

**SEND-FORTH ADDRESS TO THE OUTGOING STUDENTS OF ST. PAUL'S
INTERNATIONAL BOYS SECONDARY SCHOOL, OWERRI THIS DAY, SATURDAY,
29th JULY, 2017.**

**The PTA Chairman, Dr. Oguike,
The members of the PTA
Students of SPIBSS
Ladies and Gentlemen**

As we come to the close of this academic year, 2016/2017, we take time to celebrate our achievements as a school through rewarding some of our deserving students.

For the past few years we have been engaged in trialling out various educational strategies and evolution of policies that will revitalise our educational *status quo*. Promoting greater equality of educational opportunity has been one of the driving themes in our educational policy as a Catholic school. The results we are getting now show that we are achieving relatively high levels of student learning; we are having almost zero levels of academic dropout rates especially with our disadvantaged slow learning students. Indeed our main concern has been to have learning more equitably distributed across the different learning abilities. This has been made possible through our high level of teacher commitment and student engagement.

The internal organization of our school has given us a *thumb up* in achieving our learning goals. The core curriculum is central to our academic organisation with limited elective subjects. Raising our academic standards have contributed to some students, irrespective of their background, pursuing the curriculum at a more advanced/faster level and proceed to graduate early. This does not in any way detract from the same basic academic goals that apply for everyone.

Many thanks to our teachers; although we have discussed and implemented some merit pay proposals, the puzzle of our school's academic success does not necessarily derive from economic incentives. Our experience is that there is a sense of community, a vocation, a calling that impels our teachers to engage in more relevant curriculum and more stimulating instructions that enhance student engagement in learning. The sense of staff collegiality is another impetus to the success story of our Catholic school. The desire among staff to rally round in support of our school's mission is worth mentioning. We are therefore making a clarion call to all our Catholic parishes to rally round those Catholic schools whose teachers are more desirous in building up an effective Catholic School community. Our educational task is based upon our theological and philosophical view of the nature of the world created by God, directed and mediated through the person of Jesus Christ as understood by our Church. There is therefore a direction connection between the Catholic faith and Catholic education. This can very well explain the distinctiveness of Catholic education. It is our attempt to assist pupils to achieve a synthesis of our faith, our culture and our Christian living that motivate some of our teachers to stay on and contribute to Catholic education; after all, like almost all Catholic school teachers in Imo State, we are paid about 30% of the prevailing local government school wages. That is not to say that we will not continue the ongoing discussion about staff pay rise and pensions. We just want to thank you in no small

measure for your tremendous sacrifice and contributions to our Archdiocesan and national educational provision.

We will no less recognise the unflinching support that our parents have given to our school. We are immensely grateful for the provision of our school bus and more importantly for your financial contribution towards our ultramodern library. But we urge you to do more. We need our parents to queue in with your various Bishops in their quest for State involvement in the Catholic school educational project. Your democratic process of balloting to adjudicate in your particular localities for Catholic school grant in aid from the State is significant to the cause for revamping education in our educational process. The ideology of parent power had produced some significant transformations within the Catholic schooling culture of Anambra State. The same can happen in Imo State where Catholic schools with minimal resource are already producing evidence of educational leadership in the state's education provision.

To our outgoing students, we wish you well. We are happy for you. We are glad to be part of your success story. We endeavoured to foster in you strategies for your full integration into the wider community of our country. You have been inculcated with a sense of national consciousness and even more a sense of religious values. We now urge you to be responsible in taking your decisions for the future. When we look at your very good academic performance in the West African secondary school certificate examinations, we are proud that we are part of the hard work that brought you thus far. We are delighted to publish your general 2017 WAEC results for you to see and analyse your individual performance. Congratulations.

For our well disciplined students who watch their senior students leave school today, we encourage you to emulate the good qualities you have seen demonstrated all along by them. We are hopeful that in no distant time, you will come of age to clench your own laurels of success. We will give the deserving ones amongst you prizes which will encourage you to do more. We will appoint a few to occupy the vacant posts left by your predecessors and we hope that you will fill their gaps creditably. One more, I wish all of you success for the future and safe journey to your various destinations.

Signed: Rev. Fr. Dr. Augustine Ihedinma (Principal)