

---

## THE REDEMPTORISTS

---

1, Mission Street, Satellite Town,  
P.O. Box 541, Satellite Town,  
Lagos State, Nigeria.

Office of the Vice Provincial



---

## VICE PROVINCE OF NIGERIA

---

Email:  
redemptorist.viceprovince.ofngr@gmail.com  
Tel: +234 808 146 7484, +234 903 422 0962  
www.redemptoristng.org

**Letter 17: October 22, 2020.**

*How Can we Worship the God of Life in the midst of the Unjust and executional-style-murder of our Youths in cold blood?*

Dear confreres and our lay collaborators,

I have been writing in and out of season, but I am writing to you today out of season. I am writing to you out of season precisely because of the unjust and executional-style-murder of unarmed youths sitting on the floor and waving Nigerian flags at Lekki toll plaza on October 20, 2020 in cold blood. This executional-style-murder of unarmed and patriotic youths and the drenching of the Nigerian flag with their patriotic blood mean there is no longer option for neutrality anymore in the historical-social-political situation of our Country. In fact, an option for neutrality will be tantamount to an option for, unjust and cruel murder of our youths; human made death-dealing structures of evils; political/executive corruption; unemployment; and the cruel/crushing effect of death-dealing poverty in the society. Accordingly, I call on all the members of the Vice Province and our lay collaborators to make preferential option for the voice and the life of the poor – our helpless youths and a future where all will have life and have it to the full (cf. John 10:10) – Plentiful Redemption!!! Remember! One of those killed could have been – my/your brother, sister, family member.

Dear confreres and lay collaborators, C.4 mandates us to note that, “Among groups of people more in need of spiritual help, they (Redemptorists) will give special attention to the poor, the deprived and oppressed. The evangelization of these is a sign of messianic activity (cf. Luke 4:18), and Christ, in a certain sense, wished to identify himself with them (cf. Matt. 25:40).” It is necessary to emphasize at the onset that this evangelization must be dynamic, all embracing and all encompassing. That is, it must not only address all dimensions of their lives and existence, but it must also take into cognizance their existential struggles and unique cultural context. In fact, C.5 says emphatically, “Indeed the Congregation’s mandate to evangelize the poor is directed to the liberation and salvation of the whole human person. The members have the duty of preaching the Gospel explicitly and of showing solidarity with the poor by promoting their fundamental rights to justice and freedom.”

It is imperative therefore, for all the members of the Vice Province and our lay collaborators to take effective stance in solidarity with our patriotic youths in offering clear and precise prophetic denunciation of all structures of evils in our society and their agents – the “unknown security” operatives who killed and maimed our youths – the helpless poor. Concretely put therefore, we must enter into solidarity with the poor by joining them in their struggle to reclaim their lives from the shackles of the oppressors not only through preaching but in actually walking the walk of liberation with them. Redeptorist missionaries are called to be prophetic in our proclamation of the Gospel to the poor and the most abandoned – our helpless youths. While to the oppressors and the agents who sustain and maintain the structures of evils in the society, we must like Prophet Amos of old issue prophetic denunciations. This indeed is the moment of prophetic denunciation and rebuke!

As the Scriptures tell us, armed therefore with Yahweh’s command and his own personal experiences of the happenings in his society, Amos went to work without fear or favor. In fact, Amos began by denouncing the atrocities of the oppressors in their dealings with the poor and the weak, with the strongest possible words. Amos did not equivocate. In Amos 4:1-3, the Prophet notes, “Hear this word, you cows of Bashan, who are in the mountain of Samaria, who oppress the poor, who crush the needy,

---

# THE REDEMPТОRISTS

---

## Office of the Vice Provincial

who say to their husbands, 'Bring, that we may drink!' The Lord God has sworn by his holiness that, behold, the days are coming upon you, when they shall take you with fishhooks. And you shall go out through the breaches, everyone straight before her; and you shall be cast forth into Harmon." Furthermore, Amos 5:11-12 says "... Because you trample upon the poor and take from him [her] exactions of wheat, you have built houses of hewn stone, but you shall not dwell in them; you have planted pleasant vineyards, but you shall not drink wine ... how great are your sins – you who afflict the righteous, who take bribe, and turn aside the needy in the gate." Dear confreres and our lay collaborators, our "Amosian" moment has come - the vengeance of God is descending upon our oppressors through the agency of our patriotic youths. Indeed, what Gustavo Gutierrez called the irruption of the poor is upon us, and we must dare to be part of this epochal moment in the history of our great Country.

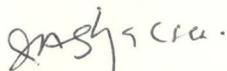
To make this epochal moment real, the Congregation must incarnate in our Country the structure of the life of Jesus. That is, following the footsteps of Jesus who at the beginning of his mission as recorded by Luke, stated unequivocally that, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach the good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed.... (cf. Lk.4:18)." Hence, we must challenge all oppressive and dehumanizing structures, and become the source of concrete hope and fullness of life for the poor and the most abandoned – our youths who are being murdered in cold blood all over our Country.

In addition, consciousness raising/conscientization is an urgent task that must be undertaken by the members of the Vice Province. The Congregation must begin to prophetically announce to the people that they must not accept their situation of death-dealing poverty as God's will for them. They must be sensitized to the fact that their condition of abject and dehumanizing poverty is the result of the unjust actions of some selfish and greedy individuals against the majority who are poor – the helpless youths. And as such, it must be resisted and fought with all their might and strength.

Let me conclude by asking once again, how can we worship the God of Life in the midst of the unjust and execution-style-murder of our youths in cold blood? One cannot but recall the timeliness of Gustavo Gutierrez, a renowned Liberation theologian's wonderment, when reflecting on the Latin American situation. He says, "How can we thank God for the gifts of life when the reality around us is one of premature and unjustly inflicted death? How can we express joy at knowing ourselves to be loved by the Father when we see the suffering of our brothers and sisters? How can we sing when the suffering of an entire people chokes the sound in our throats?"<sup>1</sup> How can we worship the God of life in spirit and in truth when our youths are being murdered in cold blood? How can we?! How can we?!!

May Our Mother of Perpetual, St. Alphonsus, all our saints and martyrs, journey with us in our transformative quest.

Your fellow sojourner in our mission to the wounded world,



Joterio Joachim Aghoja, C.Ss.R.

Vice Provincial Superior.



---

<sup>1</sup> Gustavo Gutierrez, *We Drink from Our Own Wells*, 20<sup>th</sup> cent., ed., (New York: Orbis Books, 2003) 7.