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THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE AFRICAN CHURCH OF THE 21ST CENTURY

Anthony Amadi, Ph.D

Introduction

Saint Paul was correct when he said: "No one can say that Jesus is Lord, except by the Holy Spirit" 1Cor 12:3. Unlike the previous centuries when the Holy Spirit was scarcely mentioned, Christians including Catholics of the 21st century are on fire with the movement of the Holy Spirit. The various charismatic movements have challenged people all over the world including Africa to bear witness to the Holy Spirit with their lives. However, it is certain that the Holy Spirit which always dwells in the Church is still as active in it now as during the lives of the Apostles. We know and recognize the presence of the Holy Spirit only in the movement by which he reveals the Word of God—Christ himself to us and disposes us to welcome him in faith. It is this Spirit to whom Paul bore witness that empowers us to say: "Jesus is Lord." It is this movement of the Holy Spirit in the lives of Christians in the African church that this article intends to explore to determine how the Holy Spirit has manifested himself in African Catholics in general and in Nigeria in particular.

The article begins with a brief explanation of the Holy Spirit situating his presence in the Old Testament (OT), in the life of Christ and in the universal Church. The titles and symbols of the Holy Spirit are discussed. A historical survey of the same manifestation of the Holy Spirit in Africa is traced down to the Martyrs of Uganda as well as Blessed Cyprian Iwene Tansi of

Nigeria who stands out prominently as the first Nigerian to be beatified. The role the Holy Spirit plays in the Congregation of the Holy Spirit of the Nigerian Province is highlighted. The Ministry of Fr. Emmanuel Edeh, C.S.Sp at the Catholic Prayer Ministry (CPM) calls for special attention. The article concludes with an appreciation of the place of the Holy Spirit in the Extraordinary Jubilee year of Mercy. The Catechism of the Catholic Church summarizes the aim of this article in these words:

The Church, a communion living in the faith of the Apostles which she transmits, is the place where we know the Holy Spirit:

- In the Scriptures he inspires
- In the Tradition, to which the Church Fathers are always timely witnesses
- In the Church's Magisterium, which he assists
- In the Sacramental Liturgy, through its words and symbols, in which the Holy Spirit puts us into communion with Christ
- In the charisms and ministries by which the Church is built up
- In the signs of the apostolic and missionary life
- In the witness of saints through whom he manifests his holiness and continues the work of salvation.¹

All these, especially the last point have proper direction and relationship with this article. The task at hand is to develop and

¹ *Catechism of the Catholic Church. Pocket Edition.* 1995, art 688
Dublin: Veritas Press.

en-flesh these points to support the theme of the article namely, *the Holy Spirit in the African Church of the 21st century*.

Holy Spirit in the Old Testament

The aim in this section is not to trace the etymology of the word 'Holy Spirit' rather it is to determine the manifestations of the Holy Spirit specifically in the lives of the people of the OT. It must be stated from the beginning that the OT did not use the expression 'Holy Spirit.' Both Schmaus and McKenzie agree that the expression used was the 'Spirit of God.' Primarily, this Spirit of God is considered as the source of life as seen in Genesis 1:2 and 2:7. Acknowledging the role the Spirit of God played in the lives of some selected individuals, Fleming has this to say:

On certain occasions this Spirit of God, or the power of God, came upon selected people for specific purposes. It may have resulted in victorious leadership (Judges 3:10; 6:34; Zech 4:6), superhuman strength (Judges 14:6, 19; 15:14; 16:20), or artistic ability and know-how (Exo 3:3-5) ... Prophets who received God's messages and passed them on to his people did so through the activity of God's Spirit upon them (2Sam 23:2; 2Chron 24:20; Neh 9:30; Isa 61:2; Zech 7:12).²

In agreement with Fleming on the Spirit empowerment of people to do specific assignments, McKenzie comments:

The Spirit not only confers upon those who receive it the qualities necessary to fulfill their mission, but also

² Fleming, D. 1990. *Bridge Bible Dictionary*. P176 Brisbane: Bridgeway Publications.

inspires them to deeds above and beyond the expected and their normal habits and powers; and this is a true sign of the Spirit; that a man rises above his habits and attainments. It is also to be noticed that the Spirit is a passing charisma in the Judges and in Saul, but reposes permanently upon David and upon messianic king.³

From the references above, it is certain that these individuals were enlightened to see the action of God in their lives as well as in the world. The prophets among them were given the grace to understand the word of God as well as the strength to proclaim it. The Spirit of God did not limit himself to few individuals, instead he assured the Jews of the general outpouring of the Spirit. Somerville describes this outpouring thus:

God led the Jews to look forward to a new age when he would pour out his Spirit not only on certain individuals, but on all his people: And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh... Even upon the maidservants in those days, I will pour out my Spirit (Joel 2:28-29; Isa 32:15-17).⁴

This prophecy draws our attention to the events leading to the Messiah and to the New Testament encounter. Schmaus brings this anticipation to the fore in this context:

³ McKenzie, J.L. 1994. *Dictionary of the Bible*. P841 London: MacMillan Publishing Co. Inc.

⁴ Somerville, F. 1972. *Catholic Teaching Today*. P62 Yorkshire: The Redwood Press Ltd.

The most emphatic pointer to the new Messianic age is given by Joel (3:1-5). Salvation will be accomplished with the outpouring of the Spirit upon all. The meaning of this prophecy is, as the NT texts show, not that the Spirit comes upon all men, but that he is imparted to all the faithful within the believing community.⁵

It is evident, therefore, that the Holy Spirit is present in the Scriptures it inspires. Thus the Spirit of God was active in the OT guiding the events of that time towards the coming of Jesus the Saviour who is Christ the Lord.

The Holy Spirit and Jesus

In this section, the focus is on the Holy Spirit and Jesus because Jesus is the central and focal point of the New Testament. The following phrases are briefly explained: conceived by the Holy Spirit, led by the Holy Spirit, empowered by the Holy Spirit, Jesus reveals the Holy Spirit, Jesus promises the Holy Spirit. We can agree with Somerville who said that the "Holy Spirit was present and active in Jesus from the very moment of his life on earth." The conception of Jesus in the womb of Mary was by the power of the Holy Spirit Luke 1:35. Before his public ministry, he was anointed by the Holy Spirit with his sonship confirmed at baptism Mat. 3:16. Being convinced of the presence of the Holy Spirit in his life; Jesus in Luke 4:18-19, assured his listeners that the Spirit of God would guide him in his work of saving humanity. Since this work entrusted to him was not of human origin, it would not depend on human approval. In his preaching and healing, Jesus manifested the power of God through the Holy

⁵ Schmaus, M. 1975. Holy Spirit. In *Encyclopedia of Theology. A Concise Sacramentum Mundi*. P642 New York: Burns & Oats.

Spirit working in him. Burke admits this fact when he asserts: “The whole work of Jesus is in fact a joint mission of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.”⁶ Jesus, revealing the Holy Spirit to his audience, was gradual until he was glorified. For example, in his discussion with Nicodemus he told him that a man must be born again through water and the Holy Spirit because what is born of the flesh is flesh and what is born of the Spirit is Spirit (John 3:6). In his encounter with the Samaritan woman, Jesus taught her that ‘God is Spirit, and those who worship him must worship him in Spirit and truth’ (John 4:24).

Encouraging them on the importance of prayer, Jesus assured his listeners that his Father in Heaven will surely give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him Luke 11:13. When Jesus knew that the hour has come for him to be glorified by his Father, he promised his disciples the coming of the Holy Spirit—the Spirit of truth whom his Father will send: “When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you to the whole truth” John 16:13. Before he died, Jesus committed his Spirit to the Father. After his resurrection, he guaranteed his disciples the same Spirit when he commissioned them saying: “As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you. After saying this, he breathed on them and said: Receive the Holy Spirit, for those whose sins you forgive, they are forgiven, for those whose sins you retain, they are retained” John 20:21-23. During his last instructions, Jesus tried to settle and calm the minds of his disciples with these affirming words: “And this is why I will send you what my Father promised. So remain in the city until you are invested with the power from

⁶Burke, J. 1998. *The Holy Spirit: Reflection for Committed Christians*. P21 Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa.

above" Luke 24:49. Jesus had the Holy Spirit of God in him and it is this Holy Spirit that was poured out profusely on his disciples on Pentecost, a day that marked a remarkable turning point in the history of Christianity.

Titles and Symbols of the Holy Spirit

In order to enable us identify the influence of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Church and its members, we examine in this section some of the titles and symbols of the Holy Spirit. In John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7; Jesus refers to the Holy Spirit as the "Paraclete"— One who is by one's side." He also calls it the Spirit of truth John 16:13. In his letters, St. Paul describes the Holy Spirit with different names, for example: "the Spirit of Promise Gal 3:14; Eph 1:13; the Spirit of adoption Rom 8:15; Gal 4:6; the Spirit of Christ the Lord 2Cor 3:17." Paul is correct when he says: "The Lord is Spirit and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom." It is this freedom that enabled the Apostles and Martyrs to choose Christ even in the face of death.

Some symbols associated with the Holy Spirit as interpreted by Burke are: 'water' which symbolizes the 'Holy Spirit's action in baptism'; 'fire' which signifies the 'transforming power of the Holy Spirit'; 'cloud and light' that signify the 'presence of the Holy Spirit'; 'the seal which signifies the 'indelible effect of the Holy Spirit'; the 'laying on of hand' which means the 'coming of the Holy Spirit', and the 'dove' which typifies the 'life of the Holy Spirit.' The Holy Spirit that appeared to Jesus at his baptism in the form of a dove is the Holy Spirit which 'gives life to those who are baptized in the name of Christ.'⁷ For Pope John

⁷ *ibid*, P21

Paul II, the “Holy Spirit is given to us with new life.”⁸ It is this new life in the Spirit which is characteristic in the Church that we examine in the next section.

The Holy Spirit in the Church

Pentecost marked the birth of the Church when the Holy Spirit was given to the Apostles which transformed their lives. The Catechism of the Catholic Church declares this authoritatively when it says: “What the soul is to human body, the Holy Spirit is to the Body of Christ, which is the Church.” Further, the Catechism of the Catholic Church embellishes the vitality of the Church through the Holy Spirit in these words: “The Holy Spirit is the principle of every vital and truly saving action in each part of the Body.”⁹ For Somerville, the Holy Spirit guides the Church in the Christian life by being himself the ‘new law written in our hearts.’ This new law in the hearts of the faithful is the fulfillment of OT prophecy in Isaiah 51:7 where the righteous people have the ‘new law in their hearts’ and which Ezekiel 36:26 confirms when he says: “I shall give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you.” The role the Holy Spirit plays in unifying the church is fundamental and remarkable and this prompts the Catechism of the Catholic Church to proclaim:

It is the Holy Spirit dwelling in those who believe and pervading ruling over the entire Church, who brings about the wonderful communion of the faithful and joins them together so intimately in

⁸Pope John Paul II, 1986. *The Holy Spirit: The Giver of Life: Encyclical Letter*. P5 Nairobi: Pauline Publications.

⁹ *Catechism of the Catholic Church. Pocket Edition*, 1995, art 798
Dublin: Veritas Press

Christ that it is the principle of the Church's unity.
Unity is the essence of the Church¹⁰

We must confess at the same time that the dissensions and separations that gave wounds to the unity of the church were not the work of the Holy Spirit instead they are the results of human elements in the church. Thus, the 'ruptures that wounded the unity of Christ's body—here we must distinguish heresy, apostasy and schism—do not occur without human sin.' The human elements and sinfulness; notwithstanding, the Holy Spirit continues to sanctify the Church by being active in all the sacraments through which holiness is fostered in all the faithful making them Christ-like. It follows, therefore, that the Holy Spirit has his dwelling in the Church and in the hearts of the faithful. Girzone sees the role the Holy Spirit plays in the Church as "molding the mind of the Church through each generation, so [that] it could be a beacon in the spiritual darkness of peoples ever changing fashions in religious doctrines and morals."¹¹ It becomes necessary that the faithful receive the sacraments for their sanctification, their strength and for their true membership of the Church. This practice is necessary because through the church's sacraments, 'Christ communicates his Holy and sanctifying Spirit to the members of his Body.' The Holy Spirit is also fully in the mission of the Church. The Catechism of the Catholic Church recognizes this role of the Holy Spirit in these words: "The mission of Christ and the Holy Spirit is brought to

¹⁰ *ibid*, art 813.

¹¹ Girzone, JF. 2002. *Trinity: A New Living Spirituality*. P50 New York: Doubleday, A Division of Random House.

completion in the church, which is the Body of Christ and the temple of the Holy Spirit. This joint mission henceforth brings Christ's faithful to share in his communion with the Father in the Holy Spirit."¹² There are many other ways through which the Holy Spirit makes his presence felt in the universal Church. It is equally necessary to examine how the Holy Spirit manifests himself in the African Church.

The Manifestation of the Holy Spirit in the African Church

This section begins with a comment from Pope Benedict XVI in his Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Africae Munus*. A part of this comment says:

In the face of many challenges that Africa seeks to address in order to become more and more a land of promise, the Church, like Israel, could easily fall prey to discouragement; yet our forebears in the faith have shown us correct attitude to adopt. Moses, the Lord's servant, by faith... persevered as though he saw him who is invisible. Heb 11:27. As the author of the letter to the Hebrews reminds us: 'faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen' Heb 11:1. For this reason, I call upon the whole Church to look to Africa with faith and hope. Jesus Christ who invites us to be the 'salt of the earth and light of the world' Mat 5:13-14, offers us the power of the

¹² *Catechism of the Catholic Church. Pocket Edition*. 1995, Dublin: Veritas Press

Spirit to help us come ever closer to attaining this ideal.¹³

The statement of our Pope Emeritus has highlighted some essential points relevant to our discussion here. The mention of our forebears is central. Though the Pope used Moses—the Lord’s servant as example, for all in the universal Church, I would like to use our forebears in Africa, specifically. The Pope encourages us by assuring us that Christ ‘offers us the power of the Spirit to help us come ever closer to attaining this ideal.’ We rejoice that the Spirit of the Risen Lord is also helping and sustaining us in Africa. In the section, I would like to examine the lives of the Martyrs of Uganda as our most recent forebears.

Martyrs of Uganda

The story of Martyrs of Uganda is chosen because of the heroic lesson it has for us—the lesson of perseverance in the face of martyrdom. These martyrs were able to face their sufferings and death through the power of the Holy Spirit given to them by the risen Lord. Ssemakula gives us the picture of this event in these lines:

The story of Ugandan Martyrs is unique. It is a story of young men and boys, pages at the Kabaka’s court, who remarkably responded to the message of Christianity and laid down their lives for their faith. It is a story of

¹³ Pope Benedict XVI, 2011. *Africa’s Commitment: Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, Africae Munus*. P6 Nairobi: Paulines Publications.

appalling brutality and incredible courage, of debauchery and terror, and of love and fidelity.¹⁴

The road that led to the painful death of these young men is very disturbing. At the same time, it calls for an inspirational reading at least to know something about the strong faith in the African Church. However, we do not intend to re-tell the whole story. We have selected few in order to show how the Holy Spirit is at work in African Church as explicated in the lives of these Martyrs of Uganda. When Mwanga discovered that one of his 'pages named Joseph Mukasa Balikuddembe has exposed his involvement in the killing of the newly arrived Protestant bishop,' he became furious and then pronounced an immediate death sentence on Joseph Mukasa Balikuddembe. The Kabaka gave an 'order that Joseph be burned alive.' The executioner who was sympathetic was slow to carry out this order because Joseph was 'a good person.' However, when those who hated Joseph because of his choice to become a Catholic mounted much pressure on the executioner, he consented to kill Joseph Mukasa Balikuddembe. Ssemakula describes what he calls the first martyr thus:

The executioner then turned to Joseph and said that he would not burn him alive as was the custom, but beheaded him first. With a swift and practiced movement of a long curved knife, one of Mukajanga's men severed the head, and then lifted his body onto a blazing pyre. Thus, Joseph Mukasa Balikuddembe shed the first drop of catholic blood in Buganda. He was beheaded and burned on Sunday 15th November, 1885,

¹⁴Schmaus, M. 1975. Holy Spirit. In *Encyclopedia of Theology. A Concise Sacramentum Mundi*. P642 New York: Burns and Oats.

at a place adjoining Nakivubo stadium, right in the heart of Kampala—Uganda's capital for all the people to see when the story is told of his glorious martyrdom.¹⁵

Like the Biblical story in the Acts of the Apostles 12:1-2, where 'King Herod killed James and when he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to arrest Peter also.' In the same way, few days after the death of Joseph, Mwanga 'threatened all those who professed Christianity with summary execution.' The choice that led to the several killings came when King Mwanga gave options to Christians to decide where they belonged by saying: "Let those who follow the Christian religion go to the reed fence."¹⁶ Charles Lwanga was the first to rise taking the young Kizito by his hand and moved to the place indicated by the Kabaka. They were followed by other Christian pages. The death of Kalemba deserves mention. Ssemakula describes this killing this way:

The guards set upon him. First his hands were cut off at the wrists, then his arms at the elbows; his legs were hacked off to the knees. As the executioners sawed through the bones, Kalemba's only words were: My God, My God! But this was not the end. Strips of flesh were torn from his chest and shoulders and roasted before his eyes and to prolong his agony, the executioners tied up his veins and arteries to prevent

¹⁵ibid, P14

¹⁶ibid, P16

bleeding. It took him three days to die (Thursday 27th - Sunday, 30th May).¹⁷

The intention is not to bore the reader with the narrative accounts of sufferings and painful deaths of these young African martyrs instead, to demonstrate how the Holy Spirit worked with them by empowering them to face their death with courage and fortitude. These martyrs have become shining examples to the millions of Christians in Africa and beyond. St. Bede the Venerable is correct when he referred to St. Paul's statement saying: "And in the Acts of the Apostles, St. Paul says: 'The Holy Spirit has made you guardians to rule the Church of the Lord which he obtained with his own blood.'"¹⁸ Ssemakula summarizes the reactions of the present Christians by way of appreciation saying: "We praise the great courage and unbounded zeal with which the first Ugandan martyrs embraced their faith. They died that Christianity might live."¹⁹ It is appropriate, therefore, that the Church especially in Africa celebrates their martyrdom on June 3, every year following their canonization by Pope Paul VI. The Pope's words on the day of canonization are documented below:

These martyrs of Africa have indeed laid the foundation of a new age. We would not dwell on the religious persecutions and conflicts, but rather on the rebirth of Christian and civil life that has begun. For from the Africa that was sprinkled with the blood of these

¹⁷ *ibid*, P24

¹⁸ St. Bede the Venerable, 1974. *Commentary on the first Letter of St. Peter. In the Divine Office Vol. 2* P532 Dublin: Talbot Press Ltd.

¹⁹ Ssemakula, 1983. *The Obeyed the True King: The Story of Uganda Martyrs*. P3 Kampala: Marianum Press.

martyrs, the first new age (and God's willing the last, so sublime, so precious was their sacrifice), there is emerging a free and independent Africa.²⁰

I would say that the new age of Christianity that has begun in Africa with the heroic martyrdom of Charles Lwanga and companions, is a true testimony of the work of the Holy Spirit in the continent of Africa.

The Holy Spirit in the Nigerian Church

From the continent of Africa, we now move onto Nigeria to determine the role of the Holy Spirit in the country. Different religious societies and congregations worked in Nigeria to bring about what we know today as the Nigerian Church with the power and inspiration of the Holy Spirit. This section and the next concentrate on the work of the Holy Ghost Congregation and how the Holy Spirit inspired them to touch the lives of people for the growth of the Nigerian Church as exemplified by Blessed Cyprian Iwene Tansi.

Blessed Iwene Tansi started his seminary training at St. Paul's Igbariam in 1925 under the Tutelage of the Spiritans. He had as his director Fr. Charles Heerey C.S.Sp who later became the Archbishop of Onitsha. In 1937, Michael Tansi was ordained a diocesan priest by Bishop Shanahan also a Spiritan. With the Holy Spirit guiding him and through the advice of the Spiritans, Tansi joined the Cistercians and became a monk. Being supported and sustained by the Holy Spirit, he observed self-mortification and learned the art of prayer which he practiced

²⁰Pope Paul VI, 1974. Homily on the Canonization of Ugandan Martyrs. *In the Divine Office Vol. 2* P38 Dublin: Talbot Press Ltd.

perfectly. He died as a Cistercian monk and beatified by Pope John Paul II. While the Church in Nigeria celebrates his feast on January 20, she continues to pray for his canonization. Presently, he is the first Nigerian to be beatified.

The Holy Ghost Congregation: The Nigerian Province

In his foreword of the book, 'In the Footsteps of our Founders: A History of the Spiritan Province of Nigeria (1953-2002),' Eke aptly describes the role of the Holy Spirit in the Spiritan Province of Nigeria thus:

The story of the Spiritan Province of Nigeria has been described by many as one of the success stories of Catholic missionary activities in Africa. It is in fact, a showpiece of how the Holy Spirit continues, above and behind the labyrinths of human history, to dispose all things sweetly for the growth of the kingdom of God.²¹

The Holy Ghost Congregation is very much aware of the presence of the Holy Spirit in the Congregation. This conviction prompted the leaders to encourage the various circumscriptions to write their own stories on 'how they have been led by the Holy Spirit in their work of the mission.' It is in the breath of this same Spirit; yesterday, today and tomorrow that the Spiritans tell their stories and celebrate the events of their lives.

²¹ Eke, CI; Onyewuenyi, RN; Onyeneke, A. 2006 *In the Footsteps of our Founders: A History of the Spiritan Province of Nigeria 1953-2002*) Pxxvii Enugu: Snaap Press.

It is on record that the seed where the first Spiritans were trained was planted in 1953. The same year, few young boys were enrolled at Holy Ghost Juniorate Ihiala. Like the mustard seed nurtured by the Holy Spirit, the number of Nigerian Spiritans has grown to provide missionaries to other parts of the world. Every mission outreach is fanned by the Holy Spirit and this has enabled the Nigerian Spiritans to persevere in those difficulties they experience in their mission areas. It is the Spirit that gives growth. Thus, the Nigerian Spiritans work in many countries around the world. In order to support this, Eke has this to say: "The 2002 statistics of all Spiritans according to country of origin, records Nigeria as the third largest with a total of 438 falling behind Ireland 496 and France 612."²² Surely this number has increased now. It is also on record that 'the Province of Nigeria has the highest number of professed members in the initial stage of formation throughout the entire Spiritan Congregation.' This also is the work of the Holy Spirit and a marvel in our eyes.

Some members of the Nigerian Province have been inspired by the Holy Spirit to be founders of religious congregations. Eke gave the list of these charismatic founders in this order:

Bishop Anthony Gogo Nwedo, the Congregations of the Daughters of Mary, Mother of Mercy (1961) and Sons of Mary Mother of Mercy (1970); Bishop Godfrey Okoye, the Congregation of the Daughters of Divine Love (1969); Fr. Denis Ononuju, Holy Family Sisters of the Needy (1983) and Fr. Emmanuel Edeh founded three: Sisters of Jesus the Saviour (1985), Congregation

²² *ibid*, p2

of Fathers and Brothers of Jesus the Saviour (1990) and Contemplatives of Jesus the savior (1994).²³

The Holy Spirit in the congregation is also using these congregations to bear witness of what the Spirit is doing in their lives. I intend to devote this space for the last founder in the list—Fr. Emmanuel Edeh.

Fr. Emmanuel Edeh and the Catholic Prayer Ministry of the Holy Spirit

Fr. Emmanuel Edeh is a charismatic priest who is responding to the promptings of the Holy Spirit. At the inception of his ministry in Elele in 1984, he called it 'The Catholic Prayer Ministry of the Holy Spirit.' This ministry has revolutionized the Church in Nigeria. Through this ministry, Fr. Edeh not only brought back to the Nigerian Catholics the awareness of Christ in their lives, but also the consciousness of the workings of the Holy Spirit in the Catholic Church. Many Christians who were living double standard of life refused to submit themselves again to the power of the 'small gods' they worshipped. They showed this by surrendering the charms they wore for protection. After surrendering these charms, they came to take sanctuary at the Blessed Sacrament chapel at Elele where there is perpetual Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. Sr. Chikere, referring to Fr. Edeh said: "Being hard working and down to earth in his work, gradually thousands of people began to flock to Elele."²⁴ I would like to add here, being inspired by the Holy Spirit and attracted by the risen Lord, many people trooped to Elele. Many

²³ ibid P12

²⁴ Edeh, EMP. 1998. *Jesus the Saviour in our Midst: The Third Millennium*. P82 Wycombe: Minuteman Press.

testimonies of healing were made and recorded to show how the Spirit of Jesus the Saviour is present in the Prayer Ministry which is now called 'The Pilgrimage Centre of the Eucharistic Adoration.' Two accounts on healing reported on CPM deserve mention:

During the pilgrimage week of 1987 being the first attendance of the writer, a young girl of about 22 years of age, knelt behind the writer during the adoration of Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament. The girl never uttered a word as she was known to be dumb (having been born dumb). In the early hours of the morning (about 1 am), the girl gave us curious sounds; shortly afterwards she groaned out the hymn being sung! Thereafter she began to sing and praise the Lord, along with others.²⁵

The second account report on CPM is equally a testimony of the heart.

On or about the autumn of 1990, a 60 year old man was conveyed to the pilgrimage centre by three of his sons in a car. This man had a serious stroke which left him paralyzed from his right arm down to his right leg. He also went blind as a result of the affliction... The Eucharistic celebration was going on at that time. The blind man was heard to say. God I am not a Katolik, but I have come to beg for pardon of all my sins because I

²⁵ *ibid*, P118

know I have wronged you, and you are a kind and forgiving Father.²⁶

With this prayer said, the paralyzed blind man called one of his sons and exclaimed:

Hey! What is happening to me? My eyes are seeing you; my right hand is also moving and so too my right leg. Please take me to Fr. Edeh's office; he must know what has happened to me. Henceforth, I want to become a Katolik!²⁷

The good-will message of the Apostolic Pro-Nuncio in Nigeria Most Rev. Dr. Carlo Maria Vigano recorded by Amaeshi is a confirmation of what the Holy Spirit was doing at Fr. Edeh's Catholic Prayer Ministry when he said: "Like the early Church as portrayed in the Acts of the Apostles, the Catholic Prayer Ministry has witnessed an outpouring of the Holy Spirit and seen miracles of conversion and grace among God's people."²⁸

In addition to the three religious congregations founded by Fr. Edeh, he also established many educational institutions of different levels through which the presence of the Holy Spirit is felt. These include: Our Saviour Girls' Secondary School Aba, OSISATECH Girls Secondary School Independent Layout Enugu, OSISATECH Boys Secondary School Emene Enugu, OSISATECH Polytechnic Enugu, OSISATEC College of Education Enugu, Madonna University in three campuses: Okija, Elele and Akpugo, Caritas University Enugu. Without the

²⁶ *ibid*, P119

²⁷ *ibid*, P119

²⁸ *ibid*, P119

enthronement of Jesus the Saviour and through the power of the Holy Spirit, it will be almost impossible for one single person to embark on these big ventures. Indeed, the Holy Spirit is at work in the life of Fr. Edeh and in his prayer ministry, the educational institutions and religious congregations. The last section of this article calls our attention to the Extra-ordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy.

The Holy Spirit and the Jubilee Year of Mercy

The Jubilee Year of Mercy is a world-wide Catholic celebration proclaimed by Pope Francis. It commenced on 8 December 2015, the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception and it is expected to close on the Solemnity of Christ the King, 20 November 2016. Pope Francis encouraging the people of God on the importance of this Jubilee explains:

We need constantly to contemplate the mystery of mercy. It is a well-spring of joy, serenity and peace. Our salvation depends on it. Mercy: the word reveals the very mystery of the Most Holy Trinity. Mercy: the ultimate and supreme act by which God comes to meet us. Mercy: the fundamental law that dwells in the hearts of every person who looks sincerely into the eyes of his brothers and sisters on the part of life. Mercy: the bridge that connects God and man, opening our hearts to a hope of being loved forever despite our sinfulness.²⁹

²⁹ Pope Francis, 2015. *The Face of Mercy: Bull of Indiction of the Extra-Ordinary Jubilee of Mercy*. P6 Nairobi: Paulines Publications.

It is the Holy Spirit that opens the hearts of the people of God and raises them to hope for the forgiveness of their sins. It is the Holy Spirit that inspired Pope Francis to proclaim the Jubilee Year of Mercy. It is also the Holy Spirit that will guide and direct Catholics including those in Nigeria to live this year of mercy fruitfully to the end. Pope Francis is aware of the role the Holy Spirit will play during this Jubilee year when he offered this prayer: "May the Holy Spirit, who guides the steps of believers in cooperating with the work of salvation wrought by Christ, lead the way and support the people of God so that they may contemplate the face of mercy."³⁰ Emphasizing the importance of the sacrament of Penance this time and admonishing confessors to be 'authentic signs of the Father's mercy,' Pope Francis has this to say: "We priests have received the gifts of the Holy Spirit for the forgiveness of sins, and we are responsible for this. None of us wields power over this sacrament; rather we are faithful servants of God's mercy through it."

One symbolic action characterizing this year of mercy is the 'opening of the holy door.' Pope Francis started this on 8 December 2015. What the Pope did in Rome has since been replicated in every Catholic diocese of the world. All the Catholic dioceses in Nigeria also followed suit. In the Catholic Archdiocese of Abuja, Nigeria, the ceremony of opening the door of mercy was performed by John Cardinal Onaiyekan on 17 December, 2015. The same ceremony was also done at deanery levels. Here at Veritas University it was performed by Archbishop Ignatius Kaigama of Jos on 16 March, 2016. The opening of the door of mercy is also extended to any shrine

³⁰ *ibid*, P8

frequented by large groups of pilgrims because these places are 'grace-filled' and if they are grace-filled, the Spirit of the Risen Lord is also present there. The effects of the Jubilee Year of Mercy is yet to be seen and felt in Nigeria when Christians allow themselves to be forgiven, purified and transformed and when they allow themselves to be used by the Holy Spirit in every work of mercy they perform spontaneously and promptly.

Conclusion

The number of times the word 'Holy Spirit' is mentioned has justified its place and importance in this article; and in the lives of Catholics in Africa and Nigeria. This article began with a demonstration of the work of the Holy Spirit in the selected individuals in the OT. The presence of the Holy Spirit in the life of Christ was recognized. The signs and symbols of the Holy Spirit were also highlighted. The thrust of the article was on the manifestation of the Holy Spirit in African and Nigerian Churches with particular references to the lives of some saints such as Martyrs of Uganda and Blessed Cyprian Iwene Tansi. The place of the Holy Spirit in the Congregation of the Holy Ghost was given prominence where some charismatic founders were recognized. The Holy Spirit works differently from the way human beings think and we cannot understand fully the operations of the Holy Spirit. Finally, the role of the Holy Spirit in the Jubilee Year of Mercy was also recognized and highlighted. The article tried to show that the Holy Spirit is at work in African and Nigerian Churches manifesting his presence in the lives of people. The discussions in this article have justified the Catechism of the Catholic Church by affirming those areas it indicated as sources of inspiration of the Holy Spirit.