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GSI NEWS

The Newsletter of Gaudium et Spes Institute Vol. 1 No. 1 December, 2012

www.gesinstitute.org



“Come Over Here and Rest for a while”

DESERT DAY OF PRAYER: The Monthly Spiritual Refreshment

Ejiro is a 28-year old IT consultant. He is a Computer Science graduate with an MA in Software Development. He was born and bred a Catholic and takes the practice of his faith seriously. He works from 8a.m. to 5p.m. on weekdays and does overtime on some weekends. He is also on high demand most of the time after work due to his excellent IT skills. So outside official work time he could be found fixing some software problem somewhere around town. In material terms, Ejiro is

very content. He lives in an upscale neighbourhood, loves fast cars and the latest IT gadgets. He moves around with his Blackberry, iphone and ipad. At any given time he could be seen working on two or all three devices. But he has one nagging worry: he does not have time for his spiritual life and feels spiritually empty most of the time. He tries to attend Sunday Mass but confesses that it's inadequate to fill his spiritual hunger. Recently a friend introduced him to the Desert Day of Prayer at

Gaudium et Spes and he is now one of the regulars. When asked about how he felt about the programme he said, “My spiritual life prior to discovering Desert Day was likebland, tasteless and empty. Now things are different. Desert Day gives me some hours of real soul

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searching, reflection and re-
invigoration. It's like re-
charging your spiritual
batteries every 30 days..."

Ejoro's story might resonate
with that of most people. We
live in an increasingly busy and
distractive world. Work days
full of tight schedules we
hardly meet, weekends taken
up by social engagements and
the like. The home front is not
left out with the demands of
family, friends and spouses. On
the individual level, as we go
about our daily routine, there
are a lot of distractions too.
Most peoples' hands are full
with the latest gadgets:
iphones, ipads, blackberries,
ipods, etc. At the end of the
day, it would be safe to say the
modern man is very distracted.
But as Christians we are urged
to pray always. So how do we
reconcile the demands of
modern life with that of living
out our Christian calling?
There appears to be a wide gap
between our daily lives and our
spiritual lives. Gaudium et
Spes Institute attempts to
bridge that gap with its
monthly Desert Day of Prayer.

The Desert Day of Prayer
provides an opportunity for us
to take a time off our usual
weekend schedules to pray,
listen, reflect and share. The
idea of the Desert comes from
some of our early spiritual
fathers who often retreated
into the Desert which proved
to be a conducive atmosphere
for prayer. The monthly

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

It is my great joy to present
to you the first edition of
GSI News. The aim of the
Newsletter is to inform you,
our esteemed benefactors, of
some of the ministries of this
institute for the past one year.
The founder of the institute,
and the newly created
Cardinal, His Eminence, John
Cardinal Onaiyekan is a man
of great foresight. This
institute tirelessly provides
pastoral and spiritual care to
priests, religious and laity from
Abuja Archdiocese and from
all over Nigeria. GSI attends
to the spiritual needs of
individuals and groups. It has
been a great honour and
privilege for GSI staff to serve
the people that come to this
institute from all walks of life.

I wish to express my profound
gratitude to John Cardinal
Onaiyekan for his fatherly
care and support of GSI. I also
wish to express my sincere
gratitude to GSI benefactors
who support the institute
financially and in other
numerous ways. This
Newsletter highlights the



major programmes of the
institute, namely, The Desert
Day of Prayer, Singles' Retreat
and Monday Adoration. The
Newsletter also reveals some
major expenditure of GSI and
requests for assistance in
order to implement some
major projects before the end
of the year.

It is my fervent prayer that
our good Lord will bless the
work of GSI and also bless its
countless benefactors. On
behalf of the staff of GSI, I
wish you a blessed Christmas
celebration and a grace-filled
New Year.

Fr. Callistus Isara, MSP
Director

retreat into the Desert makes
room for private prayer,
Confession, humble faith
sharing, Mass and the talk.
Each month, the talk focuses
on a specific topic which is
presented by the moderator

after which there is time for
questions and comments. Over
the years the programme has
explored a wide range of topics
including Prayer, the
Sacraments, Forgiveness,
Catechesis, Spiritual Direction,

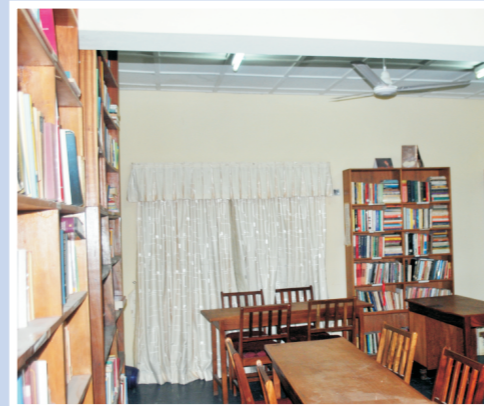
Appreciation

The Director wishes to thank all the benefactors of GSI for their immense and generous support of the institute. During the year, the following were some major assistance to the institute by some individuals:

- A complete set of sacred vessels for Holy Mass.
- A state-of-the-art public address system for the chapel.
- A state-of-the-art public address system for the big hall.
- Individual donations to GSI.

May the good Lord who is never outdone in generosity bless you abundantly.

Facilities @ GSI



Library



Bookshop



Accommodation



Halls

HOW CAN YOU SUPPORT US?

One good way of supporting the Institute is by joining the Benefactors' Scheme. The scheme entails a monthly contribution for the upkeep and development of the Institute. The scheme has four classes:

CLASS A: N10,000 and above per month

CLASS B: N5,000 and above per month

CLASS C: N2,000 and above per month

CLASS D: N1,000 and above per month

The benefits of membership include:

- Regular information and updates on the activities of the Institute.
- Free use of the library.
- Masses offered for all benefactors.

You can redeem your monthly contribution via the following ways:

1. Pay into any Ecobank branch. Account Number: 0015369371. Account Name: Gaudium et Spes Institute Benefactors' Scheme.
2. Pay at the Institute.

AREAS OF IMMEDIATE NEED

We wish to appeal to our benefactors to help us accomplish by Christmas day the following needs:

- Ø Renovation and refurbishment GSI Kitchen which is estimated to cost N700,000.00. The kitchen serves a very important role in providing meals and refreshment to clerical and lay staff of the institute, retreatants, guests and participants at our programmes. On a typical programme like the Desert Day of Prayer; meals are prepared for over 100 persons. The kitchen was construction over 20 years ago and is in urgent need of renovation.
- Ø The institute is also in urgent need of a utility car. The current one is 12 years old and costing so much to maintain.
- Ø Painting of the Institute's fence and other areas.

The Resurrection, Mary.....These talks can be accessed at our website @ www.gesinstitute.org

The programme celebrated its 6th anniversary this January having been inaugurated in 2006. The programme attracts participants from all over the

archdiocese, especially from parishes around the city of Abuja. They come from all walks of life: young and old alike. They are usually between 50 to 100 people attending on any given third Saturday. Over time it has been observed that the number of social activities taking place around town

determines how many turn up. But the number does not dampen the spirit as participants always slip into the spirit of the Desert and participate actively. Question/Comment time really evokes different opinions depending on the topic of the day. Many have said they learn a lot from the talk and also from the sharing and comments.

SINGLES IN THE LORD

Ministering to the needs of Catholic Singles

At one time or the other in life many people find themselves being single. This may be due to various factors like young people not yet married, priests and religious, those who have lost their spouses, those who choose not to marry, single parents, etc. The single state,

order to meet the desire, yearning, and felt need of singles in the Nigerian Church. Evidently, there are not too many programmes in parishes in the Nigerian Church that are designed specifically to meet the spiritual and pastoral needs of Catholic singles." That is how the ONE DAY RETREAT FOR

SINGLES came about. The main focus of the programme is interpersonal relationship as it relates to the Christian faith. This assumes greater significance in the sense that serious relationship between single persons has a potential of leading to marriage. The retreat attracts attendees from all over Abuja and beyond. One of the most consistent groups come from St. Peter's Parish, Keffi, in the Diocese of Lafia. Credit for their consistency goes to the Sisters of the Nativity who provide transportation and sponsorship. Fr. Pius Femi Oladele, MSP, also mobilises a large group from Ss. Peter and Paul's Parish, Nyanya.



like other states, comes with its challenges. These challenges vary from one society to the other. In the Nigerian society single people have their fair share of challenges to contend with. According to Fr. Callistus Isara MSP, Director of the institute and the brain behind the Singles Retreat, "I introduced the programme in

order to meet the desire, yearning, and felt need of singles in the Nigerian Church. Evidently, there are not too many programmes in parishes in the Nigerian Church that are designed specifically to meet the spiritual and pastoral needs of Catholic singles." That is how the ONE DAY RETREAT FOR SINGLES came about. The main focus of the programme is interpersonal relationship as it relates to the Christian faith. This assumes greater significance in the sense that serious relationship between single persons has a potential of leading to marriage.

The Singles' Retreat is held every other month. Like the Desert Day, it deals with a specific topic on each day of the programme. Over

the years it has examined a host of topics as they affect the single state of life. Topics like the Dynamics of Human Relationship, Singles and Christian Witness, Choosing a Life Partner, Problems and Effects of Singleness and a host of other very relevant themes. The primary objective of the Singles' Retreat is to create an enabling environment for prayer, sharing and reflection for Catholic singles. But over time it has also turned out to be the point of meeting for some singles who eventually got married.

"Be Still and know that I Am God"

The weekly MONDAY ADORATION programme

The vision of this programme, which holds every Monday evening, is to pray silently. Those who gather for the programme also reflect on a different topic each week. They also discuss and share before Benediction. Maybe you should consider joining this weekly programme.



"COME TO ME ALL YOU THAT ARE LABOURED AND OVERBURDENED"

PASTORAL COUNSELLING AND SPIRITUAL DIRECTION @ GSI



Individual counseling and spiritual direction takes the bulk of the time of the priests working at GSI. If you are burdened in any way and you wonder who to talk to, who to help you, know that you are just a phone call away from help by calling GSI. Mobile: 0708 268 0183



OTHER PROGRAMMES:

During the year the following programmes have also taken place:

Ø The training in Pastoral Counselling skills which has largely focused on priests and religious for the past six years has now opened up for lay persons. On October 27, 2012, seven lay persons and one deacon graduated from this institute as trained pastoral

counselors and were awarded certificates by GSI.

- Ø Five lay persons completed their training as extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion.
- Ø 17 priests were trained in May in the art of spiritual direction from Abuja, Maiduguri and Idah dioceses.
- Ø Seminars for Lectors and Church Wardens were also held.
- Ø Directed retreats are ongoing for priests, religious and laity.

GSI website

The Gaudium et Spes Institute's website has been redesigned and upgraded. We implore everyone to pay regular visits to the site. This will keep you updated on the activities and programmes of the institute wherever you may be. You can also have access to talks given at the institute's various programmes. www.gesinstitute.org