

## **In the footsteps of their Predecessors: Nigeria South-East Holy Ghost Missionaries' Involvement in education, 1970-2020**

**Rev. Fr. Joseph Oguejiofor Okafor, PhD**

Department of History and International Studies,  
Nwafor Orizu College of Education, Nsugbe, Anambra State, Nigeria.  
Email: okaforjog@hotmail.com

### **Abstract**

For the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and more, expatriate Catholic Holy Ghost missionaries dominated the education terrain in the then Eastern Nigeria to the point that it was identified as the hallmark of their evangelization in the region. These expatriate missionaries were expelled from the region at the end of the Nigeria-Biafra war in 1970, leaving behind a few indigenous members that had been recruited into their religious Order from Eastern Nigeria. Not a few persons wondered on whether the recruited members from Eastern Nigeria could uphold the educational legacies of their predecessors. This work explored this thought. It employed both qualitative and quantitative methods with critical method of history in the analyses of data, using thematic, chronological, and narrative methods in presenting the work within a framework of Courageous Resistance theory. The findings of the research revealed that the Eastern Nigeria members of the religious Order not only upheld the legacies of their expatriate predecessors, but also went further to improve on such legacies.

**Key words:** Predecessors, Holy Ghost Missionaries, Nigeria South-East, Education.

### **Introduction**

The expatriate Catholic Holy Ghost missionaries (otherwise called Spiritans) who evangelized Eastern Nigeria until 1970, had Western education as a major strategy in their evangelizing mission. Many, including Ayandele (1991), Ekechi (1971), Kalu (1978), and Omenka (1989), entertained the opinion that education was the hallmark of their missionary activity in Eastern Nigeria, especially for the pre-1970 period. Records have it that shortly before the Nigeria civil war, the Catholic Church owned 2,406 schools out of existing 5,986 schools here. Thus it was responsible for forty percent (40%) of the schools in the then Eastern Nigeria, thanks to the foundations laid by the Holy Ghost missionaries (Onwubiko, 1985). Their engagement in education spread widely including: creating educational environment, providing schools, free education, teachers and educators, broadening the scope of the education curriculum, and quality of education, among others. Elsewhere, it is said that, "for the period 1885 to 1970 a history of education in Igboland will have the Spiritans front and centre" (Okafor, Fall 2014). During the said period, the name, Holy Ghost Fathers was not just synonymous with the Catholic Church in Eastern Nigeria, it more or less, evoked education.

The end of the Nigeria-Biafra war in 1970, saw these expatriate Holy Ghost missionaries expelled by the Nigerian Government. The government took over mission schools. Many saw this as a blow to mission schools and education general. Equally, many also believed that the expulsion of Irish missionaries meant the demise of the missionary group and their activities, especially education, in Eastern Nigeria. Nevertheless, the expatriate Holy Ghost missionaries had earlier recruited members from Eastern Nigerian into their missionary Order. These indigenous members have continued to grow despite the forceful expulsion of their expatriate colleagues. Since the pre-1970 expatriate Holy Ghost missionaries were known for their involvement in education, it would, of course, not be out of place to see how much their immediate successors, the indigenous Holy Ghost members held unto this legacy.

Again, the *Spiritans Rule of Life*, the Constitution of the Congregation states that the principal activities of the members also include "engaging in social and educational work ....." It further directs that members consider as "important task for our times: - youth apostolate, because the present situation of young people is crying out more than ever for social and educational works..." (Congregation of the Holy Spirit, 2013, 18 and 18.1). The Chapter documents of its Province of Nigeria, South-East further emphasized schools and education, including skills acquisition as necessary aspects of the mission of the Province (Congregation of the Holy Spirit, Province of Nigeria, South-East, 2011, No. 1.1). Thus,

the crux of this paper is to engage the participation of these Eastern Nigerian Holy Ghost missionaries in educational activities.

In this paper, both qualitative and quantitative methods would be employed with critical methods in the analyses of available data. The presentation will be in thematic, chronological, and narrative methods of history. Theoretically, the work will be anchored on the framework of “**Courageous Resistance**”. The theory originated mainly from a group of scholars: Thalhammer, K.E., O’Oloughlin, P. L., Glazer, M.P., Glazer, P.M., MCFarland, S., Shepela, S.T., Stoltzfus, N. (2007). It observes that in difficulties and moments of injustice, courageous resistance becomes the power of ordinary people. Some individuals, groups and institutions courageously try to surmount the difficulties, resist oppression and ill will, moved by three factors: humanitarianism, need for achievement and quest to bequeath a legacy to society. This theory pictures both the situation and the reaction of the post-1970 NSE missionaries

### **Clarification of concepts**

Three key concepts need clarification in this paper. One is the **Holy Ghost missionaries**, and it represents the members of a worldwide Catholic Missionary Order currently known officially as the Congregation of the Holy Spirit. Over time, the group has been variously referred to as the Holy Ghost Congregation, Holy Ghost Fathers, and the Spiritans (Okafor, 2013). This group brought Catholicism to Eastern Nigeria. These would be interchanged in this work.

**Nigeria South-East** is a shorter form of the Province of Nigeria, South-East. The Congregation of the Holy Spirit is divided into different administrative groups called provinces. The Province of Nigeria, South-East covers the old Eastern Region of Nigeria. It is abbreviated here as **NSE**.

In this study, **education** simply refers to formal Western education. This implies mainly the use of schools to achieve teaching and learning.

### **Education Apostolate (1970-1983)**

For the period 1970-1983, the involvement of Nigeria South-East Holy Ghost missionaries in education was not very pronounced. In its District Council Meeting at Udi on September 11, 1973, their leader, Father Philip Aguh emphasised the necessity to re-launch into this apostolate, noting that “through schools, the young are captured and nurtured in the Lord.” Thus, some of the members were sent to study secular courses in Nigerian universities, so as to take up education apostolate. Fathers Godfrey Odigbo read Mathematics Education; Casimir Eke - History; Aloysius Obi - English, Stanislaus Ogbonna - Psychology, and Lawrence Teteh, Ignatius Baaju Izuchi, Emmanuel Agbakwuru took other studies. In furtherance, the group administration in 1976, agreed to be sending some future priests (Seminarians in Philosophy stage) to study secular courses in Nigerian universities. Following this Francis Ibe went University of Ibadan to study Geography while Anthony Amadi studied French language at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The bid to retain the legacy had taken off.

Since government had taken over the mission schools and the establishment of new ones difficult at the time, relaunching into education apostolate, made seeking employment a necessity, more so, as the Federal Government policy of Universal Free Primary Education started in 1976 posed problems for mission schools. Thus, the groups’ involvement in school apostolate in the region between 1970-1983, was limited to its Junior Seminary. However, they engaged elsewhere in Nigeria where some dioceses invited their help. Father Akalawu became a teacher at Mount Saint Gabriel School in Aliade and Father Leo Okeke, at St. John Bosco College, Doma, both in Makurdi Diocese. In 1980, Father Akalawu began a secondary school, St. Peter’s College in Toto. NSE missionaries ran the schools at Doma and Toto for Makurdi Diocese many years after, and both became very renowned schools in that part of Nigeria (Akalawu, Personal Communication, 07/02/2018). Similarly, Father Casimir Eke who went on mission in the Gambia in 1977, taught History in a secondary school. In all, however, the NSE Holy Ghost missionaries were unable to open their own schools within this period.

### **Education apostolate and strategy (1984-2020)**

During this period, the participation of the NSE Holy Ghost missionaries in education and school apostolate improved and blossomed. Four patterns of engagement in education apostolate could be identified in the missionary activities of their members. The first pattern concerns being engaged by different dioceses to teach or administer their schools. The second is engaging in public and private educational institutions. The third has the missionaries establishing schools in the parishes where they worked; while the fourth pattern has the missionaries establishing their own schools and institutions outside their places of work.

The first pattern actually began in the period 1970-1983. As already said, Bishop Murray of Makurdi Diocese invited the group, and Fathers Akalawu and Okeke worked in Alaide, Toto and Doma for years. They were the group's pioneers in this pattern of education involvement. Beyond 1983, however, there are other invitations that involved engaging the members of the group. Idah Diocese invited the assistance of the group at the Federal Polytechnic Idah and the College of Education, Ankpa where Fathers Remy Onyewuenyi and Lawrence Teteh served in the capacities of chaplains and teachers in both institutions in the early 1980s. Also, in his letter of 21<sup>st</sup> July, 1985, the Bishop requested the Province to help him with a priest teacher and spiritual director for his Junior Seminary at Idah. Father Eugene Azuinye was assigned to him in fulfilment of this request (CSSP Archives Onitsha, Box 7).

Bishop Albert A. Fasina, in 1991 requested priests from the group for education apostolate for his diocese of Ijebu-Ode. The Province sent Father Emmanuel Nnadozie who began teaching at St. Anthony's Grammar School, Esure and later helped to open more schools for the diocese including Christ the King Catholic College, Ijebu-Ode. He was made the Director of Education for the Diocese. Fathers Fidelis Nwankwo, Aloysius Orjinta, and Emeka Akabueze also assisted in various schools in the diocese. Impressed by their service, Bishop Fasina made many other requests for priest educationists from the group. Many other dioceses requested and received the NSE Holy Ghost members for educational services including in the Dioceses of Ekiti, and Ilorin in Nigeria, in Gokwe and Mutare Dioceses of Zimbabwe, Garoua Diocese in Cameroon, Cayene Diocese in French Guyana, and so on.

For the second pattern, engaging members of the Province in public and private educational institutions, it also began earlier. In early 1980s, Father Stanislaus Ogbonna worked in a government school at Sharia, Benue State and Father Eugene Azuinye in Government Secondary School, Oguma. Father Boniface Ochuonu taught at Christ the King College, Onitsha for years in the 1980s; Father Paul Nwaneri taught under Ekiti State in 1990s; Father Akalawu got transferred to Imo State in 1998 as a teacher/Principal; by 2006, Father Chinedu Aneke taught in Bomu under the Rivers State government. This is to mention but a few.

Furthermore, many of the NSE Holy Ghost members engaged in education apostolate in public and private tertiary institutions. Fathers Onyewuenyi and Teteh were mentioned to have lectured at Federal Polytechnic Idah and College of Education, Ankpa respectively. Father Onyewuenyi later lectured briefly in his *alma mater* in Ottawa Canada before returning to Nigeria in 1991. He joined the Faculty of Environmental Studies at Caritas University, Amorji Nike, Enugu in 2006 and rose to become a Deputy Vice Chancellor of the University. He is currently, Vice Chancellor, Spiritan University, Nneochi. Father Augustine Onyeneke joined the Department of Sociology and Anthropology of the University of Nigeria Nsukka (UNN) in 1982. In later years, Fathers Malachy Nwabuisi and Godwin Abiogu (Faculty of Education) and Anthony Ekwunife (Department of Religion), enlisted as lecturers at UNN. The four rose to professorial ranks. Father Onyeneke retired from UNN and joined Madonna University and rose to become a Deputy Vice Chancellor of its Akpugo Campus. Other confreres that joined the academic service of UNN included Fathers Matthew Chukwuelobe, (Department of Philosophy), Ernest Ezeogu (Department of Religion), Aloysius Orjinta, who transferred from Babcock University, Ikenne to the Department of Foreign Languages of UNN (Okafor, 2019).

Some others who toed the academic line included Father James Okoye who joined the Catholic Theological Union (CTU), Chicago, USA where, on September 28, 2006, he became the first to be installed in the Univeristy as Carroll Stuhimueller Distinguished professor in Old Testament

(Congregation of the Holy Spirit, 2008). He later joined the Duquesne University, Pittsburgh, USA. Father Eugene Uzukwu lectured at the Institute Catholique, Paris for many years, the National Seminary of Ireland from 2003 and is currently a Professor at Duquesne University, Pittsburgh where three other NSE Spiritans are academic staff. Fathers Bede Ukwuije is a visiting professor at the Institute Catholique, Paris; Paulinus Odozor, Professor at Notre Dame University, Indiana USA; Augustine Obi, Professor of Philosophy at Kogi State University, Anyigba; Peter Agbonome, Professor of Architecture at Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka (he is the first priest to become a full professor of Architecture in Nigeria). There are currently about twelve other Spiritans of the NSE Province involved as academic staff in various public and private tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

The third pattern of NSE Spiritan missionaries' education involvement is establishing schools in the different places where they worked. Under this, wherever they found themselves working and there were no schools, they tried to build schools. For instance, while at Toto Parish, which had no school, Father Simon Emeanua began a primary school, and Father Akalawu added a secondary school there, St. Peter's College, Toto in 1980. Unfortunately, the school was sacked by incessant civil strife that engulfed Toto and her neighbours. There are some other institutions in this third pattern category founded by the members, not within parishes or for the Province, but to serve other purposes as the conditions for their establishment demanded. For instance, Father Emmanuel Edeh founded some secondary schools at Enugu and Elele, a polytechnic, and two universities, Madonna University, Elele and Caritas University Amorji-Nike, Enugu, approved by the National Universities Commission (NUC) in 1999 and 2005 respectively, which he later bequeathed to the Religious Orders that he founded. Some also started schools in countries like Gabon, French Guyana, Cameroon, Ethiopia, and Zimbabwe. Because of lack of proper records, it is difficult to list all the educational institutions began by these missionaries in the places where they worked. A few are, however, listed in the table below.

**Table 1: Some institutions started by members of the Province where they worked**

S/No.	Name of School/Institution	Location	Initiator	Year Founded
1.	St. JohnBosco College	Doma, Nassarawa State	Fr. Leo Okeke (1 <sup>st</sup> Principal)	1977
2.	Christ the King Primary	Toto, Nassarawa State	Fr. Simon Emeanua	1977
3.	St. Peter's College	Toto, Nassarawa State	Fr. Ambrose Akalawu	1980
4.	Our Lady of Fatima Nursery/Primary Sch.	Woliwo, Onitsha	Fr. George Akanigwo	1987
5.	CKC Nursery/ Primary School	Awo-Omamma, Imo State	Fr. Jude Agorchukwu	1991
6.	St. Patrick's Nursery/ Primary School	Awo-Omamma, Imo State	Fr. Joachim Oforchukwu	1994
7.	St. Matthew Catholic Primary School	Odeke, Ibaji, Kogi State	Fr. Paul Njoku	1998
8.	St. Joseph's Primary School	Gwagwa, Abuja	Fr. Aloysius Obi	1998.
9.	St Philip Secondary School	Jattu, Edo State	Fr. Philip Ayika.	2001;
10.	St. Patrick's College	Awo-Omamma, Imo State	Fr. Emmanuel Nnadozie	2002.
11.	Christ the King College	Awo-Omamma, Imo State	Fr. Malachy Eleanya	2010
12.	Mater Misericordiae Secondary School,	Rumuomasi, Port Harcourt	Fr. Cletus Mbarikatta	2014
13.	St. Ignatius Nursery/ Primary School	Odonjisi, Onitsha, Anambra State	Fr. Henry Anyabuike	2014

14.	Theresa's Nursery/ Primary School	Ubima, Rivers State	Fr. Emmanuel Nnadozie	2015
15.	Vocational Secondary School, C.K.C. Parish,	Isumiocha, Anambra State	Fr. Augustine Ogbonna	2015
16.	Our Lady of Lourdes Nursery/Primary School	Elele, Rivers State	Fr. Callistus Offor	2015
17.	Sets of secondary Schools	Enugu and Elele	Fr. Emmanuel Edeh	From 1990 to 2002
18.	Our Saviour institute of Science and Technology	Enugu	Fr. Emmanuel Edeh	1994
19.	Madonna University	Elele, Rivers State	Fr. Emmanuel Edeh	1999
20.	Caritas University	Amorji-Nike, Enugu	Fr. Emmanuel Edeh	2005

\*\*Sourced from varied files in CSSp Archives.

For the Spiritan missionaries of NSE, education is more than erecting schools and issuing out certificates. Following the Catholic teaching that it “consists not only in the aggregate of all experiences that enlighten the mind, increase knowledge, and develop abilities, it includes moral and religious education which help to develop attitudes and strengthen the will” (Ebelebe, 2016, p.67), these missionaries’ educational institutions as useful channels to form characters that would in themselves become vehicles for the empowerment of the individuals and their dependants. The institutions they founded in parishes and elsewhere, were also means through which many became empowered socially and economically. But as missionaries, they often build up parishes and whatever structure that could be developed in them, and hand them over to the local Church while they vacate to respond to fresh appeals elsewhere, the gains are not always consolidated, thus the need for their own schools.

The fourth pattern of the NSE Spiritan missionaries’ involvement in education, which is to own the schools and be totally responsible for their management, their curriculum, and their future, thus arose from the need to achieve the above objectives. Moreover, the Congregation of the Holy Spirit as an institute identified the following as “Spiritan values in educational works”: - Preferential option for the poor; - Faith development; - creating a Community of respectful relationships; - drive for Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation; - Holistic and person centred education; Academic excellence; - Inclusion and dialogue with other faith traditions; - moulding a Spirit of service and of sharing; - and making room for Evaluation, renewal and initiative (Congregation of the Holy Spirit, 2016). Spiritan owned schools are, therefore, a surer vehicle to actualizing these ‘values in educational works’. These values are the goal of the involvement of a Holy Ghost missionary in education. Institutions that are not concretely owned by the members of the Congregation may not assure the pursuit of this goal.

By 1984, there were only two educational institution owned and managed by the NSE Spiritans. The Holy Ghost Juniorate, Ihiala, though a minor seminary, it also does secular subjects as a secondary school. The second, the Spiritan School of Philosophy, Isienu Nsukka, opened in 1976, is a tertiary institution. In 1987, the Province opened the Spiritan International School of Theology (SIST), Attakwu, Enugu. These were originally purely institutions for ecclesiastical studies but have opened their doors to accept non-ecclesiastical students who wish to study and acquire certificates in the areas of study the institutions offer. While the school at Isienu is accredited for a Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) degree and a Diploma certificate, the SIST Attakwu offers Bachelor and Master of Arts degrees and a Higher Diploma in Religious Studies. To non-ecclesiastical students, these schools have not only provided certificates to them but have equally initiated them into the values as identified with “Spiritan Education”.



For more practical approach to this fourth pattern of education involvement, the NSE Spiritans, started non-ecclesiastical educational institutions to be inspired by the “Spiritans values in educational works”. Holy Ghost Academy, Amaokpala, Anambra State opened by the group in 2002 is the first in this cadre. It has risen to an enviable secondary school for every social class. This was followed by Father Philip Aguh Spiritan Academy, Akabo, Imo State in 2010; then, Bishop Okoye Spiritan Secondary School (BOSSS), Mirinwanyi Asa in Oyigbo, Rivers State which is a school of its own class. BOSSS intends to provide much of the Spiritan values in education (a platform for holistic education) to children from relatively wealthy families, as often times the rich are selective of the schools their children attend. Other schools inspired by this fourth pattern of education engagement will be listed in the table below.

The NSE Spiritans equally initiated this fourth pattern of education in their mission areas outside the administrative areas of the Province. This gave birth to the Holy Ghost Secondary School, Benin City, under the instrumentality of Father Hyacinth Ogbodo, and managed by NSE missionaries since September, 2014. In Zimbabwe, the NSE Spiritans working there, similarly built and opened the Holy Ghost Secondary School, Marange, in 2004, to pursue integral and holistic education of the young in the mission area. It was once reported about the School in Marange, that the chief of Marange, the community, and the ministry of education, are happy with the developments (Igboanyika & Nwamara, 2004).

The NSE Holy Ghost missionaries took a bold stride in the education apostolate, when in 2007, they decided to establish a full-fledged university. The result is the Spiritan University Nneochi (SUN), in Umunneochi Local Government of Abia State, Nigeria. This project seemed initially an uphill task as it is capital intensive and the Province is relatively poor, being made up of poor missionaries. Yet the members vowed to see it through by tasking themselves to sacrifice as much as possible, as it is hoped to empower generations to come. The National University Commission (NUC) inspected the project from 2015, and the Federal Government of Nigeria issued it a license for operation on December 19, 2017. The development of this University has attracted much commendations. The university has already graduated two sets. It is hoped that it conveys meaningfully, the “Spiritans values in educational works”.

**Table 12: Schools and Educational institutions built for the Congregation**

S/No.	Name of School/Institution	Location	Initiator	Year Founded
1.	Spiritans School of Philosophy	Isienu Nsukka	Provincial Administration	1976
2.	Spiritans International School of Theology (SIST)	Attakwu, Enugu	Congregation	1987
3.	Holy Ghost Academy	Amaokpala, Anambra State	Regional Administration	2002
4.	Holy Ghost Secondary School	Marange, Zimbabwe	Frs Anthony Amadi & Paschal Ndeze	2004
5.	Shanahan Memorial Academy	Umualumoke, Abia State	Fr. Bartholomew Agu	2005
6.	Father Philip Aguh Spiritans Academy	Akabo, Imo State	Provincial Administration	2010.
7.	Bishop Okoye Spiritans Secondary School (BOSSS)	Mirinwanyi Asa, Oyigbo, Rivers State	Provincial Administration	2011
8.	Spiritans International Secondary School	Attakwu, Enugu	Fr. Bartholomew Agu	2013
9.	Holy Ghost Secondary School	Benin City	Fr. Hyacinth Ogbodo	2014

10.	Holy Ghost International School	Mirinwanyi-Asa Oyigbo, Rivers State,	Fr. Cletus Aloh	2015
11	Spiritans University Nneochi (SUN)	Umunneochi L.G.A., Abia State	Provincial Administration	2017

\*\*Sourced from varied files in CSSp Archives.

Evidently, the Nigeria, South-East Holy ghost missionaries have meaningfully engaged itself adequately in education apostolate. It will continue to engage itself more in this apostolate as avenues and resources permit.

### Assessment

When viewed from the lens of the performance of the expatriate Holy Ghost missionaries before 1970, a realistic assessment of their NSE colleagues' performance in **education apostolate** from 1970 will not be very easy for some reasons. First, the opportunities that confronted the two groups are not the same. Former Minister for education in Nigeria, Professor Fabian Osuji, looking objectively at both groups, aired this view:

I certainly praise the indigenous Spiritans for the initiative they have taken so far because the Spiritans that handled our education before the war had a whole lot of support all over the world and that seem to have affected their ability to perform. For instance, also, I think that the political climate before the war was such that the Spiritans had full ambience to operate, but since after the war, the political climate in Nigeria had changed a great deal so that the configuration of the State and the Church had changed so much that I praise our Catholic priests for being able to achieve what they have today (Personal communication, 9/01/2018).

This judgement is apt. One, the post-civil war educational atmosphere is much closed when compared to the open-ended sphere enjoyed by the expatriate Holy Ghost missionaries before the civil war. The post-civil war era had the government control educational institutions for a long time without mission participation, thus leaving out real involvement of NSE Spiritans. Again, while the pre-civil war Holy Ghost missionaries had dominant control over the erection, existence, and management of Catholic mission schools in the region at that time, their post-civil war confreres, for most of the period, participated in educational activities only to the extent that their invitation and mission allowed, thus leaving an unsure future for the efforts they made. Worst still, the NSE Spiritans had no proper forum for the documentation of most of the schools opened by its members while they worked in the parishes of different dioceses. Their exit from a diocese or parish meant that such schools gradually ceased to be linked to the Holy Ghost missionaries. Thus, presenting a very accurate data of the schools established by the Holy Ghost missionaries of this era becomes difficult as most members who created such schools were not accessible when this research was carried out.

Again, the expatriate group worked in an environment where there was little or no schools. Western education began in former Eastern Nigeria at their time, thus, they had the liberty to bring schools to nearly all the towns. In other words, they were building schools because there were no schools. The post 1970 missionaries in Eastern Nigeria had a different environment. Schools had already been built in most towns and villages located within the region by 1970, though there were few secondary schools. There was, therefore, less need for new schools. Moreover, even though one can never have enough schools, the indigenous group was incapacitated by lack of personnel and finance to build new schools.

The above obstacles notwithstanding, the Nigeria South-East Holy Ghost missionaries engendered so many schools and educational institutions, though one may not be able to give the exact figure. Interestingly, most of these establishments have positively distinguished themselves among their peers, to be high standard and quality over the years. To give a few examples, besides making between 95 and 100 per cent in the yearly external examinations, in competitions organised by United Nations office in

Nigeria with some foreign embassies; out of 135 adjudged high profile secondary schools selected across Nigeria, the Holy Ghost Juniorate, Ihiala won the “Best School Award” in 2007, and “Second Best School Award” in 2008. It got the “Gold Medal Award” in 2009 for National ICT Competition for Secondary Schools organised in collaboration with the Federal Ministry of Education. Still in 2009, it was the “Runners-up” in the Southern Nigeria Milo Basketball Championships, and in 2010, it represented Anambra State and won a double Gold Medal at the National Secondary School Sports Fiesta held in Lagos. It hosted the United Nations Simulation Summit (UNASS) with many high profile schools in attendance from 2006-2010. In 2009, five Juniorate students were elected into the National Children’s Parliament. And 2010, its students were part of the international dance group that toured and performed in Israel, Japan, USA and Canada during the “Nigeria at 50 Years celebrations, among other laurels” (Adindu, 2012).

Similarly, the Holy Ghost Academy, Amaokpala started in 2002, has recorded a number of outstanding achievements., It got first position in the United Nations Education Summit (UNASS) in 2011 and also first position in the Digitise Peers International Competition, an ICT programme organised annually for students nationwide. In 2011/12, it came tops also in Anambra State and South-East Zonal competition conducted by the Petroleum Technology Development Fund (PTDF). One of its students was elected Speaker of the Students’ Parliament in Anambra State in 2012 (The Missionary, December 2011 – May 2012). On November 17, 2020, the school received an “Award of Excellence in Leadership” from the National Productivity Centre, in collaboration with Leadership and Professional Ethics Consult. What is more, a number of its past students have distinguished themselves in various universities they attended. For instance, Emmanuel Adibe made First Class in Information Communication Technology Engineering at the University of Stratford, Delhi, India, and was equally the “Best Graduating Student” of the University, while Onyemechalu Stanley made a First Class in Archaeology at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka (Nweke, 5<sup>th</sup> March, 2016), to mention but a few. The education provided by the Province of Nigeria aims at assuring functional education that will help the students to be self-reliant in the future.

For Bishop Okoye Spiritan Secondary School (BOSSS), Mirinwanyi Asa, Oygbo, among other accolades, it has achieved Excellent performance in local and international exams like JAMB, IGCSE and SAT; attracting Fully and partly funded local and foreign tertiary education Scholarships for her students; 97-100 per cent success in WAEC and NECO exams since 2016 that it first sat for WAEC. Among the laurels won are: Best School in Oygbo Award by Bedek Global Resources 2016; Gold winner- Rotary Club Spelling Bee, 2016; Nigeria’s representative- African Spelling Bee Kenya, 2018; Silver –Nigeria Spelling Bee, 2018; Global Most Innovative Education School of the Year, 2018 by World Quality Alliance; Winner- NAFTA French Essay Competition, 2019; 2<sup>nd</sup> Runner-up- STAN Competition, Kano 2019; Silver and Bronze(State)- Mathematical Association of Nigeria Competition 2019; Gold-Port Harcourt Book Club Essay Competition, 2020; Silver- Toyota Dream Car National Art Competition, 2020; Winner -International Physics Olympiad, Lithuania, 2021; Bronze- International STEM Olympiad, Germany, 2022; 1<sup>st</sup> Runner-up- National Digital Literacy Competition, 2022; Silver and Bronze- Zero Crime Secondary School Competition, 2023; Gold and Silver- US Chandelle Mathematics Competition, 2023; Silver- Spiritan JPIC /PCE Poetry Competition, 2023; Gold winner-Port Harcourt Book Club Essay Competition, 2023; Category based gold, silver and bronze - African Mathematics Olympiad, 2023; Category based gold, silver and Bronze winner- I –STEM Olympiad, Paris, France, 2023; Africa Most Admired Quality Education Christian School of the Year 2023, by African Quality Alliance.

For the NSE Holy Ghost missionaries who are scholars, a good number of them have distinguished themselves as well. Francis Cardinal Arinze commenting on this remarked that:

The last thirty years have proved that your priests have shown scholarship .... Your Fathers have distinguished yourselves. Obviously, the fact that you are planning a university now is a proof. But also individuals, in Rome Fr. Bede Ukwuije is greatly appreciated from many angles. But before him, Fr. James Okoye, and others were at your Generalate. So you have had distinguished people. Now Fr. Ekwunife



Anthony is dead, he had been distinguished in the university area and many of your Fathers. Like James Okoye, when we had our African synod in 1994 in Rome, he was one of the people who contributed much as theologians .... Fathers like Paulinus Odozor who was the chief organizer of the Theological Conference in March this year in Rome. It is true that it is Notre Dame University that arranged it but he was the key person and your Fathers were very distinct. So God has blessed you with scholars ... (Personal Communication, 27<sup>th</sup> December, 2017).

### Conclusion

From the presentation above, one observes that the Nigeria South East Holy Ghost missionaries initiated the establishment of many primary, secondary schools of reputable standards. Most commendable, members of this group saw to the erection of five degree awarding institutions, including two of the status of university colleges, and three full-fledged universities: the Madonna University, Elele and Caritas University Amorji-Nike, Enugu, as well as the Spiritan University Nneochi, Abia State. Suffice it to say that considering its spread, quality, and magnitude, the involvement of the NSE Holy Ghost missionaries in education as an evangelizing strategy was very successful. The success is clearer when viewed from the role of education and cognitive ability in relation to the development of "human capital" as argued by Rindermann. He argued that;

A high-quality education enhances the development of thinking, deepens knowledge, furthers personality, changes attitudes, and trains special skills, which are all important for success in the world of work. With a higher quality of education, more complex tasks can be solved, and behavior suffers less from fewer mistakes. The positive side effects spread into everyday life and social relations. Usually, the individuals themselves, the environment near them, and more broadly society as a whole benefit (2018, 40).

They must have touched the lives of the students they nurtured or tutored in different ways.

What is more, the post 1970 NSE Holy Ghost missionaries have sustained the legacies of their pre-1970 expatriate colleagues in the field of education and even improved on the legacy by taking it to another level which their expatriate colleagues could not attain before 1970. It is also worthy of note that in the history of the entire Congregation of the Holy Spirit, the Province of Nigeria South-East is the second Province to achieve a full-fledged university after the one established by the Irish Holy Ghost Fathers in the United States. Indeed, confronted by the post-1970 challenges to education and the perceived ill will of the government, and moved by humanitarianism and need for achievement, the quest to retain and bequeath same legacy to their contemporary society, the post-1970 NSE Holy Ghost missionaries courageously resisted the obliteration of the education legacy of their pre-1970 expatriate predecessors in Eastern Nigeria. They persisted in the footsteps of their predecessors.

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