

A Welcome Address Presented By Patrick Ekpater, the Chairman, Deanery Laity Council, at this Epe Deanery 2nd Annual General Meeting (AGM 2026) held this day, the 2nd of May 2026 at the Catholic Church of Assumption, Awoyaya.

Protocol

I greet you all in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

It gladdens my heart to welcome you all to this 2nd Annual General Meeting, themed, **“Leading with Love, Serving with Purpose. Focus: Charity (Caritas), Unity, and Mission-Driven Service Within the Church Community”**. The choice of this Theme is very fitting to the Church Community and our gathering today. We are Catholics, Councilors, and Leaders and so are called to be purposeful and be driven by the Mission of Christ in all aspects of our service, and that this service must be embedded in, and be discharged with extraordinary love of God. As Leaders our service should be geared towards uniting the Body of Christ. Remember our motto is **“Driving Growth and Fostering Unity!”**. Our Service should mirror these values particularly those who are elected to serve in the next four years. I can assure you that Rev. Fr. Jude Eze, our Guest Speaker, would do justice to this Message today and you would leave here fulfilled.

This AGM offers an opportunity for all stakeholders across councils and Lay Apostolate groups, Priests and Religious, to come together to take stocks, examine, and reflect on our journey of service, shared successes, and challenges, as well as our resolve to forge ahead and do more to keep building on shared growth, mission, and responsibilities.

As we participate in this 2nd Annual General Meeting of our Deanery Laity Council, I would like to draw our attention to the vision of our Dean, Rt. Rev. Monsignor Gabriel Amolegbe, to drive the growth of the Deanery through strategic investments in the spiritual needs of the Lay faithful, as well as physical development in the areas of Asset acquisition for self-sufficiency.

On this note I want to thank all of you for always responding to this clarion call. I want to assure you that your constructive contributions, comments, observations, reviews, and ideas would help us to have a robust deliberation, and all resolve would be well documented in this AGM.

Today, we would also recognize and appreciate in a special way our Priests, outgoing leaders, and Patrons & Patroness for their selfless service and sterling contributions to the Laity Council and the Church. This is one of the ways we encourage ourselves in this service even as we are very much aware the greatest Rewarder is our God Almighty. Please we encourage you to continue to render this mission-driven service in your community and wherever you find yourselves.

On behalf of myself and the Laity Executives, I thank our Daddy Monsignor Gabriel Amolegbe, the Dean of the Deanery for standing solidly by us all these years. We equally thank our Chaplain Rev. Fr. Michael Etegene for the rare and solid support and spiritual guidance. Our highly esteemed Patrons and Patroness, Outgoing Leaders, and Past Leaders, and indeed the entire Body of the Laity, we welcome you to this AGM. We sincerely thank the Director Lay Apostolate Centre, Rev. Fr. John Oscar Obi, and the Lagos Archdiocesan Laity Council President, Mr. Ugonna Ezeifedi & his Executives for their support and guidance and for honouring our invitation today. We pray our stay here birth a great resolve for the Deanery.

I Thank You All!

Salt of the Earth Light of the World! One Church One Laity! Epe Deanery....Driving Growth & Fostering Unity!



Engr. Patrick Ekpater, MNSE, NIPetE

Chairman, Deanery Laity Council