



Defende Nos



No.134

Saint Michael's Priory SSPX

Our Founder's Word

Actually, indifference is more than just a heresy. It is sheer apostasy because it denies that Our Lord Jesus Christ is the only Saviour... This indifferentist apostasy is the very foundation of false ecumenism and of false religious liberty. If, in fact, any religion can be a means to reach God, missionary spirit must be replaced by ecumenism, and adepts of any religion, without any distinction, must be granted total liberty of expression and of liberty to search.

Religious Liberty Questioned
p. 43

ECUMENICAL COUNCILS & ECUMENISM

The recent celebration of the 1700th anniversary of the Council of Nicea is a good occasion for us to reflect on the nature of an ecumenical council, and its role in the Church. What is the relationship between an ecumenical council and ecumenism? An ecumenical council is a synod of bishops from all over the Catholic world, with which the Pope shares his authority to teach and define dogma. Ecumenical councils are not a part of the divine constitution of the Church, nor do they happen at regular intervals. They are always a response to a crisis, either doctrinal or disciplinary. The plan is always for the assembly of bishops to agree and to embrace the teachings and disciplinary reform approved by the successor of St. Peter, the Pope.



Pope Leo XIV and schismatic orthodox Bartholomew I at Nicea (Iznik, Turkey) on November 28, 2025

'. TRUE ECUMENISM

Ecumenism comes from the same word as ecumenical, meaning universal. However, it has two radically different meanings, as clearly indicated in the 1949 instruction of the Holy Office. True ecumenism is the return of non-Catholics, heretics or schismatics, to the unity of the Catholic Church, which is truly universal, that is the acceptance of Catholic doctrine and the authority of the Sovereign Pontiff. This is how the above-mentioned instruction describes it. *“Catholic doctrine must be propounded and explained in its totality and in its integrity. It is not permitted to pass over in silence or to veil in ambiguous terms what is comprised in the Catholic truth on the true nature and stages of justification, on the constitution of the Church, on the primacy of jurisdiction of the Roman Pontiff, on the unique true union by the return of separated Christians to the one true Church of Christ”*.

FALSE ECUMENISM

False ecumenism, to the contrary, is the practice of sharing ideas, prayer, worship, dialogue with non-Catholics, on an equal footing, as if their teachings were just as good and true as those of the Catholic religion. This is how it was condemned by the above mentioned instruction: *“They will take care that under the false pretext that we should attend to what unites us rather than to what separates us, there be not fostered a dangerous indifferentism...For it is to be feared lest because of the so-called irenical spirit (which means peace at all costs) that Catholic doctrine...itself be assimilated or in some way accommodated to the teaching of the dissidents, so that the purity of Catholic teaching would suffer, or its true and certain meaning in some way be obscured”*. This is the ecumenism that was introduced into the Catholic Church at the Second Vatican Council (U.R.).

The problem is that this recent celebration of the first ecumenical council at Nicea, which defined doctrine for Catholics only, is now treated as a symbol of false ecumenism with non-Catholics, whether they be schismatic Orthodox or Protestant. It is said that since all agree to profess the Nicene Creed without the *Filioque*, then we are all one in the Faith. Alas, this is manifestly false ecumenism, for there is unity at all, neither in Faith nor in government nor in discipline.

WHAT UNITY?

Now it is true that ecumenical councils establish unity. It is one of the principal reasons why they are held. It is to be a unity on doctrinal or disciplinary questions that were previously in dispute. However, this unity is only established amongst Catholics, who accept the authority of the Sovereign Pontiff, upon which the definitions of every ecumenical council depends. This was the case at all the early Councils: - Nicea, Constantinople I, Ephesus and also at the Fourth Ecumenical Council, at Chalcedon in 451, which embraced the teaching of St. Leo the Great on the Incarnation, at which the Fathers all declared: *“Peter has spoken through Leo. This is what all of us believe. This is the faith of the Apostles”*.

However, it is historically false to affirm that ecumenical councils bring about unity amongst all those who believe in Christ. Take for example the Council of Nicea (325), which condemned the heresy of Arianism by defining that the Son is of one substance with the Father. This was not the end, but the beginning of the divisions on the question which lasted until 381, 55 years. During this time, it seemed to St. Jerome that the whole world had fallen into Arianism. The Council of Nicea produced unity – but only for those who submitted to its decision, and two generations of bishops throughout most of the Roman empire rejected it for political reasons, that is for the sake of a compromise that would bring “unity” within the empire, but a false unity without principle. The Arianizing emperors from Constantine to Valens were responsible, but the bishops followed. The aftermath of Nicea was great division. Yet Nicea’s definition was correct, Catholic, and the principle of true unity, as was finally acknowledge at the second ecumenical council in Constantinople in 381.

After every council the divisions and separation of those who refuse to accept the Church’s authority are much more evident afterwards than beforehand. The reason for these divisions was always a political desire to bring about a unity based upon compromise. By rejecting the Council’s definitions they rejected the principle of true unity. After the Council of Ephesus (431), which condemned Nestorius, the Nestorian church sprang up, separated from the Catholic Church. After the Council of Chalcedon (451), Monophysitism took away the whole Coptic Church in Egypt and Ethiopia from the Catholic Church, and much of the church in Syria and Armenia. The same can be said of most of the Councils in the Church’s history. The errors they condemned ceased within the bosom of the Church, but abounded and increased outside. .

For example the second council of Lyons (1274) and that of Florence (1439) which brought unity with the schismatic Eastern Orthodox, but which unity they repudiated right after each of these Councils. This was also the case for the Council of Trent (1546), which established great unity among Catholics and condemned the heresies of the Protestants, but did not stop Protestantism nor the division they created.

Ecumenical Councils consequently bring true unity and are the instrument of true ecumenism, that is of return of dissidents to the one true Church. They do not and never have promoted the false ecumenism that the memory of Nicea is used by Leo XIV to evoke.

FILIOQUE

The most scandalous aspect of this celebration was the recitation of the Nicene Creed without the *Filioque*. The justification is that the original Nicene Creed did not have the *Filioque*, but simply stated that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father. This is a perfectly true statement, of course, but its teaching is incomplete, for the Holy Ghost does not proceed only from the Father, but also from the Son. Hence the subsequent development and definition as a doctrine of our Faith that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and from the Son, so that whoever refuses to believe this has lost the true Faith. This has been repeated by many councils and in every Catholic profession of Faith for over 1,000 years. An example is the decree for the Greeks of the Council of Florence of 1439: *"We define that this truth of faith be believed and accepted by all Christians, and that all likewise profess that the Holy Spirit is eternally from the Father and the Son and has His essence and His subsistent Being both from the Father and the Son, and proceeds from both eternally... We define in addition that the explanation of the words Filioque for the sake of declaring the truth and also because of imminent necessity has been lawfully and reasonably added to the Creed"* (Db 691).

Image of the Council of Nicea with the condemned and excommunicated Arius at the bottom.



Consequently, the profession of the Nicene Creed without the *Filioque* cannot be considered other than a favoring of the heresy of the Eastern Orthodox who deny the profession of the Holy Ghost from the Son. It makes Protestants and Orthodox think that praying the Creed without the *Filioque* is compatible with our faith, which it is not. According to the 1917 Code, Canon 2316, anyone who in any way favors heresy incurs suspicion of heresy. Woywood in his commentary on this canon quotes the 1864 Instruction of the Holy Office, which “*forbids the participation of Catholics in any meetings, public conventions or private gatherings arranged by non-Catholics for the purpose of united all groups of Christians*” (p.513). This gives the traditional mind of the Church. Now it is clear that the ecumenical meeting to celebrate the 1700th anniversary of Nicea was precisely what the Church has always condemned.

LEO XIV

The explanation of this is contained in Pope Leo XIV’s Apostolic Letter *In Unitate fidei* in preparation for this ecumenical meeting. This is what he wrote: “*The Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, has led us to recognize the members of other Churches and ecclesial communities as our brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ, and to rediscover the one universal community of Christ’s disciples throughout the world. We share the same faith in the one and only God, the Father of all people; we confess together the one Lord and true Son of God, Jesus Christ, and the one Holy Spirit, who inspires us and impels us towards full unity and the common witness to the Gospel. Truly, what unites us is much greater than what divides us!*” You will note the emphasis on what unites, rather than what divides, which is precisely what was forbidden as false ecumenism in the time of Pope Pius XII. You will also note that non-Catholics are said to have “*the same faith*”, which is also manifestly false, for they do not believe all of divine revelation, and consequently their faith is human, based on what they think for themselves,

not on the authority of God who reveals. It is not the true, supernaturally revealed Catholic Faith.

Close up of Leo XIV with the schismatic Patriarch of Constantinople, Bartholomew I at the 1700th celebration of Nicea.



More revealing yet is his explanation of the question of the *Filioque*, which is a doctrine of our Faith. However, Pope Leo XIV considers it as only a “*theological controversy*” or a “*subject of misunderstanding*” that has lost its relevance. This can only be considered as a betrayal and a refusal to profess the Faith. This is what he wrote in the above-mentioned document: “*We must therefore leave behind theological controversies that have lost their raison d’être in order to develop a common understanding and even more, a common prayer to the Holy Spirit, so that he may gather us all together in one faith and one love*”. Note that in the same apostolic letter he recommends the recently published document by the International Theological Commission entitled *Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour. 1700th Anniversary of the Ecumenical Council of Nicaea*. This states explicitly that the question of the *Filioque* is but “*a subject of misunderstanding between the Christian confessions*” (§4).

NEW REVELATION

How could a doctrine of Faith become an irrelevant misunderstanding or controversy? Only if divine revelation is considered to be evolving, changing with time, so that the Faith now is no longer objectively what it was before. This is precisely the concept of revelation found in the document of the ITC recommended by Leo XIV. The Council of Nicea is considered to be an event in revelation, which is “*newness par excellence*” because it contains new revelation. It is not an expression of the deposit of Faith from the Apostles. Speaking of Nicea this document states: “*It is Revelation itself, while the Wisdom Event and the Ecclesial Event are part of the transmission of this primordial gift. In it, God makes a covenant with a people in order to make a covenant with all peoples; he assumes a humanity in order to assume all humanity. Nicaea is the expression and the fruit of the Newness of Revelation, and it is for this reason that the Council of 325 offers a paradigm for every period of renewal of Christian thought, as well as of the structures of the Church*” (§71).

Now if Nicea is new revelation as an event in the Church’s life, so also is the celebration of Nicea in 2025, so also are the events in the Church’s history, such as the other councils. Public revelation is no longer fixed at the death of the last of the Apostles, but constantly changing and evolving. This is the basis of false ecumenism and it is pure Modernism.

St. Pius X condemned the modernist theories that revelation was not completed with the apostles (Lamentabili, §21), that dogmas are not truths fallen from heaven (Ib. §22), and that revelation is nothing else than man's consciousness of his relation to God (§20). For dogma and Faith, they say, "*must be bound by the laws of evolution*" (Pascendi, Db 2094). This is what is really behind the use of the Council of Nicea to promote false ecumenism. And this is in total opposition to the real purpose of this wonderful Council, which was to condemn and eradicate the heresy of Arianism within the Church by fidelity to unchanging revelation received by the Apostles from Christ Our Lord.

It is interesting to note that if all the ecumenical councils of the Church caused division amongst those who rejected them, they were no different to Our Lord Himself, who declared: "*Think ye, that I have come to give peace on earth? I tell you, no; but separation. For there shall be henceforth give in one house divided: three against two, and two against three*" (Lk 12: 51, 52). Was it not holy Simeon who prophesied, that the child would be "*for a sign which shall be contradicted*" (Lk 2:34). True councils likewise. It is also interesting to note that after each of the councils it was emperors and politicians who attempted to bring about a false unity by contradicting or undermining the council's teaching. This always failed, since it was a unity outside the truth. After the council of Nicea it was with the Arians; after that of Chalcedon, it was with varying degrees of Monophysites. After the medieval councils of union it was with the eastern Orthodox and after the council of Trent with Protestants. They all failed to convince those who refused the authority of the Church. Now false ecumenism is doing the same thing, to bring about a false union of all believers, not based upon sharing the same objective doctrines of Faith, but simply on some ideas that we share in common. It is likewise doomed to failure. It is now 60 years since the Vatican II document on Ecumenism (U.R.) and there is absolutely no fruit – no unity, no conversion to the Faith, just endless meetings, discussions and joint services that do not profess the Faith.

Fr Peter R Scott



PRIORY NEWS



The two big events in the life of the Priory for the month of December were the Harvest Thanksgiving on December 7 and the First Communions on Gaudete Sunday, December 14. No fewer than 15 children received their first communions (top), from the hands of Fr. Paul Vassal (top right), who preached (above).

One of the many groups of parishioners who received Fr. Vassal's blessing at the harvest.



Above: Fr Scott receives new members into Queen of All Hearts on Dec 8 at St. Pius X chapel, Yaba,, as they make their total consecration.

Right: Fr. & Mrs. Paul Eppe celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary on Dec 28 with their four children at St. Pius X, Yaba.

Below right: Eight men attended the Ignatian retreat that started on Dec 28

Below: The new gate made to replace the rusty old date and installed at St. Pius X in Yaba in November.



OUR HEAVENLY FRIENDS

ST. HILARY

"They didn't know who they were." This is how Hilary summed up the problem with the Arian heretics of the fourth century.

Hilary, on the other hand, knew very well who he was -- a child of a loving God who had inherited eternal life through belief in the Son of God. He hadn't been raised as a Christian but he had felt a wonder at the gift of life and a desire to find out the meaning of that gift. He first discarded the approach of many people who around him, who believed the purpose of life was only to satisfy desires. He knew he wasn't a beast grazing in a pasture. Hilary could see in his own heart that humans were meant for even more than living a good life.

If he didn't lead a virtuous life, he would suffer from guilt and be unhappy. His soul seemed to cry out that wasn't enough to justify the enormous gift of life. So, Hilary went looking for the gift giver. He was told many things about the divine -- many that we still hear today: that there were many Gods, that God didn't exist but all creation was the result of random acts of nature, that God existed but didn't really care for his creation, that God was in creatures or images.



One look in his own soul told him these images of the divine were wrong. God had to be one because no creation could be as great as God. God had to be concerned with God's creation -- otherwise why create it?

At that point, Hilary tells us, he "chanced upon" the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures. When he read the verse where God tells Moses "I AM WHO I AM" (Exodus 3:14), Hilary said, *"I was frankly amazed at such a clear definition of God, which expressed the incomprehensible knowledge of the divine nature in words most suited to human intelligence."* In the Psalms and the

Prophets, he found descriptions of God's power, concern, and beauty. For example, in Psalm 139, "*Where shall I go from your spirit?*", he found confirmation that God was everywhere and omnipotent.

But still he was troubled. He knew the gift-giver now, but what was he, the recipient of the gift? Was he just created for the moment to disappear at death? It only made sense to him that God's purpose in creation should be "that what did not exist began to exist, not that what had begun to exist would cease to exist." Then he found the Gospels and read John's words including "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God..." (John 1:1-2). From John he learned of the Son of God and how Jesus had been sent to bring eternal life to those who believed. Finally, his soul was at rest. No longer did it look upon the life of this body as troublesome or wearisome, but believed it to be what the alphabet is to children... namely, as the patient endurance of the present trials of life in order to gain a blissful eternity. He had found who he was in discovering God and God's Son Jesus Christ.

After becoming a Christian, he was elected bishop of Poitiers in what is now France by the laity and clergy, although he had been previous married with one daughter named Apra.

Not everyone at that time had the same idea of who they were. The Arians did not believe in the divinity of Christ and the Arians had a lot of power including the support of the emperor Constantius. This resulted in many persecutions. When Hilary refused to support their condemnation of Saint Athanasius he was exiled from Poitiers to the East in 356. The Arians couldn't have had a worse plan for themselves.

Hilary really had known very little of the whole Arian controversy before he was banished. Perhaps he supported Athanasius simply because he didn't like their methods. But being exiled from his home and his duties gave him plenty of time to study and write. He learned everything he could about what the Arians said and what the orthodox Christians answered and then he began to write. "*Although in exile we shall speak through these books, and the word of God, which cannot be bound, shall move about in freedom.*" The writings of his that still exist include On the Trinity, a commentary on the Gospel of Matthew, and a commentary on the Psalms. He tells us about the Trinity, "*For one to attempt to speak of God in terms more precise than he himself has used: -- to undertake such a thing is to embark upon the boundless, to dare the incomprehensible.*"

St Hilary of Poitiers (continued)

After three years the emperor sent him back to Poitiers, because, we are told by Sulpicius Severus, the Arian emperor was tired of having to deal with the troublemaker, "*a sower of discord and a disturber of the Orient*". But no one told Hilary he had to go straight back to his home and so he took a leisurely route through Greece and Italy, preaching against the Arians as he went.

In the East he had also heard the hymns used by Arians and Catholics. Back at home, Hilary started writing hymns himself to spread the faith. His hymns are the first in the West with a known writer. Some of us may wonder at all the trouble over what may seem only words to us now. But Hilary wasn't not fighting a war of words, but a battle for the eternal life of the souls who might hear the Arians and stop believing in the Son of God, their hope of salvation.

The death of Constantius in 361 ended the persecution of the Catholics. St. Hilary died in 367 and was proclaimed a doctor of the Church in 1851. His feast day is on the 14th of January.

WHAT IS ECUMENISM?

The description of this movement of dialogue and mutual exchange on religious questions with non-Catholics, and this on a basis of equality, is first made in a Papal encyclical of Pope Pius XI, in *Mortalium animos*, "On Fostering True Religious Unity", published in 1928.

This is the Pope's description: "*Assured that there exist few men who are entirely devoid of the religious sense, they seem to ground on this belief a hope that all nations, while differing indeed in religious matters, may yet without great difficulty be brought to fraternal agreement on certain points of doctrine which will form a common basis of the spiritual life. With this object, congresses, meetings, and addresses are arranged, attended by a large concourse of hearers, where all without distinction, unbelievers of every kind as well as Christians, even those who unhappily have rejected Christ and denied His divine nature or mission, are invited to join in the discussion.*" (§2)

Follows immediately afterwards the Pope's condemnation of "*the panchristians*", whose "*fair and alluring words cloak a most grave error, subversive of the foundations of the Catholic Faith*" (§3): "*Such efforts can meet with no kind of approval among Catholics. They presuppose the erroneous view that all religions are more or less good and praiseworthy (this is the error of indifferentism), inasmuch as all give expression, under various forms, to that innate sense which leads men to God and to the obedient acknowledgment of His rule. Those who hold such a view are not only in error; they distort the true idea of religion, and thus reject it, falling gradually into naturalism and atheism. To favor this opinion, and to encourage such undertakings is tantamount to abandoning the religion revealed by God.*" (§2)

In his instruction on Ecumenism in 1949, Pope Pius XII ordered that, in opposition to such "*dangerous indifferentism*", "*Catholic doctrine must be propounded and explained in its totality and in its integrity. It is not permitted to pass over in silence or to veil in ambiguous terms what is comprised in the Catholic truth on the true nature and stages of justification, on the constitution of the Church, on the primacy of jurisdiction of the Roman Pontiff, on the unique true union by the return of separated Christians to the one true Church of Christ*".

And yet, this is precisely what has not been done since Vatican II, in attempting to follow the contrary request not to offend the sensitivities of our "*separated brethren*" in the Vatican II Decree "On Ecumenism", *Unitatis Redintegratio*. This is how that document defines Ecumenism, with none of the precautions laid out by Pope Pius XII against indifferentism: "*The term 'ecumenical movement' indicates the initiatives and activities encouraged and organized... to promote Christian unity (i.e. the apparent unity, outside the truth, of different denominations or churches getting along). These are: first, every effort to avoid expressions, judgments and actions which do not represent the condition of our separated brethren with truth and fairness and so make mutual relations with them more difficult*". What this means is that we must never criticize their errors and disobedience. This is false ecumenism. The document also lists as other ecumenical activities dialogue, cooperation for the common good of humanity and common prayer (U.R. §4). These activities are all based upon the belief, already condemned in advance by Pope Pius XI, that all religions are more or less good or praiseworthy, expressed in this way in the Vatican II document on Ecumenism: "*Separated communities and churches as such...have been by no means deprived of significance and importance in the mystery of salvation. For the spirit of Christ has not refrained from using them as means of salvation*" (U.R. §3). Clearly this is implicitly but really in contradiction with the defined dogma, "*Outside the Church, no salvation*" (Lateran IV, Ds 802).

Fr Peter R Scott

YABA—ACTIVITIES DAY



Friday December 26 was a first for St. Pius X chapel in Yaba, Lagos. It was a family day. The day started with the celebration of the Mass and the reception of seven new members into the Archconfraternity of St. Stephen on their feast day. It was followed by family fun activities, including games of chess, draughts and scrabble, singing competitions, a historic tug of war of the men against the women (which obviously the women had to win). At the end of the day prizes were awarded to all the successful children.

Eucharistic Crusade

December intention: For missionaries of the Society of Saint Pius X

Next meeting: **Sunday 25th January** after the High Mass

Treasure for November 2025

	NIGERIA	GHANA
Treasure sheets	43	3
Morning Offerings	1066	82
Masses	311	18
Sacramental Communions	264	10
Spiritual Communions	746	69
Sacrifices	532	29
Decades of the Rosary	5935	517
Visits to the Blessed Sacrament	294	20
Fifteen minute meditations	425	24
Good Examples	486	40

Our Lady of Good Success

Rosaries during November— 11,245

Next meeting: **Sunday 18th January**

Holy Souls' Society

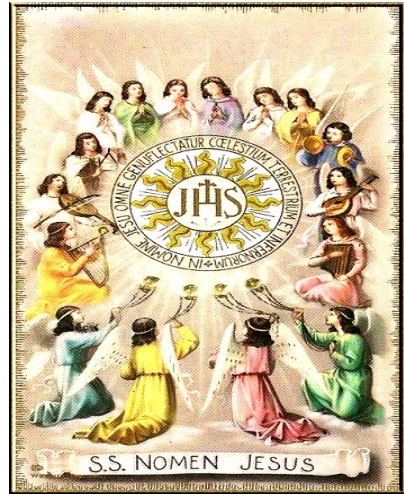
Next meeting: **Sunday 25th January.**

Legion of Mary

Every Sunday after the High Mass

Altar Boy Practice

After Sunday Mass.



MONTH OF THE HOLY NAME OF JESUS

HOW TO HELP THE PRIORY

It is with many grains of rice that we are able to fill the bag. So any help is welcome!

Thank you for supporting our expenses by cash.

You also can help:

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✂ By Transfer - occasionally or monthly - to

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Name: **THE SOCIETY OF SAINT PIUS X**

Number: **5080119933**

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- ✧ **Weekly Mass** : 7.15 am & 6.00 pm
- ✧ **Saturday Mass**: 7.15 am
- ✧ **Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament** :
Saturday at 8.00 am
- ✧ **Confessions and Priest's office**:
Sunday 8.00am
Mon—Sat 8.00 - 9.00 am and 4:30 - 5:30 pm
- ✧ **Children's catechism** : Sunday 10.30 - 11.30

**A question ?
Call Fr Paul
Vassal, Prior
0810 271 1905
0704 571 1890**

ST. PIUS X CHURCH

69 Queen Street
YABA- LAGOS
Contact : Mr. Paul OKEKE
(0708 645 3104)
(0816 862 0235)

LAGOS
Every
Saturday
and
Sunday

- ✧ **Sunday Mass**: 7am & 9am (*High Mass*)
- ✧ **Saturday Mass**: 9am / 6pm (*Low Mass*)
- ✧ **Confessions** :
Sunday 6.00- 7.00am, Saturday 5.00-6.00pm
- ✧ **Catechism & Conference** : Sunday 10.30
- 11.30am

SACRED HEART CHAPEL

44 Khartoum St.
WUSE 5 - ABUJA
Contact : Mr. Emmanuel
GILBERT (0803 329 6427)
Or (0814 900 3374)

ABUJA
Every
Saturday
and
Sunday

- ✧ **Sunday Mass** : 9.00am (*Sung Mass*)
- ✧ **Saturday Mass** : 5.00pm (*Low Mass*)
- ✧ **Confessions**:
Sunday 8.00-9.00am, Saturday 4.00-5.00pm

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(0703 054 4862)
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2nd & 4th
Sundays at
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Sundays
- ✧ **Confessions**: Sunday 7am-8am or 3-4 pm
- ✧ **Catechism & Conference** : Sunday

**IMMACULATE
HEART OF MARY
CHAPEL**

Flat 20, Federal
Department of Agri-
culture Quarters,
Rumuodomaya,
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Contact : Mr. Vitalis OMECHE
(0703 0622 144)

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1st, 3rd & 5th
Sundays at 4 pm;
2nd & 4th Sun-
days at 8 am

- ✧ **Sunday Mass**: 4 pm or 8 am
- ✧ **Confessions**: 3 pm or 7 am
- ✧ **Saturday Mass & Confessions**: 6 pm
before 2nd & 4th Sundays.