

INTRODUCING THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF ORLU

The early Christian Missionaries to Nigeria (members of the Irish Province of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit, C.S.S.P) set their foot on what is now known as the Catholic Diocese of Orlu in 1910. The first resident priest settled in the Diocese in 1936, while the first Parish was established in 1937 with the Irish priest, Rev. Fr. D. Hackette as its Parish Priest. In 1966, the confines of the present Catholic Diocese of Orlu were raised to a Deanery with Rev. Fr. Lawrence Doyle, C.S.SP (another Irish Missionary) as the first Dean. On November 19, 1980, the late Supreme Pontiff, His Holiness, Pope John Paul II, created the Diocese of Orlu out of Owerri Archdiocese and appointed Most Rev. Dr. Gregory O. Ochiagha as its first Bishop. The current Bishop, Most Rev. Augustine T. Ukwuoma took over the administration of the Diocese on June 21, 2008 following the retirement of the first Bishop.

Ever since the first missionaries came to what is now the Catholic Diocese of Orlu, the almighty God has given increase to their labors as the tiny seed they sowed has grown from an insignificant mission area to a teeming and lively Local Church. At the creation of the Diocese in 1981, there were only 350,000 practicing Catholic Christians. Today, these numbers have witnessed and are witnessing tremendous and steady growth. Of the 972,578 population of the Diocese, 655,378 are Catholics. This represents approximately 67% of the entire population. The total number of Mission Units/Parishes has also increased from 23 at the inception of the Diocese to over 200 today.

THE PURPOSE OF OUR APPEAL

Despite this tremendous growth in number, strength and faith, the fact remains that ours is an oppressed and suppressed people who have been subjected to untold hardship by corrupt and irresponsible leaders. Because the people have lost hope in the State, they look upon the Church as the last resort. In addition to the usual charitable services, my Diocese identifies for a specific period a particular target in its social-service-provision mission and addresses the greater part of its resources towards its realization.

Since 2015, the Diocese has chosen as its priority the provision of good drinking water to our innermost rural communities who until now have relied mostly on pond-like streams and rainfalls for their drinking water. This involves drilling several functional boreholes at strategic locations in the diocese, with each borehole serving a community of about 50 families. The huge cost involved in doing this and the numerous numbers of communities involved are telling on our lean and meager resources. It takes around \$8000 to drill a functional borehole covering the cost of actual drilling, electric generator to pump the water, large reservoirs as well as distribution points. It is for this reason that my diocese asked to be included in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia's MCP. Any help rendered us in this regard would be appreciated.

For more information, contact the Foreign Missions Coordinator

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