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EDITORIAL

When we look around us and observe the environment keenly, we can see that things are not getting better. Each day the rate of evil continues to increase. However, in the midst of the wrongs done in society by people they still crave for a peaceful and progressive society. Many things have really gone wrong ranging from the self, in the family, in places of work, places of worship and arenas of social gathering. The various sectors of society including education, religion, politics and economy seem to have loopholes in their abilities to sustain and maintain a happy society.

In our last edition we cantered on Suffering and Hope, in which we attempted to let people know that suffering is not so to say a “curse”, and that the one done with hope leads to victory. On another thought, most suffering are artificial in the sense that some people out of bad will create more sufferings for others. In our Nigerian society and some other nations of the world where severe suffering abide it could be the negative intentions and inordinate ambitions of many persons that keep them lingering. With emphasis on Nigeria, many things are not done right by those leading in society in various sectors; be it politics, education, religion, socio-cultural, economy and others. The general public is not innocent of the causes of the problems or sufferings the society faces because most times our greedy ambitions lead us to commit evil against one another. For us to come out of our present situations, there should be a change of heart and mentality.

Therefore, in this vol. 42 No 2 edition of our Journal, we wish to centre on **Repentance**. Repentance is a change of heart from misdeeds, evils or moral short-comings. It could be understood as a shift from bad to good. For a better society, man must repent from those things that cause set-backs to society and enmity between himself and God and with fellow man. A society that wallows in sin and abomination attracts God’s wrath, whereas the one that repents

wins God's mercies and blessings. God, through the prophet Jeremiah told the nation of Israel 'if you return O Israel, says the lord, if you return to me, if you remove your abominations from my presence, and do not weaver, and if you swear, 'As the lord lives!' in truth, in justice and in uprightness, then nations shall be blessed by him, and by him they shall boast.' (Cf. Jer. 4:1-2). Due to the devastating activities of human beings in society, and people taking laws into their hands, taking wrong notion or dimensions of some particular states or areas of life which God has instituted for the wellbeing of man, many things have really gone wrong. Must we continue to wallow in our wrong thoughts and evil ways of life? What do we gain in being against God, fellow man and nature? There is need for a true and candid change of heart and embrace the grace of God for a better society.

In our theological investigations into the need for and role of repentance to better societal life and give life credence and precedence over selfish ambitions, Fr. Godwin Ndubuisi Orji in his article **The Sacredness of Human Life in Today's Society** tries to scripturally and traditionally reinstate the sanctity of human life by exploring and investigating the notion of sacredness of human life and the ugly reality facing human life today, pointing out the threats that devalue human life, thereby recommending reorientation of human mind, inclusion of moral education in school curriculum, sanitizing polity and responsible parenthood as possible means to gain back the dignity of the human life.

Furthermore, Fr. Ohajuobodo I. Oko in letting us know the great need for *metanoia* (repentance) in his article "**Near has come the Basilea of God. Repent and believe the Good News**" (Mk 1, 15) - **Metanoia as a Biblical Motif and Pastoral Imperative** bases his own guiding tips on Mark 1:15 where Jesus reminds us of the kingdom of God which is near, and calls us to "Repent and believe in the Gospel." He pinpoints two inevitable figures Jesus and John the Baptist, with the role each played in the call to repentance. John preached a baptism of repentance and Jesus summoned his first

audience to repentance and faith as a response to the time of the in-breaking of the kingdom of God.

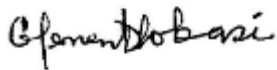
Human beings cannot be one with God without first making effort to abridge their excesses in the many ways they offend God and fellow man. Accordingly, Rev. Placidus Onwubiko in his article **Contrition: On the Threshold of Genuine Repentance** observes that union with God cannot be attained without repentance from sin, and that repentance links with the promise of God's mercy and forgiveness of sins.

The church teaches that death is not an annihilation but a transformation, and encourages Christians to accept it whenever it comes by living a good life and doing penance. Similarly, Fr. Stanislaus Nnamdi Iheoma in his article **Repentance and the (Un) Faithful Departed** notes that repentance is part of the larger theological concept of penance, and presents repentance as the answer to the mystery and tragedy of death.

While considering the agents of positive change in our society, Fr. Samson Ejiofor Asadu in his article **The Nature of Consecrated Life and the Question of Proliferations of New Forms in Igbo Land** mentioned the institutions of the clergy and laity of the church, and that the role each institution plays sustains a consecrated life characterized by *metanoia*- compunction of heart about their errant ways which includes a firm purpose of amendment and reformation and not merely *metamelomai* to indicate a futile regret.

Again, Fr. Simon Okonkwo Areji in his article **The Sacrament of Matrimony and the Christian Call to Holiness** points out the sacramentality of marriage, its importance in the life of man because through it as a sacrament, God sanctifies his people and ordains the continuous process of creation. Since all Christians are called to holiness irrespective of their vocations, marriage is also a way of life, and Christian couples who are faithful to the demands of marriage are, without doubts, citizens of heaven.

Finally, just as biblical Herod was blinded by his ego to behead John for telling him the truth, many individuals try to silence the prophetic voice calling them to repentance. This was presented lucidly by Fr. Cosmas C. Uzowulu in his article “**John I beheaded**”: **The Study of Luke 9,7-9 and Its Implication for Insecurity in Nigeria!** says that there are people like Herod in Nigeria today who value power more than the lives of their people and see others’ popularity or success as threat to their existence. But should we continue with such attitude? No, there must be a change of heart for us to have peace and joy of body and soul. So, corrupt leaders who kill and silence prophetic voices in our land should note that one day the wicked shall die and his wicked heart dies with him.



Clement Obasi