from one plate of food signifying oneness, peace, unity, safety and brotherhood. In other words, it is better to be together. In the praise of God for all his blessings to human life and its existence. It is like saying: „How wonderful it is, how pleasant, for brothers to live together in harmony! It is like the precious anointing oil running down from Aaron's head and beard, down to the collar of his robes. It is like the dew on Mount Hermon, falling on the hills of Zion. That is where the Lord has promised his blessing-life that never ends” (Ps 133:1-3).

Moreover, IB signifies remembrance of God's mercy, given the fact that many people have lived and died, it becomes morally obligatory for the living to thank God for the life he gave those alive. If it were not God's mercy, man's existence would have been a history, which no one could have been there to tell a story.

men and women. The young people are future stakeholders and ambassadors of society anchored in trust and hope and devoid of fear³⁰.

Analogically, the human person is like a computer. A computer has a capacity to store as many files as possible. But, these files in a computer are not to be left for granted that all will be well. On a day, when one least expected will be the time when a virus will attack files in a computer. The virus is not interested in a computer rather it is interested in the content of a computer. When all the files are corrupted such a computer not only represents poison to an owner and risking all essential data stored in a computer but a material for a dustbin. However, this situation cannot go on and on without anti-dotes. Many experts have discovered how to install anti-virus safety for the protection of computers. The anti-virus protects both files and a computer for the happiness of an owner. In the same vein, the human person is in the category of animal kingdom and a political animal. But the serpent was the wisest and cunning animal God has ever created (Gen 3:1) to leave side by with the human person. When the human person least expected, the devil takes advantage of such moments and attacks the human person. The devil attacks the human conscience, freedom and trust in God. This means that Nigerians have the moral duty to protect their moral authority of God and man. It is only the Divine Mercy that has the power to purify the human person spiritually and physically in order to be with God. To be with God one has to have faith in God in order to please God (Heb 11: 6). In this sense, Nigerians can take advantage of God given potentialities to change the situation in Nigeria for the common good of Nigerians. This collective view can be likened to paradigm-identity where the differences of Nigerians can be turned and be converted into single digit of strengthen for the common good. It is not over-statement to say Nigerians together with their international friends and allies to do the needful in order to remedy the present situation. After all, every human problem has a solution. Nigerians at home and abroad have all it takes to catalyze the attitude of mercy through the application of traditional media, social media, locative media, sport community, online community and digital culture. However, while internet is the „modern-day drum” that sends sound that cannot be ignored and can be used as an instrument the voice of mercy in Nigeria, care must be taken to avoid making the internet „the god of modern day Baal” with its implications of sacrifices, which led to tremendous deception and betrayal. Handing over the attitude of the Divine Mercy to the young people, it is handing over to them the Divine Mercy „energy of justice, and peace in the world”³¹ as an instrument of

³⁰ Cf. V. Flynn, *Mercy's Gaze: 100 Readings from Scripture and the Diary of St. Faustina*, Stockbridge MA: USA 2013, p. 36.

³¹ P. K.A. Turkson, M. Toso, *Energy, Justice and Peace: A Reflection on energy in the Current Context of Development and Environmental Protection*, Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, New York: Paulist Press 2014, p.19; W. E. May, *An Introduction of Moral Theology Second Edition*, Our Sunday Visitor Publishing Division, Huntington, 2003.

energy. Through the media applications, young Nigerians not only have the equipment to also connect applications to actualize God's richness in mercy and a new just order both at social and political levels, but can connect the „unbelieving community”³², making the attitude of the Divine Mercy as the basis of the principle of justice and morality³³. Fundamentally, teach the young the why and the how of mercy, they will not only live the teaching, and remember it all their lives but they will not depart from it (Pr 22:6), at the same time working-hard to create heroes. Nigerians are challenged to champion mercy, to be experts in mercy, to be witnesses of mercy and to promote justice. Nigerians are challenged to yearn and hunger for mercy to the point of saying: no more corruption in the history of Nigeria; no political instability in the political system in Nigeria; no insurgencies and terrorists in Nigeria; that the Divine Mercy is the way of our life; justice is our song and common good is our anthem; a prosperous and strongest economy of Nigeria under mercy is our dream.

Mercy Prayer for Nigeria in Distress

All powerful and merciful Father, you are the God of justice, love and peace. You rule over all the nations of the earth. Power and might are in your hands and no one can withstand you. We present our country Nigeria before you. We praise and thank you for you are the source of all we have and are. We are sorry for all the sins we have committed and for the good deeds we have failed to do. In your loving forgiveness, keep us safe from the punishment we deserve. Lord, we are weighed down not only by uncertainties but also by moral, economic and political problems. Listen to the cries of your people who confidently turn to you. God of infinite goodness, our strength in adversity, our health in weakness, our comfort in sorrow, be merciful, to us your people, spare this nation Nigeria from chaos, anarchy and doom. Bless us with your kingdom of justice, love and peace. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

–Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria (CBCN)

Prayer Against Bribery and Corruption in Nigeria

Father in Heaven, you always provide for all your creatures so that all may live as you have willed. You have blessed our country Nigeria with rich human and natural resources to be used to your honour and glory and for the well-being of every Nigeria. We are deeply sorry for the

³² The „unbelieving community” is referred to those who have no faith in God, the Creator, due to no fault of their own but they are created in the image of God and living in the world created by God.

³³ Cf. *DCE*, no. 26.

wrong use of these your gifts and blessing through act of injustice, bribery and corruption, as a result of which many of our people are hungry, sick ignorant and defenceless. Either, you alone can heal us and our nation of this sickness. We beg you, touch our lives and the lives of our leaders and people so that we may all realize the evil of bribery and corruption and work hard to eliminate it. Raise up for us God fearing people and leaders who care for us and who will lead us in the part of peace, prosperity and progress. We ask the through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

–Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Nigeria (CBCN)

GENERAL CONCLUSION

I will do the general conclusion under six headings, namely, Synthesis of the study, moral commitment, importance of the Divine Mercy and morality, achievements, recommendations and further research.

I started this research with the topic *The Moral Implications of Divine Mercy in Individual, Ecclesial and Social Life of Nigerians*. The concepts of morality, Divine Mercy, individual, ecclesial and social life of Nigerians are innate and experienced in the human nature. In the introduction, I summarized the principal themes of the dissertation namely, motivation, description, the research problem, scope, relevance of my research, sources, which I have visited and used, methods, originality, destination, prospects, suggestive ethical recommendations.

1. Synthesis of the study

In the introduction, I pointed out that my dissertation was a cry for love instead of vengeance between Nigerians and other human persons. In order to achieve this purpose, I explained in depth that when man sinned, the reward for his sin was death (Gen 2:17). And when he sinned (Gen 3:7) he became under „death sentence”. God the Creator, had the prerogative of mercy. In his love and mercy, his Divine Mercy flew to man through his attitude of mercy and he called

out to man: „Where are you?” (Gen 3:9). By this wake-up-call, God redeemed man out of mercy, created man out of love and promising him salvation(Gen3:15). I was inspired by the sense of mercy, justice, common good, equity, peace, which are connected to moral virtue.

2. Research Results and Analysis

Analogical focusing on Nigerians, who have been besieged by the devaluation of human life, deaths caused by insurgencies– Boko Haram, Herdsmen, kidnapping and psychological tensions, I have decided to investigate the causes and remedies. In my investigations through the questionnaire (appendix:3a), which I gave 2,500 copies (appendix: 3d), I found out that in no. 4 of the questionnaire (appendix: 3a) out of 2,500 copies, the 2,495 copies were (appendix: 3d) returned with affirmations that they „showed mercy to others”. The remaining 5 copies of the questionnaire were not recovered at the time of the collection of the questionnaire based on the time frame. The no. 6 of the questionnaire (appendix: 3d) showed that 1,113 recipients received mercy and they felt „loved”. And I also orally interviewed Nigerians from the North, the East, the South and the West of Nigeria. I found that the human life in Nigeria is devalued by each day due to the random killings of children, adults, the vulnerable, the aged, men and women from all over Nigeria.

My first reaction was that there were Nigerians who did not give mercy from their fellow Nigerians. The cry for love is the centre of the dissertation. This is because in every wrong doing is a lie. Thus, the moral implication of Divine Mercy is, to tend towards doing good and avoid evil. This missing link between mercy and Nigerians is the problem in Nigeria. In order to prove that there was a missing link between Nigerians and God is that, out of 2,495 Nigerians 1,113 showed mercy to others but 1,382 Nigerians did not received mercy in returned. Therefore, the 1,382 Nigerians who never received mercy is the subject and object of „the Moral Implications of the Divine Mercy” based on my moral discernment, which led to my research. Moreover, I divided 1,382 (55%) Nigerians by 4 cardinal points representing the North, South, East and West of Nigeria ($1,382 \div 4$), the result showed that there are 346 (14%) Nigerians in all over parts of Nigeria who never received mercy. Thus, the 1,382 Nigerians are the cause of insurgencies. Consequently, I was urged by moral conscience to not only seek Nigerians’ redemption in the Divine Mercy but to research on the Nigerian situation and accept IB as a moral responsibility for the good of individual, ecclesial and social life of Nigerians. In addition, the no. „2495” is called „Wazobianification” of Divine Mercy–it means, recognizing God’s presence in the three major languages as a point of contact to three hundred and seventy-one (371) languages in Nigeria. However, Nigerians have the moral obligation to seek the 1,382

Nigerians who did not receive mercy and influence them with love, human dignity and national integration.

My second conviction is that, I investigated the natural resources I found out that all the 36 States including the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, has natural resources (Cf. appendix: 5a, 5b). Some states have more than other states. The results shown in appendix: 2a-2g, that God is merciful to Nigeria as a nation and people. In 1960 until date, Nigerians have been blessed with natural and human resources. The CBCN acknowledged the sins of Nigerians and made „a prayer of mercy” when it said: „We are sorry for all the sins we have committed and for the good deeds we have failed to do. In your loving forgiveness, keep us safe from the punishment we deserve” (Cf. Appendix: 1).

The third conviction on the moral implications of the Divine Mercy is clear from the layout of the appendix: 2h. In the diagram, due the lack of mercy, there is a seemingly two systems of governments operating simultaneously suggesting strongly that „the Nigeria” before Independence is inside the Nigeria after Independence with complex developments made up of different ideologies.

Fourthly, the devaluation of the human life and activities of Boko Haram, Herdsmen, kidnappings etc., are only symptoms.

Fifthly, institutions must rise up to their moral responsibilities for the restoration of justice, equity and for the common good and national interests for the good of all Nigerians.

Therefore, my research would be relevant in Nigeria, in order to save Nigerians from spiritual and physical dominations. In order to achieve this purpose, I consulted moral authorities, which were namely, the teachings and addresses of St. John Paul II, when he came to Nigeria in 1982 and 1998; Church Documents; Vatican II Documents; Papal Documents; Bishops Pastoral Letters and Communiqués/Addresses. Other sources included: were live interviews; questionnaire; authors of books; dictionaries; journals; magazines; articles; addresses; internet web-sites; related themes on moral implications of the Divine Mercy. All the relevant sources were within the dimension of theology, morality and anthropology. The method of my writing was analytical, comparison, case study, description, and synthesis. My key words were contextual, storytelling and proverbs, which are heritage specific to Nigerians vi-sa-vis their cultures, geographical and political experiences. As an instructional approach, storytelling would have a broad application in Nigerian society specially to acquire the attitude of the Divine Mercy for both children and adults to achieve both IB (Cf. CCC, 1776) and WZB. Furthermore, emphasized the imagination of mercy (Cf. Mt 18:32-33) in every human activity towards the divine completeness.

The destination of my dissertation was not only to restore the value of human life of Nigerians, to build a just, equitable, peaceful and vibrant Nigeria but to highlight the priority of morality over technology, the primacy of the human person over things and superiority of the soul over matter. My conclusion may be highly helpful to understand, recognize and participate in the moral implications of Divine Mercy in Nigeria. The dissertation and the supportive voice of the CBCN, who demanded and called for a just, peaceful and integrated Nigeria would be relevant. I am convinced beyond doubt that my dissertation will help to solve the problems. The results of my investigations, which were clear and simple will lead Nigerians to spiritual and physical freedom. Evidently, in chapter one, the introduction of the term *Wazobianification*, made the dissertation original, which indicated that all Nigerians are in dire need of life, justice, mercy, human dignity in both divine and human institutions. In chapter two, in as much as God shared his attributes to man, Nigerians were not only called to forgive on behalf of God at personal and institutional levels but to use the theology of mercy as a subject of daily life activities. In chapter three, Nigerians were called to recognize the necessity of the moral implications of Divine Mercy. Chapter four, which addressed conversion as a remedy for corruption in Nigeria, it has been recommended as the strongest ethical tool that restores corroded moral values, in order to create legacy of mercy, change mind-set and empower generations. Finally, the fifth chapter reiterated *Ibakkanafication* of moral implications, which is to tend towards good and avoid evil. I stood on the teachings of the Church and CBCN, and demanded conversion of Nigerians without delay. I challenged Nigerians to defend the value of human life, reconstruction of moral and social justice and to recognize the fact that political instability, hatred, kidnapping and poverty do not discriminate. And to reposition the national and the common interest as a priority for all Nigerians.

Similarly, I considered the moral implications and the Divine Mercy for these reasons. In a native Nigerian communal setting, when there is a problem that affects the common good, the elders and those who can contribute in any way, would gather through consultations as follows: Firstly, they would call a problem by its name. Secondly, they would ask what should be done. Thirdly, they ask who would do what? Fourthly, they would ask when to do what? Fifthly, they would say how to do it? However, these traditional steps promote transparency, accountability, paradigm-identity and the preservation of the truth in human life.

3. The Importance of Divine Mercy

On one hand, the word, „Divine Mercy” without the article „the” to qualify it, is in reference to „God, who is rich in mercy whom Jesus Christ has revealed to us as Father; it is his Very

Son who, in himself, has manifested him and made him known to us. God, who is rich in mercy out of the great love, with which he loved us, even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ”¹. On the other hand, the word, „the Divine Mercy” with the article „the” to qualify it, is in reference to Jesus Christ, the Divine Mercy Incarnate. He is the „Revealer of God the Father” of mercy. „In this way, in Christ and through Christ, God also becomes especially visible in his mercy; that is to say, there mercy is emphasized as the attribute of the divinity, which the Old Testament, using various concepts and terms, already defined as ‘mercy’. Christ confers on the whole of the Old Testament tradition about God’s mercy a definitive meaning. Not only does he speak of it and explain it by the use of comparisons and parables but above all he himself makes it incarnate and personified it. He himself, in a certain sense, is mercy. To the person who see it in him—and finds it in him— God becomes ‘visible’ in a particular way as the Father who is rich in mercy”². Due to man’s desire for autonomy in the midst of science and technology, the Fathers of the Church have taught that „We cannot but deplore certain attitudes (not unknown among Christians) deriving from a shortsighted view of the rightful autonomy of science’. ‘Without a creator there can be no creature. In any case, believers, no matter what their religion, have always recognized the voice and the revelation of God in the language of creatures. Besides, once God is forgotten, the creature is lost sight of as well”³. Therefore, paradigm-identity is a value, without which there can be no claim of rights and freedoms. Paradigm-identity has the power to defeat the empire of corruption and tyranny of poverty⁴. Our identity and uniqueness reveal the divine plan of the universe. Our identity and uniqueness portray the truth in the sense of yes or no. That is to say, something cannot be and not be at the same time.

4. Moral Commitments

Nigerians should seek conversion and repentance as prerequisites of transformation and developments. Nigerians should deliberately decide on the kind of Nigeria they want. They should be ready at all times to defend Nigeria’s freedom, integrity and its indissolubility when they are threatened. First, the enemies of Nigerians are Nigerians themselves. This is because it is said: „The way you make a bed, is the way you lie on it”. Nigerians should search for their own enemies within. Therefore, since Nigerians enemies are within Nigeria and Nigerians, this

¹ *DM*, no. 1.

² *DM*, no. 2.

³ *GS*, no. 36.

⁴ N. Sharansky, *Defending Identity, Its Indispensable Role in Protecting Democracy*, New York: Public Affairs 2008, p. 17.

makes the work simple. It is the moral responsibility of Nigerians to find where those enemies live and bring them to justice and account for their deeds. Their works of sabotage of various sorts should be accounted for, so that Nigerians can bounce back to spiritual and material prosperity. The answers to Nigeria's problems are in the hands of Nigerians in collaboration with their allies of bi-lateral relations. Nigerians should change their resilience into a powerful instrument of re-thinking about Nigeria as a nation. The young people should be considered and let them be trained in future functions of Nigeria. The young are not only to be trained but let them be encouraged to stop making desperate journeys in search for better life. Let all the institutions be involved in absolving the young people instead of getting into the illegal migrant ventures with all its risks. The young people who have just concluded their various studies, the government should stand out and take its moral responsibilities. However, the Church has done a lot in terms of moral support and encouragements, and still doing a lot as voice of the voiceless in Nigeria. On one hand, the Church cannot be dispensed from the discussion and fight against ills that have besieged Nigeria from all sides. The Church as Mother and Teacher, will continue to be charged with the moral responsibility to be the prophet and model of history in cases where people's lives are devalued, abused, kidnapped, discriminated and depersonalized in the name of religion, sex, nationality, race, taste or opinion. As Pope Benedict XVI implored: „the Church as a whole and all her Pastors, like Christ, must set out to lead people out of the desert, towards the place of life, towards friendship with the Son of God, towards the one who gives us life and life in abundance”⁵. On the other hand, for Islam it goes without saying that the norms of Islamic law are binding, because they were given by religious revelation. This is because for the Muslims, conduct is regulated by the will of God expressed in the Qur'an and interpreted by the prophetic mission of Mohammed⁶. However, the leaders of Christianity, Islam and ATRs, should strengthen the opportunities for dialogue and personal and institutional commitments in order to achieve this goal from the point of view of social justice, to collectively condemn in strong terms the dominion of corruption, manipulation of the law, violation of personhood and senseless killings of people in Nigeria. There should be re-establishment of trust between individual Nigerians, trust between groups and trust between various subjects and authorities. Security should be the business of everybody. After all, the concept of „one Nigeria” is central in our belief that there is no distinction of persons. We can say like St. Paul, there is neither Jew nor Greek (Rom 10:12). There is neither Christian nor Muslim, neither ATRs Believer nor non-indigene, for we are all Nigerians, and Nigeria will always be one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

⁵ S. Sakaba, *A Clash Political Identity: A Violation of Personhood*, p. 81.

⁶ Cf. *Ibid.*

However, from the theological point of view, I have used several Biblical texts in all the chapters of the dissertation due to the moral authority of Scripture. Thus, Scripture is the soul of Moral Theology. It calls us to greater things of God. It teaches us the origin of man and the world, with their purposes in the world. It teaches us the basis of Love and how to respond to Love. It teaches us the two commandments of the love of God and neighbour. It teaches us the secrets of the Beatitudes in relation to God's Kingdom. It is the lens and source of motivation in our lives. It teaches us truth. It teaches us the Christian faith and the dignity of the human person. It teaches us about freedom and conscience of man. It teaches us about the Natural Law. And it teaches us about ecology.

The Scripture is the source of Christian Family. It is the source of the Tradition of the Church. It governs the moral principle of the Christian life. It is the Word of God in our time. It is the Christian youth. It is the source of Christian unity. It teaches us forgiveness and mercy.

5. The Significance of the Research and Dissertation

The dissertation is a new reality in the history of Nigeria. It is popularly said: „Grace builds on nature”. Grace is able to build on nature because nature serves as the foundation, base and platform. Analogically, the dissertation is a basis and structure of theology of Divine Mercy. I have developed the dissertation into a reliable and credible tool for recognition of the moral implications of Divine Mercy, effective implementation of the attitude of mercy and strengthening the moral implications in Nigeria and Africa. The dissertation is a contribution to the mission of the Church in Nigeria and beyond.

The dissertation is not only for Christians but it is for Muslims and ATRs members based on my conclusions. Firstly, in chapter one, I analysed and gave a concise history of Nigeria as a divine history, a gospel and an inevitable event. It stressed the fact that history is not possible if God is not involved. In other words, no event that takes place without God allowing it to happen. This permission and God's favour is called Divine Mercy. Secondly, in chapter two, Nigerians were called not only to forgive on behalf of God but to embrace the Divine Mercy as a national principle of life. On one hand, Nigerians constantly receive mercy from God and from their fellow Nigerians at different circumstances of daily life. On the other hand, they give mercy to others in different situations of practical life. Moreover, mercy exists in the nature of Nigerians, which makes it easier to receive and to give it. In chapter three, Nigerians were called to recognize the necessity of the moral implications of Divine Mercy. This recognition means that Nigerians have the moral responsibility to the needs of fellow Nigerians who are thirsty, hungry, sick, imprisoned and strangers in their fatherland (Nigeria)

to cater for their upkeep and restore them to human dignity and national integration. In chapter four, conversion is the remedy of corruption and poverty in Nigeria. However, knowing and understanding the theology of mercy is one aspect. Due to the wounded human nature, Nigerians are in constant need of God's mercy. In receiving God's mercy, Nigerians stand the advantage of being purified spiritually and physically through the DMD. Conversion is not a once and for all time. It is a process and a constant renewal of one's disposition to God's grace. And in chapter five, *Ibakkanafication* of Divine Mercy and *Wazobianification* of Divine Mercy were credible and reliable means of inculcating the moral implications of Divine Mercy in Nigeria. Furthermore, I challenged Nigerians to defend the value of human life, reconstruction of moral and social justice and to recognize the fact that political instability, hatred, kidnapping and poverty do not discriminate. And to reposition the national and the common interest as priority for all Nigerians. The dissertation may be used as a source to deepen the knowledge of Divine Mercy, the Divine Mercy and as essential moral guide. The dissertation will pave way for further research.

Nigerians should yearn and hunger for mercy to the point of saying: no more corruption in the history of Nigeria; no more political instability in the political system in Nigeria; no more insurgencies and terrorists in Nigeria; that the Divine Mercy is the way of life; justice is our song and common good is our anthem. Consequently, God rich in mercy will be seen and known in the Nigerian, who will be living in a new just order of social and political life of Nigerians.

6. Recommendations and Further Research

Firstly, due to the importance of the moral implications of Divine Mercy, I recommend the establishment of the following subject areas in all Catholic institutions of learning: Theology of Divine Mercy; Creation of a Catholic application on mercy to reach social media users; Creation of fora on the Divine Mercy for business men and women; Creation of fora on the Divine Mercy for politicians. Secondly, further research on: Divine Mercy and ecology; The Divine Mercy: The ministerial priesthood today; Democratic rule for the Divine Mercy and Science: the instrument of the Divine Mercy.

However, the „status questionis” of the dissertation is that there were issues that have not been investigated in the dissertation. I considered them beyond the scope of the dissertation. These issues included the following: The Divine Mercy and Ecology; the Divine Mercy: The Ministerial Priesthood Today; Democratic Rule for the Divine Mercy and Science: the Instrument of the Divine Mercy.

Further research on the Divine Mercy especially in Nigeria, will be very beneficial in the overall interest of Nigerians. The research will synchronize all the important areas that cover politics, social and cultural life of Nigerians across the board. In the research, the aspects of mercy should be emphasized especially in Christianity, Islam and ATRs religions. Importantly, the research will foster exchange of data, information and materials. Research itself is an „investment” when a scientific fact and truth is discovered, the future society can step on that reality as „intellectual capital” to stabilize the prevailing human problems. The solution of a problem is possible when a problem is named. And it is only through research a problem can be found and named before its treatment. A credible research enhances spiritual and physical transparency and social values of Nigerians. Researching on the Divine Mercy is to promote intellectual capacity building, because mercy as an attribute is found in each Nigerian. This also means that communities within Nigeria will be involved in order to synchronize the spiritual and corporal works of mercy in the interest of the common good. However, to heighten awareness of the importance of research on the Divine Mercy, a language is the powerful tool that is not an option as a research tool, for the benefits of Nigerians. I believe that the final outcome for further research for Nigerians, will make available greater empowerment of young Nigerians to participate and exercise the works of mercy, development of infrastructure as potential Divine Mercy materials for Nigerians. Consequently, Nigerians will make a yes-commitment to the Divine Mercy as their life principle, in response to the moral implications of Divine Mercy.

The further research will benefit the Nigerian families where up-bringing of children is very domestic. Parents and guardians will train and transmit the characteristics of the Divine Mercy to the young Nigerians. Thus, to train young Nigerians it to preserve the future, to preserve the future is giving up of our today, to give up of our today in sacrifice is to say yes to the future and to say yes to future is to say yes to possibilities anchored on faith, hope and love for Nigerians.

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1.5.2. Summary Analysis of the Questionnaire Data

Total Questionnaire 10x250 =2,500

Total distributed =2,500

signed/returned =2,495

unreturned =5

Final result order according in Descending order of value

1. 2495****	23. 202
2. 2007****	24. 173
3. 1866****+2	25. 140
4. 1644-1644	26. 135
5. 1112	27. 124
6. 1113	28. 80
7. 1010	29. 42
8. 1007	30. 31-31
9. 801	31. 21
10. 780	32. 11-11-11
11. 740	33. 0x9
12. 730	_____
13. 702	22,851
14. 606	
15. 605	
16. 600	
17. 532	
18. 480	
19. 422	
20. 344	
21. 287	
22. 251	

The no. „2495” is called „Wazobianification” of Divine Mercy

1. Compensating the victims 2. Creating awareness

These are specified answers about how victims of violence should be remembered

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Documentations and Appendices

Mercy Prayer for Nigeria in Distress

All powerful and merciful Father, you are the God of justice, love and peace. You rule over all the nations of the earth. Power and might are in your hands and no one can withstand you. We present our country Nigeria before you. We praise and thank you for you are the source of all we have and are. We are sorry for all the sins we have committed and for the good deeds we have failed to do. In your loving forgiveness, keep us safe from the punishment we deserve. Lord, we are weighed down not only by uncertainties but also by moral, economic and political problems. Listen to the cries of your people who confidently turn to you. God of infinite goodness, our strength in adversity, our health in weakness, our comfort in sorrow, be merciful, to us your people, spare this nation Nigeria from chaos, anarchy and doom. Bless us with your kingdom of justice, love and peace. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

–Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Nigeria (CBCN).

Appendix: 1



Appendix: 2a
3 Regions

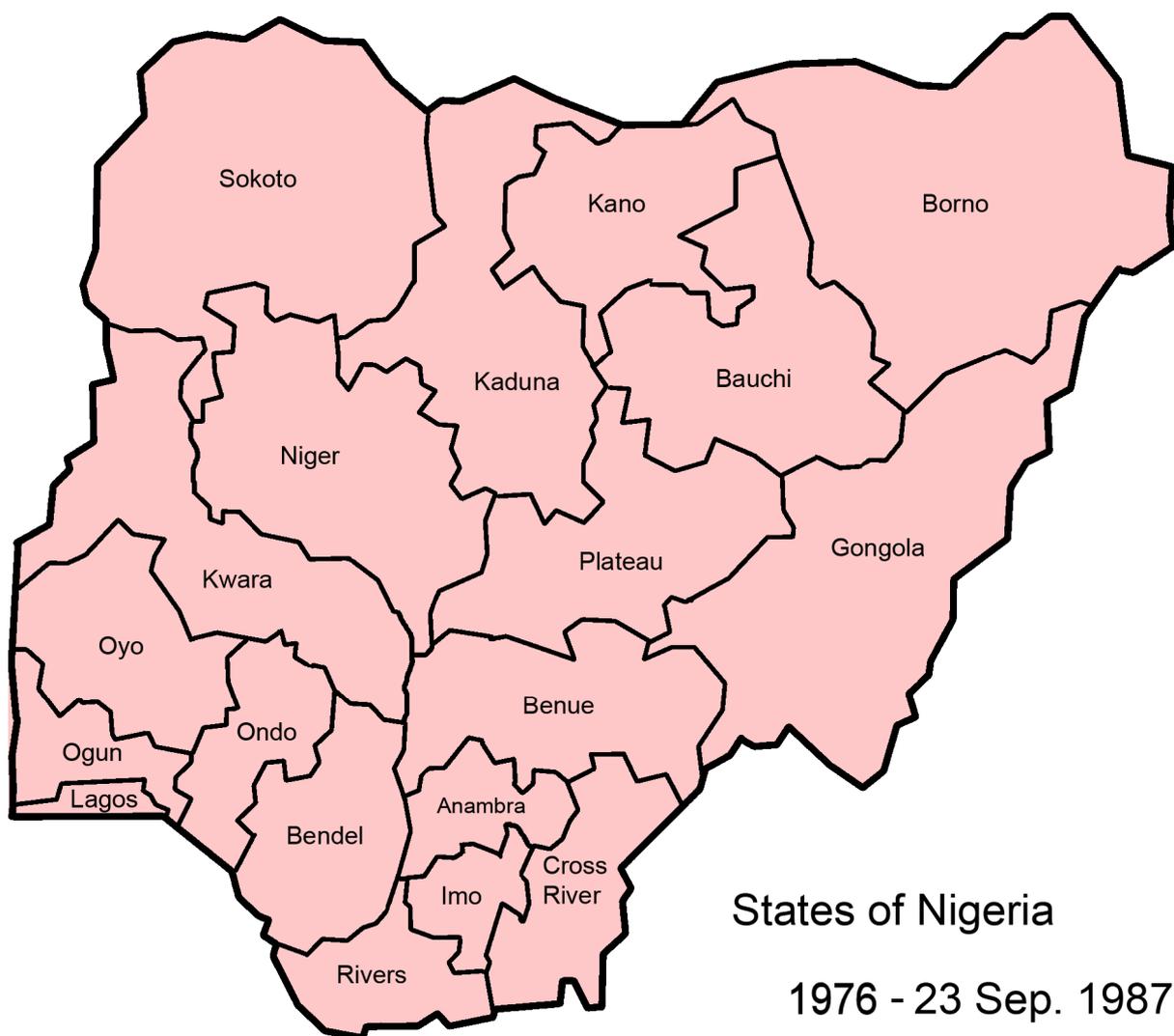


Appendix: 2b
4 Regions



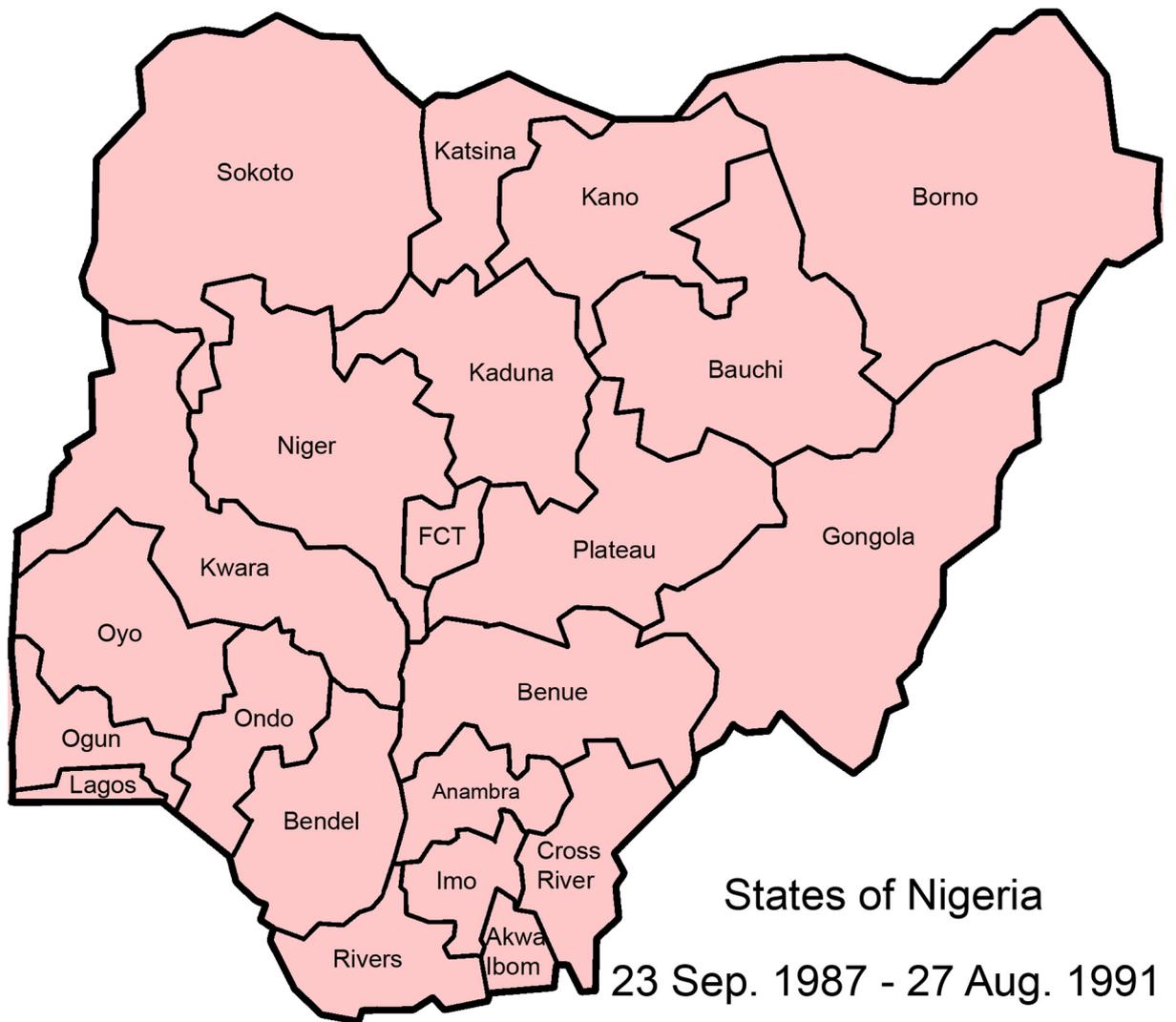
Appendix: 2c

12 States



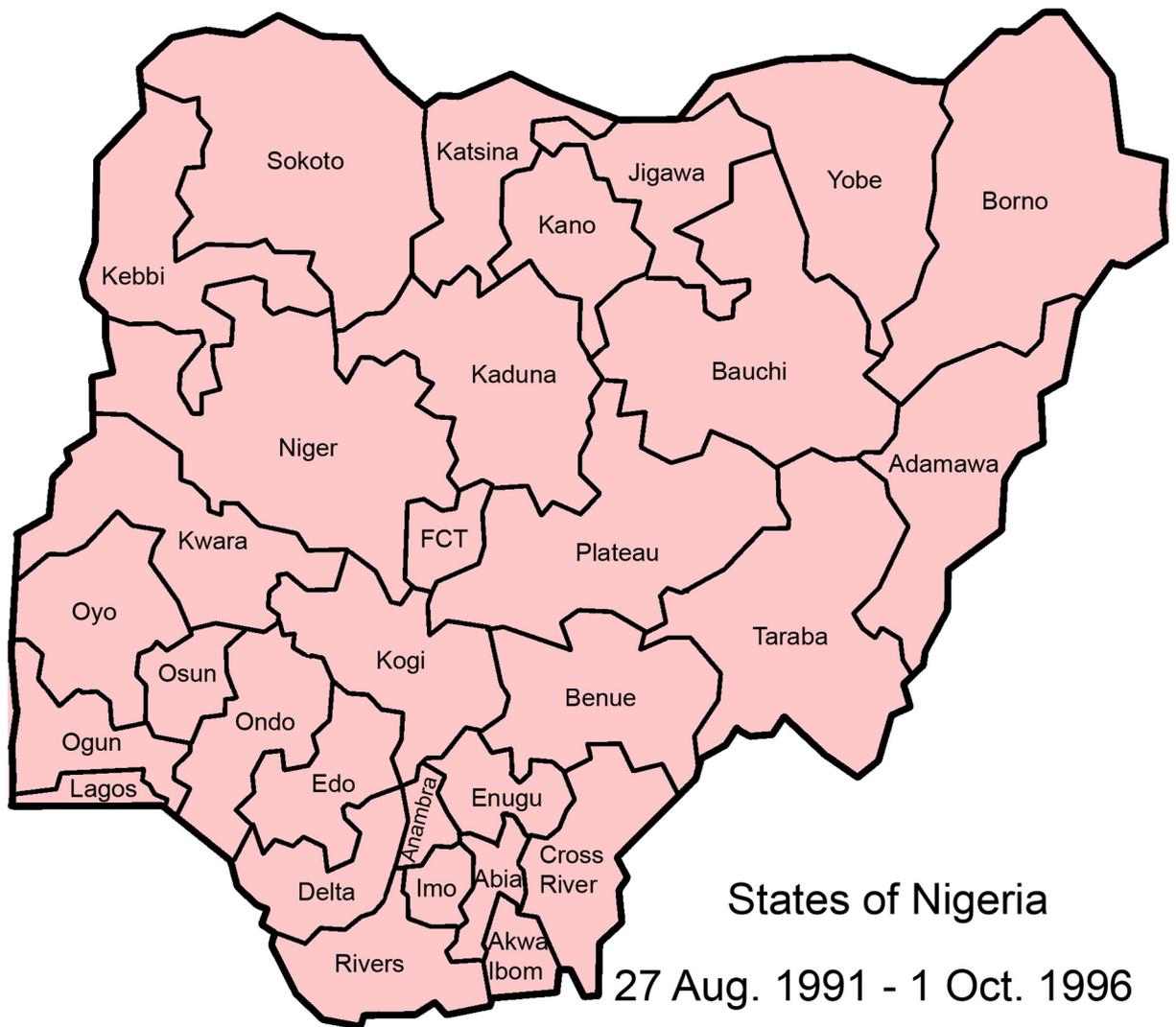
Appendix: 2d

19 States



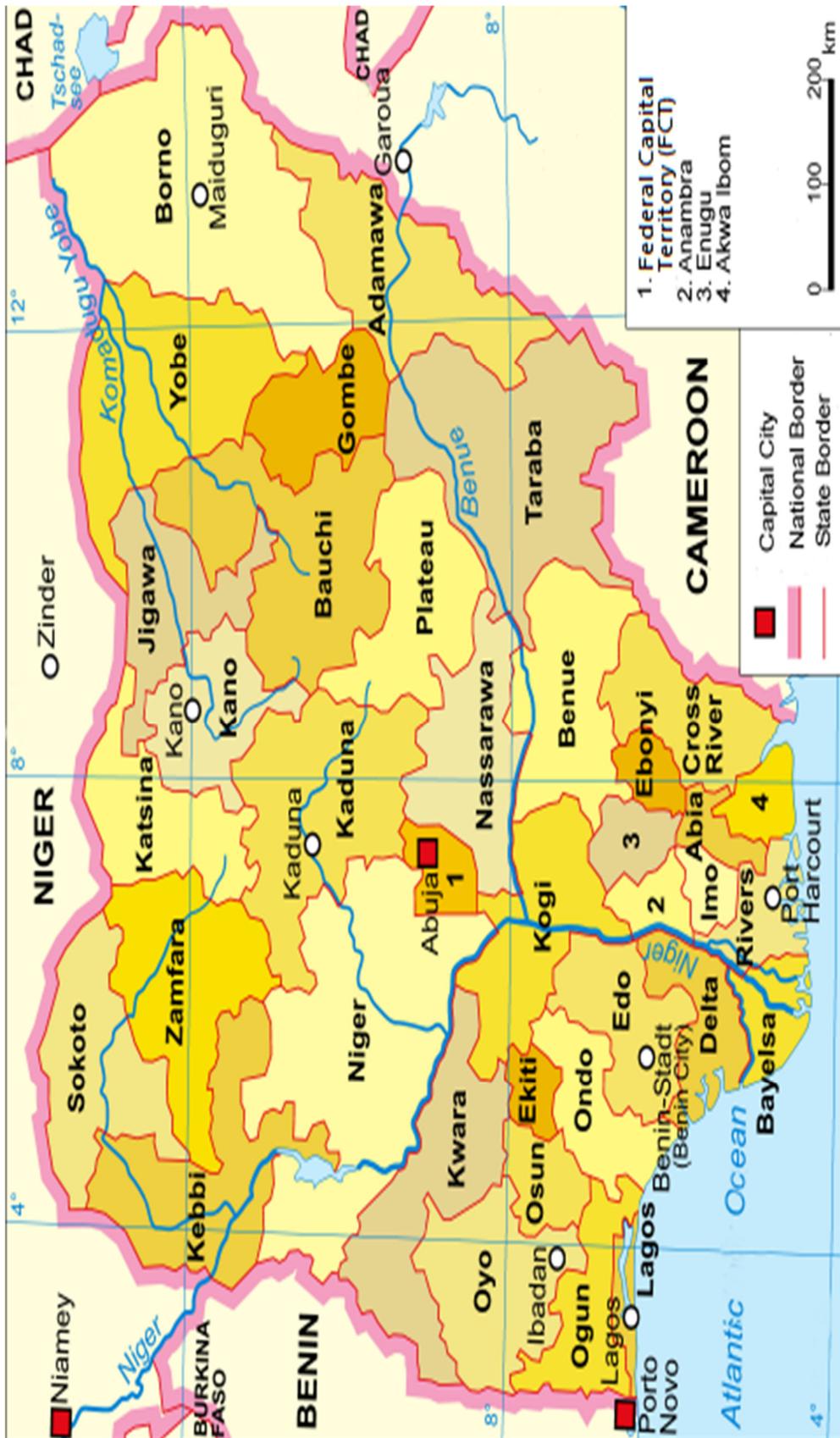
Appendix: 2e

21 States



Appendix: 2f

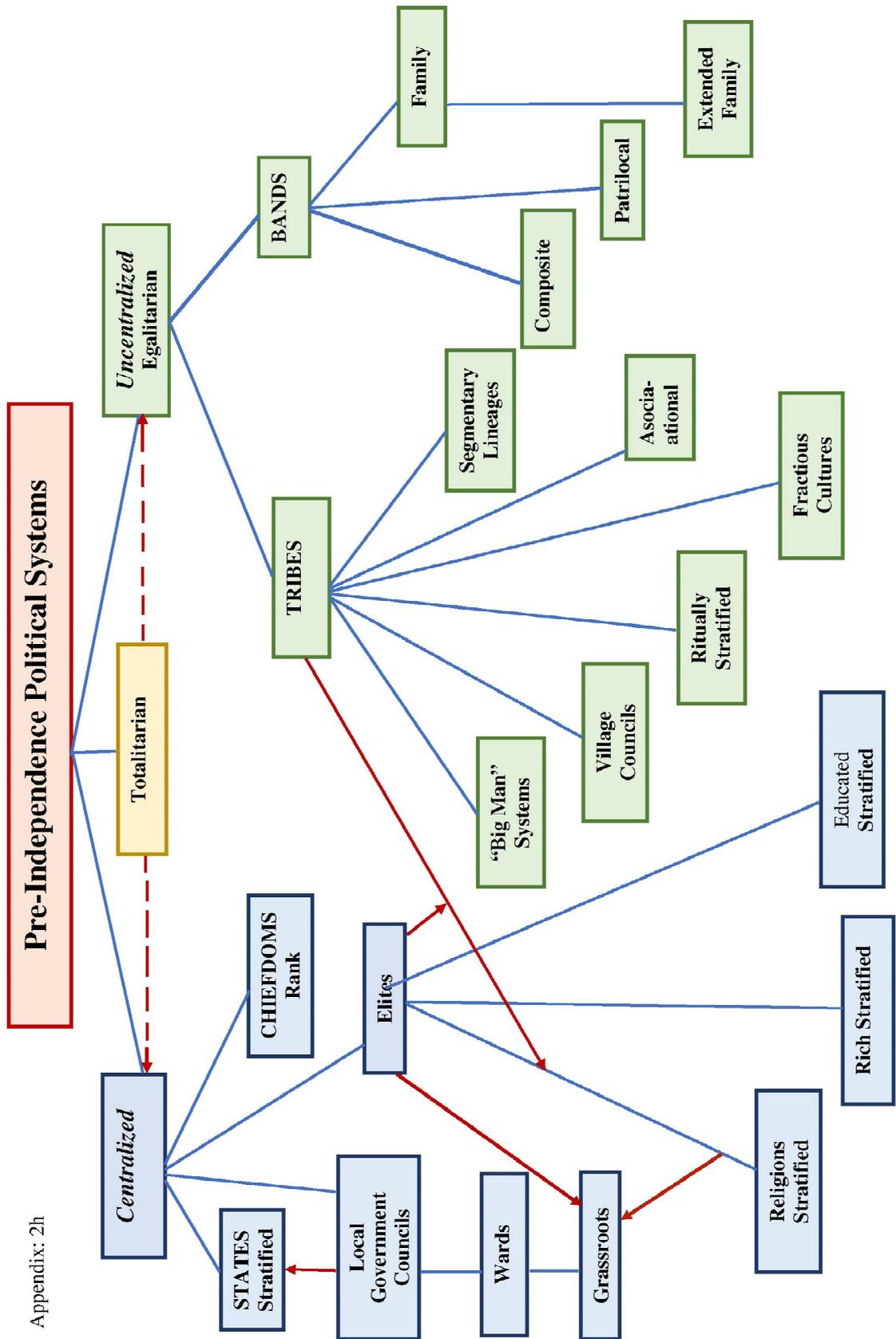
30 States



1996-1998

Appendix: 2g

36 States including the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja (2018)



Appendix: 2h

INTRODUCTION TO THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The figures below are arranged according to the questions in the questionnaire. They also show the choices people made. They not only expressed what people think of being good but they show the concrete attitude to personal and objective good. Two thousand five hundred (2,500) copies of questionnaires were given to ten (10) people. The persons were picked from the North, South, East, West and as well each person was picked from the six Geo-political Zones of Nigeria respectively, for distribution and collection. Each had two hundred and fifty (250) copies. It was a practical form of knowledge searching in a natural environment and with the natural people on natural grounds. Knowledge comes from information, books, direct teaching or any electronic sources of a subject matter. In other words, this kind of knowledge is a priori knowledge, which can be deduced from theoretical assumptions about a particular field of knowledge to practical knowledge of facticity. A questionnaire type of research, is a condensed gathered information or knowledge that reflects scientific and original facts of a study. It goes beyond the deduced type of knowledge. In simple terms, it is a scientific knowledge which is acquired through observations, experiences, data collation and testing of data where necessary. Scientific facts, can only be facts if they under-go the process of verification of hypothesis in order to conclude and infer the data as fact of history. This research material and figures, cover the vast Nigerian history, geographical map, the meaning and purpose of life among Nigerians, and the human development. Finally, the figures represent the enormous task of Nigerians who have been given the mandate to give meaning to Nigeria in all its richness. This research is to call Nigerians to responsibility, accountability, attitudinal change, participation of Nigerians to inculcate mercy in the will and the freedoms of Nigerians in order to acquire real existential life that is merciful, suitable and that reflects the divine image which expresses God's mark in all Nigerians. After all, „God is love”.

Questionnaire Data (2017)

Remembering the victims of violence and saving lives in Nigeria

NB: For Survey and Research Purposes

1. Have you personally experienced violence? (a) Yes (b) No (c) Don't know
2. Has any member of your family experienced violence? ((a) Yes (b) No (c) Don't know
3. How should victims of violence be remembered? (a) By building monuments to their honour (b) By establishing Remembrance Day to their honour (c) By establishing, Nigerian Peace Envoy' NGO-programme (d) Other (specify)_____
4. Have you ever showed mercy to others (a) Yes (b) No (c) Don't know
5. What was the reason you acted mercifully? (a) Religious conviction (b) Out of emotions (c) Don't know
6. How did you feel when you received mercy? (a) Blessed (b) Loved (c) Don't know
7. Does your religion help you to show mercy? ((a) Yes (b) No (c) Don't know
8. How likely would you recommend someone to act mercifully? (a) Very likely (b) Unlikely (c) Don't know
9. What is your understanding of mercy? (a) Expressing love (b) Helping (c) Showing interest (d) other (specify)_____
10. Are families doing enough to show mercy? (a) Yes (b) No (c) Don't know
11. Should families and communities receive mercy from the state? (a) Yes (b) No (c) Don't know (d) Other (specify)_____
12. Is the Church doing enough to practise mercy? (a) Yes (b) No (c) Don't know
13. Can mercy transform family life, Nigerian society, Africa and the world? (a) Yes (b) No (c) Don't know
14. Can merciful behaviour change and improve Christian-Muslim Relations in Nigeria? (a) Yes (b) No (c) Don't know

Personal details:

Age_____

Occupation_____

Educational Status: O'Level, graduate, postgraduate, other (specify)_____ (please, tick appropriately)

THANK YOU

Appendix: 3a

Summary Analysis

Total Questionnaire 10x250 =2,500

Total distributed =2,500

signed/returned =2,495

unreturned questionnaires =5

Completed forms times the no. of questions(2495x14) =34,930

Results according to the order of questions and their nos.

S/N	A	B	C	D
1	730	780	11	
2	801	606	140	
3	287	605	422	31
4	2495	0	0	
5	702	600	31	
6	740	532	0	
7	2007	0	0	
8	1644	11	0	
9	1007	480	80	0
10	1010	344	202	
11	1112	173	124	0
12	1113	0	135	
13	1644	251	11	
14	1866	21	42	

1 Compensating the victims 2. Creating awareness

These are specified answers about how victims of violence should be remembered (question no.3 above)

Appendix: 3b

Summary Analysis of the Questionnaire data 2017-01-30

Total Questionnaire 10x250 =2,500
 Total distributed =2,500
 signed/returned =2,495
 unreturned =5
 Completed forms times the no. of questions(2495x14) =34,930

Category of results based on options of the questions

S/N	A	B	C	D
1	2495	780	422	
2	2007	606	202	
3	1866	605	140	31
4	1644	600	135	
5	1644	532	124	
6	1113	480	80	
7	1112	344	42	
8	1010	251	31	
9	1007	173	11	0
10	801	21	11	
11	740	11	0	0
12	730	0	0	
13	702	0	0	
14	287	0	0	

1. Compensating the victims 2. Creating awareness

These are specified answers about how victims of violence should be remembered (question no.3 above)

Age Composition

18-25 =448

26-30 =792

31-60 =1023

61-75 =151

76-85 =49

86+ =32

Occupation: Civil servants, teachers, businessmen/women

Educational Status: O'Level, graduate, postgraduate,

Appendix: 3c

Summary analysis of the Questionnaire data 2017-01-30

Total Questionnaire 10x250 =2,500

Total distributed =2,500

signed/returned =2,495

unreturned =5

Completed forms times the no. of questions(2495x14) =34,930

Final result order according in Descending order of value

1. 2495***	23. 202
2. 2007***	24. 173
3. 1866***+2	25. 140
4. 1644-1644	26. 135
5. 1112	27. 124
6. 1113	28. 80
7. 1010	29. 42
8. 1007	30. 31-31
9. 801	31. 21
10. 780	32. 11-11-11
11. 740	33. 0x9
12. 730	_____
13. 702	22,851
14. 606	
15. 605	
16. 600	
17. 532	
18. 480	
19. 422	
20. 344	
21. 287	
22. 251	

The no. „2495” is called „Wazobianification” of Divine Mercy

1. Compensating the victims
2. Creating awareness

These are specified answers about how victims of violence should be remembered (question no.3 above)

Appendix: 3d

Original Proposed topics

1. Praxeology of the Divine Mercy Devotion Among “Road Workers” as an Antidote to Poverty, Hunger and Violence in Northern Nigeria: A Moral Consideration for Renewal and Building of our Home
2. Morality of Death: A Proposal for John Paul II’s Theology of the Divine Mercy Modernization a Paradoxical Moral Burden to Life in Nigeria
3. Theology of Love in John Paul II: History and Identity, a Pastoral Consideration for Pastoral Workers in Minna Diocese
4. The Divine Mercy Devotion in John Paul II an Antidote to Violence: A Moral Consideration for Lasting Peace and Freedom in Northern Nigeria Mt 25 (-a Moral Consideration for an Applied Research)
5. The Praxeology(Ergonomics) of Divine Mercy Devotion in John Paul II: A Remedy to Revenge and Poverty (Mt 25)
6. Praxeology of the Divine Mercy Devotion in Politics: A Moral Consideration for Sustainable Developmental Goals in Nigeria
7. A Critical Evaluation of the Potentials of Divine Mercy: End of Poverty and Dehumanization in Nigeria
8. Praxeology(Ergonomics) of Divine Mercy in Northern Nigeria: A Moral Consideration
9. A Critical Evaluation of Potential of Ecology in Pope Francis to Eradicate Poverty, Dehumanization and Violence in Northern Nigeria
10. Life and Ecology: A Proposal for the Divine Mercy Theology in Pope Francis
11. Ecological Creation: History, Identity and Purpose: A Proposal for Ecological Theology Nigeria: A Proposal for a „Theology of Divine Mercy”
12. Moral Implications of Divine Mercy in individual, Ecclesial and the Social Life of Nigerians.

Appendix: 4

Mineral Resources in the 36 States of Nigeria

1. Abia: Gold, lead/zinc, limestone, oil/gas and salt 2. Abuja: Cassiterite, clay, dolomite, gold, lead/zinc, marble, tantalite 3. Adamawa: Bentonite, gypsum, kaolin & magnesite 4. Akwa Ibom: Clay, lead/zinc, lignite, limestone, oil/gas, salt & uranium, 5. Anambra: Clay, glass-sand, gypsum, iron-ore, lead/zinc, lignite, limestone, phosphate & salt, 6. Bauchi: gold, cassiterite (tine ore), columbite, gypsum, wolfram, coal, limestone, lignite, iron-ore, & clay 7. Benue: Barite, clay, coal, gemstone, gypsum, iron-ore, lead/zinc, limestone, marble & salt 8. Borno: bentonite, clay, diatomite, gypsum, hydro-carbon kaolin & limestone 9. Cross River: Barite, lead /zinc, lignite, limestone, manganese, oil/gas, salt & uranium 10. Delta: Clay, glass-sand, gypsum, iron-ore, kaolin, lignite, marble & oil/gas oil/gas 11. Ebonyi: Gold, lead/zinc & salt, Glay, gypsum, lead/zinc, lignite, limestone, manganese, oil/gas & uranium 12. Edo: Bitumen, clay dolomite, phosphate, glass-sand, gold, gypsum, iron-ore, lignite, limestone, marble & oil/gas 13. Ekiti: Feldspar, granite, kaolin, syenite & tatum 14. Enugu: Coal, lead/zinc & limestone 15. Gombe: Gemstone & gypsum 16. Imo: Gypsum, lead/zinc, lignite, limestone, marcasite, oil/gas, phosphate & salt 17. Jigawa: Butyles, amethyst, aqua marine 18. Kaduna: Asbestos, clay, flosper, gemstone, gold, graphite, kaolin, hyanite, mica, rock, crystal, ruby, sapphire, sihnite, superntinite, tentalime, topaz & tounmaline 19. Kano: Gassiterite, copper, gemstone, glass-sand, lead/zinc, pyrochinre & tantalite 20. Katsina: Kaolin, marble & salt 21. Kebbi: Gold 22. Kogi: Cole, dolomite, feldspar, gypsum, iron-ore, kaolin marble, talc & tantalite 23. Kwara: Cassiterite, columbite, feldspar, gold, iron-ore, marble, mica, & tantalite 24. Lagos: Bitumen, clay & glass-sand 25. Nasarawa: Amethyst (topaz garnet), barytex, barite, cassiriet, chalcopyrite, clay, columbite, coking, coal, dolomite/marble, feldspar, galena, iron-ore, limestonemica, salt, sapphire, talc, tantalite, tourmaline quartz & zireon 26. Niger: Gold, lead/zinc & talc 27. Ogun: Bitumen, clay, feldspar, gemstone, kaolin, limestone & phosphate 28. Ondo: Bitumen, clay, coal, dimension stones, felspar, gemstone, glass-sand, granite, gypsum, kaolin, limestone & oil/gas 29. Osun: Columbite, gold, granite, talc, tantalite & tourmalin 30. Oyo: Aqua marine, cassiterite, clay, dolomite, gemstone, gold, kaolin, marble, silimonite, talc & tantalite 31. Plateau: Barite, bauxite, betonite, bismuth, cassiterite, clay, coal, emeral, Fluoride, Gemstone, granite, iron-ore, kaolin, lead/zinc, marble, molybdenite, phrochlore, salt, tantalite/columbite, tin & wolfram 32. Rivers: Clay, glass-sand, lignite, marble & oil/gas 33. Sokoto: Clay, flakes, gold, granite, gypsum, kaolin, laterite, limestone, phosphate, potash, silica sand & salt 34. Taraba: Lead/zinc 35. Yobe: Soda ash & tintomite 36. Zamfara: Coal, cotton & gold.

Agricultural Resources in the six Geo-Political Zones

Each geo-political zone has multiple dishes of food from variety of food crops such as: rice, garri, palm oil, obunoko seed, egusi, melon, yam, beans, ineapple, banana, orange, avacado pear, coconut, kolanut, garden-egg, guava, water-melon, cucumber, gabbage, carrot, tomatoes, palm-fruit, plantain, corn, water-leave, pumpkinleave, okro, coca, cashew, bread-fruit, bitter-kola, garlic, ginger, guinea-corn, flax, potatoes, onions, pepper, groundnut, cassava, soya-beans, millet, pocho, nata, maguggu, ngolo, pawpaw, spinach, cocoyam, fruits and vegetables.

South-East (5 states)	Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, Imo
South-South (6 states)	Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, Rivers
South-West (6 states)	Ekiti, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Osun, Oyo
North-East (6 states)	Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba, Yobe
North-West (7 states)	Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Sokoto, Zamfara
North-Central (6 states)	Benue, Kogi, Kwara, Nasarawa, Niger, Plateau

Appendix: 5b