



A publication of the Sisters of Saint Michael The Archangel.

June 2024

volume 3

Issue No. 6

MICHAELIAN FAMILY GBOLUWAGA 2024: A CELEBRATION OF FAITH AND HOPE

By Sr. Martha Oteku, SSMA



Preamble

The Michaelian Family of the congregation of the Sisters of St. Michael the Archangel, a vibrant community of faith, recently gathered for their annual Gboluwaga in Akure, Ondo Diocese between 21st and 23rd June, 2024. The three-day event brimming with spiritual enrichment, fellowship, and service was hosted by the Akure Michaelian Akure zone. This year's Gboluwaga unfolded at the Mary Help of Christians Catholic Church, Araromi, Akure. The Parish priest, Fr. Matthew Adetiloye, welcomed the Sisters and the entire Michaelian Family with open arms. His warmth set the tone for the gathering.

A Message of Hope

The theme echoed Isaiah 41:10: "Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God." Fear, though present in life's challenges, need not define us. The disciples themselves grappled with fear during Jesus' crucifixion, unable to recognise Him after His resurrection. Ecclesiastes 3: 1, reminds us

that there is a time for everything. In hardship, we find strength in the ever-present Lord. Also, as Psalm 62:6 declares, "He only is my rock and my salvation; He is my defence; I shall not be moved" and as the economic hardships in our country persist, let us confidently declare, "The Lord is my strength; I will not fear". It is important for us to constantly hope in the Lord and trust in His ever-presence with us. The book of Isaiah 40:31 says, "But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength" Our trust and hope in God (psalm 62:6) should always be constant.

The 3-in-1 Activities

The 2024 Gboluwaga wove together diverse activities, each contributing to the rich fabric of faith and Charism of the Sisters of St. Michael the Archangel:

Healing Hands and Evangelization

Attendees received more than spiritual nourishment. Medical professionals offered free healthcare services, embodying the Michaelian commitment to holistic well-being. Sisters and lay

In this Issue

♦ MICHAELIAN FAMILY GBOLUWAGA

♦ CHOLERA AN EMERGING MENACE

♦ THE USIG PRESIDENT, APPOINTED TO THE DICASTERY FOR EVANGELIZATION

♦ USA MISSION ON A FIRST -EVER GROUP RETREAT



members visited homes, sharing the Gospel message. Their footsteps echoed the apostolic zeal of the early Church and in fulfilment of their being (Evangelisation through Inculturation).

Talk Show and Spiritual Guidance
The talk show delved into faith, family, and contemporary challenges. There was also opportunity for confession and counselling which allowed the members and attendees to experience reconciliation and spiritual healing.

Thanksgiving Mass
The event culminated in a heartfelt thanksgiving at Mary Help of Christians Catholic Church. The grand finale—a Mass of Thanksgiving—brought the entire Michaelian Family together. Hearts overflowed with gratitude for God’s blessings, both seen and unseen.

Appreciation
Sr. Adenike Regina Oke, SSMA (Superior General), on behalf of the congregation, expressed profound gratitude to the Akure Michaelian Zone. Special recognition went to Mrs. Mary Omodara, the Zone president, and all Akure Zone members. Their tireless preparations made the Gboluwaga possible. The Gboluwaga extended beyond spiritual nourishment. Free medical care touched the lives of Akure residents, reinforcing the Michaelian ethos of service.

Conclusion
In unity and unwavering faith, the Michaelian Family of the Sisters of St. Michael the Archangel worldwide continues its journey of rendering both spiritual and financial support to the congregation



to our **JULY** Celebrants

2ND	SR. MARGARET OGUNKUADE
8TH	SR. ROSELINE SLYVESTER
13TH	SR. BENEDICTA OSENI
19TH	SR. LUCY AKINSIPE
21ST	SR. ADEOLA ADEDOYIN
23RD	SR. CAROLINE OGUNDIRAN
26TH	SR. MARYANNE MOWOBI

7TH	SR. ANTHONIA AKINOYEKAN
10TH	SR. CHRISTIANA ISOLA
15TH	SR. MARY-ANNE OBAMA
21ST	SR. MARY-ASSUMPTA TAIWO
23RD	SR. ROSEMARY ADENIRAN
25TH	SR. MICHAEL AKINLUSI
26TH	SR. MORENIKEJI FASEEMO



CHOLERA AN EMERGING MENACE



What is cholera?

Cholera is a disease caused by eating food and drinking water contaminated with the bacterium *Vibrio cholerae*. It usually affects the intestine.

Symptoms

It usually presents with severe diarrhoea (“rice water stool”), dehydration, weakness, muscle cramps, fever, vomiting, low blood pressure and excessive thirst. Death can occur within 24 hours of its onset from excessive dehydration.

Factors contributing to the spread of cholera are:

- When people do not wash their hands with soap and water after defecating and then cook or serve food with unwashed hands,
- Indiscriminate dumping of refuse and irregular disposal of sewage,
- Enabling flies to carry the bacteria to water or food, contamination of food from flies when not properly covered,
- Eating raw foods and vegetables not properly washed or processed, eating raw sea foods contaminated with the bacterium,
- Blocked drains and leaking water pipes,
- Overcrowded conditions such as internally displaced persons camps,
- Refugees and prisons with no access to safe water
- Poor hygienic condition of school hostel, toilets and kitchen.

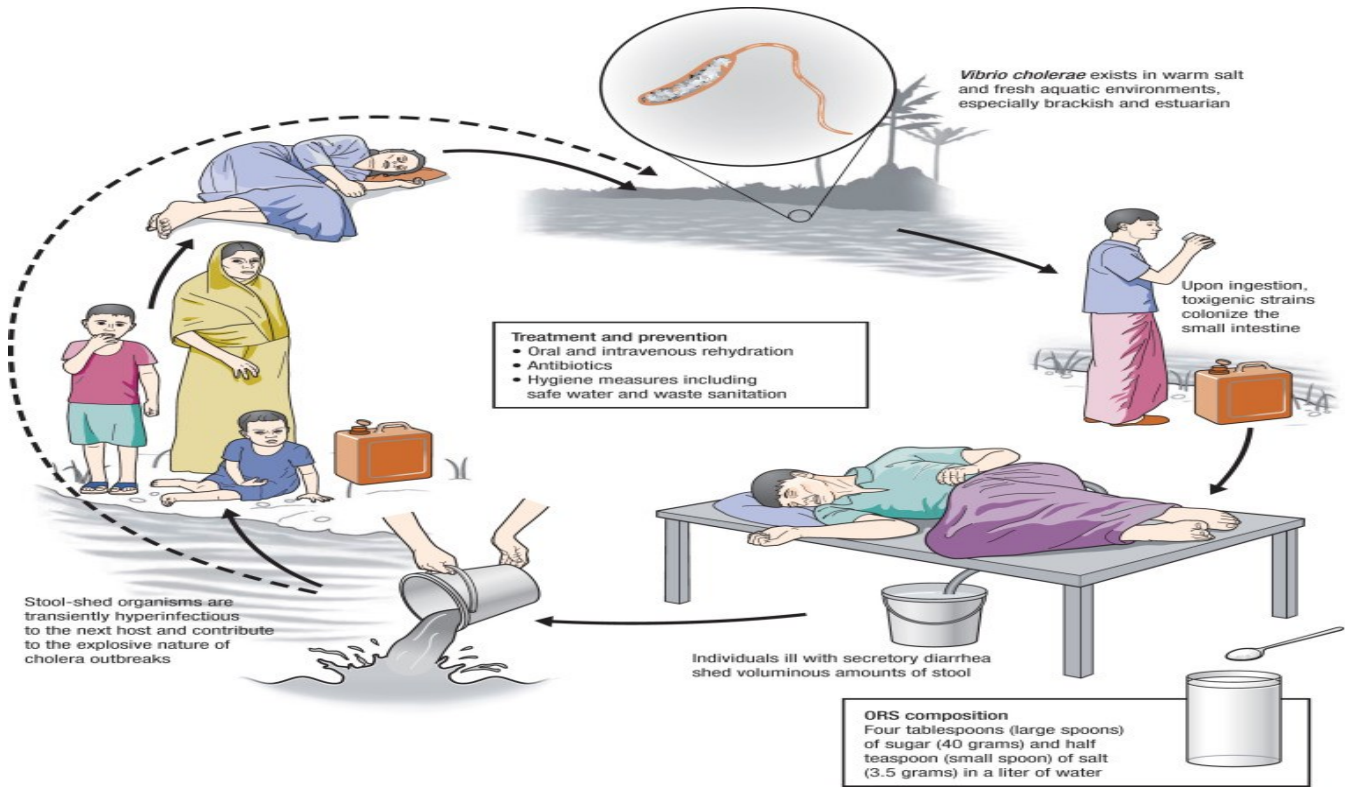
Prevention and treatment

Access to clean water, proper sanitation and waste disposal, ensuring personal hygiene and food safety practices, Community engagement and information campaigns on how to prevent cholera infection are important. Oral Rehydrated Solution or home-made oral rehydration salts (1L of clean water with 6 teaspoons of sugar and 1/2 a teaspoon of salt).

If symptoms persist within the day, report to the hospital quickly. This prevents spread and death. Oral cholera vaccine for use in high-risk areas. (taken in two doses (one week to six weeks apart) and they protect for three years.



SR. DR. MARGARET OGUNKUADE, SSMA



Let's prevent cholera and save our generation and the generation to come.....

USA MISSION ON A FIRST-EVER GROUP RETREAT

By Sr. Dorcas Balogun, SSMA



The Sisters of St. Michael the Archangel USA mission held

their first group retreat between the 2nd and 6th of June 2024, at Holy Family Retreat Centre in Beaumont. The retreat was directed by Fr. Eugen Nkardzedze, and focused on the theme "Called to Be Served: The Paradox of Serving the Lord in the Consecrated Religious Life." The retreat aimed to bond members, contemplate their purpose and motivations and achieve specific goals together. Fr. Eugen provided biblical support for the theme, highlighting the importance of following the Lord's guidance.

Each day of the retreat took on different topics that hinged on the overall theme -"Called to Be Served: The Paradox of Serving the Lord in the Consecrated Religious Life." The retreat Master gave biblical support for the theme, "Peter answered him, "We have left everything to follow you! What then will there be for us?" (Mt 19: 27). He also used an example of a woman who bought cookies at the airport and mistakenly thought

another man had taken her cookies, without asking her, without a word to her, not even a greeting. The man still gave part of his cookies which she collected angrily but didn't exchange any words with him. On the plane, and opening her bag, she discovered that her package of cookies was untouched and unopened. With these illustrations, Fr. Nkardzedze emphasised the importance of recognising that we are called to be served. but we sometimes miss the point by thinking that, as consecrated people, we are the saviours of the world.

The Retreat Master also used an article from the book titled: *So, You Think Nobody Loves You*, by a Jesuit priest, Robert Kelly, to highlight the need for true, credible witnesses from unbelievers who are tired of religious arguments and hypocrisy. According to him, Fr. Kell Kelly cited the prophet Zechariah's prophecy that people want to go with a Jew because they have seen God's presence, and that people want to see evidence of

God's presence in their times (Zech 3:20). He therefore encouraged the Sisters to seek love, hope, selflessness, and joy in a world full of distractions, hatred and selfishness.

Fr. Eugen went further to discuss with the Sisters topics on personal worth, community experience, and prayer, focusing on self-esteem and the difference between individual and community members. He stressed the importance of com-



munity over individual welfare and the difference between sacrificing members for survival and individual members. Christians believe in a community for the person, not the community itself, and follow the apostle Thomas's perspective on community.

Fr. Eugen heightened the importance of understanding the pace of community life as determined by the weak, as a good shepherd. He also said that strength is measured by weakness and vulnerability and that loving only those who love you is a disservice. A wise person pays attention to the weak part, like one on a journey checking for tyre leaks, etc.

Finally, the Retreat Director further emphasised the position of women in the world, citing the story of creation and the importance of women in societal change. He encouraged sisters to apply the wisdom gained from the

retreat to their communities and solve problems better. The retreat concluded with a renewal of vows, symbolising the commitment to God and the responsibility to serve others in society. The world needs women to change its games, and God needed Mary to do so.



USIG PRESIDENT
GETS APPOINTMENT AT
THE VATICAN

By Sr. Mary-Freda Adeniyi, SSMA

On June 8th 2024, Pope Francis announced new appointments to the Dicastery for Evangelization. Among them is Sr. Mary Barron, OLA, USIG President, nominated as a member of a Section for First Evangelization and New Particular Churches.

Born in Ireland, Sr. Mary is the Congregational Leader of the Sisters of Our Lady of Apostles, a missionary congregation founded in Lyon, France, in 1876 for evangelization, particularly in Africa.

Sr Mary gained missionary experience in Nigeria, West Africa during formation and subsequently as a professed Sister in Tanzania in East Africa.

Expressing her delight and gratitude for the appointment, the USIG president said, “I hold it as a great honour both for

the International Union of Superiors General (UISG) and for my own congregation, the sisters of Our Lady of Apostles (OLA). In my capacity as a Board member of UISG, I have been serving as a member of the Council of 18 for the past few years, a consultative body between the two unions for religious life: UISG and the Union of Superiors General (USG), and the Dicastery.

This new nomination inspires a deep sense of gratitude in me, as it recognizes female missionaries and the contributions, we make to the Missio Dei.”

This appointment is also a sign that women religious are been recognized in the church and their powerful role is not been undermined.



EDITORIAL

Dear Sisters and Friends, it is with great joy that we present to you the JUNE edition of our Michaelian Voice Newsletter. We hope you find it enriching and interesting. Do remember to send us your comments. Thank you and remain blessed!

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