

# **THE INDISPENSABILITY OF CULTURAL VALUES IN SOCIETAL DEVELOPMENT: THE IGBO EXAMPLE.**

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## **Abstract**

The European missionaries came to civilize and Christianize Igbo people. In the course of carrying out their work, they employed several evangelization strategies. Some of these strategies were successful and many others were unsuccessful. For long, many authors have given undue emphasis on these strategies without giving adequate consideration to the contributions of some Igbo cultural values as essential factors in the success of their work. This article seeks to fill such gap by considering the pivotal roles played by the Igbo cultural values of community, solidarity, respect for elders, and sense of the sacred in the success of evangelization and societal development of Igbo people.

## **1. Introduction**

The European missionary came to Igboland to civilize and Christianize Igbo people (Okwu 2010: 84). The success of evangelizing and Christianizing any people depends on the fruitful interaction between the evangelizer who brings the good news and the audience who receives the good news. In this interaction, the missionary is always influenced by his or her culture in the interpretation and transmission of the gospel, and the receiver of evangelization equally depends on certain cultural values in the reception of the same gospel. To achieve any meaningful result in their work, missionaries need to recognize the cultural values of the people they seek to evangelize. The Catholic missionaries, for example, who tried to evangelize Igbo people without any recourse to their culture toiled for fifteen years and could not get up to 2000 converts (Congregation of Holy Ghost Province 1996: 27).

However, the missionaries began to gain more converts under the leadership of Bishop Shanahan who adopted a method that recognized the place of Igbo culture in his missionary work. Francis Arinze, the first indigenous Archbishop of Onitsha who took over from Bishop Charles Heerey the co-adjutor of Bishop Shanahan, praised Shanahan's method of evangelization. He praised his recognition of Igbo "religious beliefs and practices, social and cultural values" as God's gifts to the people for the reception of the Catholic faith (Arinze 1973: 14). While some cultural values can be at odds with the gospel, some others serve as a good preparation for its reception and subsequent growth. Relying on the testimonies of the

missionaries themselves and those of early converts to Christianity in Igbo land, this article seeks to show how the cultural values like sense of the sacred, community, solidarity, sacredness of life, respect for authority and elders helped in civilizing and Christianizing Igbo people. It insists that cultural values more than their evangelization strategies helped them achieve the measure of success they had in Igboland.

For long, scholars have simply rehearsed the strategies which the missionaries employed in their work whenever they examined factors that drive the growth of Christianity and societal development in Igboland. They attribute the missionaries' success in their evangelization work to such factors as their use of "education as a veritable tool for evangelization" (Ekechi 1971:106-107; Ekechi 1972:186; Okorocha 1987:238; Udeani 2007:103; Ejiogu 2011:151), or through "proper planning" (Chigere 2000: 168) or through the given of gifts to the poverty stricken Africans (Ejizu 1988:30-41), or even through the establishment of hospitals where the sick and infirm are healed (Chigere 2000:270). It is true that these factors contribute to the success of missionaries in their work. However, the history of evangelization must not be written with undue emphasis on the activities of the European missionaries while discounting the receiving culture's response to the work of the missionaries. This way of presenting the history of Christianity in Igboland entrenches colonial historiography in a post-colonial time. There is hardly any doubt that a receiving culture does contribute to the work of civilizing or Christianizing Igbo people. Let us introduce Igbo people and their place among other tribes in Nigeria.

## **2. Introducing Igbo People**

Igbo people are among the three major ethnic groups out of many ethnic nationalities, language groups and cultures in Nigeria (Okoro 2009: 170). Among these ethnic groups, Igboland is unique especially because political authority is not centralized but rather diffused according to villages, towns, and communities (Ohadike 1988: 437). As a result, there is no one central myth of origin that unites Igbo people as a homogenous social group. Nevertheless, common cultural values, tradition and language are the known uniting factors of Igbo people. There are no doubts that most countries of sub-Saharan Africa share common cultural values and what is said of Igbo people could also be said of them. In this essay, the use of Igbo/African cultural values almost interchangeably is done on purpose. It recognizes like Wiredu did earlier in his *Philosophy and an African Culture* that although Ghana has varying ethnic groups with certain differences in culture, "there are deep underlying affinities running through these

cultures which justify speaking of a Ghanaian traditional culture" (Wiredu 1980:6-7). What Wiredu says of Ghana can also be said of the whole of sub-Saharan Africa.

The Catholic missionaries' work among Igbo people in the context of Nigeria and West Africa is significant in view of the fact that Igbo priests constitute more than 54% of all the Catholic priests of Nigeria (CSN website 2011). Thus, the Catholic Church in Igboland contributes a large number of priests and religious working as missionaries in different parts of the world (Ebelebe 2009: 203). Let us explore the meaning of cultural values and how five of such values helped in the growth of Christianity and societal development in Igboland.

### **3. The Meaning of Cultural Values:**

"Cultural Values" according to Pope Paul VI, "belong in a way to the natural laws which are implanted in the heart of every person and are the foundation for a well-ordered life with his/her fellow human beings in every generation"(Pope Paul VI, *Africae Terrarum* # 7) The Pope sees values as what refines society and cannot be attacked without undermining human development. And every integral human development impacts positively on the overall development of society. Values constantly help in forming human beings. Tanye believes that human beings hold on to them as a moral guide in determining right behaviour from wrong one (Tanye 2010:26). Society adopts values like community, solidarity, respect for life, respect for elders because they have been tested and shown to be effective in harnessing ethical and interpersonal relations and wellbeing between the individual and the society(Tanye 2010:26).

Values are categorized broadly as either intrinsic or extrinsic depending on whether it is an end in itself or serves as a means to an end (Curtler 1997: 79). Extrinsic values are valuable as a means to an end whereas intrinsic values are always valuable irrespective of its acknowledgement. For instance, human life is inherently valuable and so God endows the human person with the instinct of self-preservation. On the contrary, the extrinsic material value like money is not as inherently valuable for human existence since people have lived during the barter system without money.

Some values are inculcated by parents through imposed or imbibed standards. According to T. Lidz, children imitate their parents and also integrate into their lives some aspects of life in the society. Parental orders become for children the point of reference for approved, acceptable or forbidden behaviour in the society (Lidz 1983: 251). Not only does the family guide and nurture children's behaviour, the society also draws children into the

complex relationships that continue to grow over time. Thus, children affect and are affected by the people they relate with all through their lives (Goodman 1967:102).

#### **4. The indispensability of Cultural Values in Societal development of Igboland.**

Cultural values are among the many but primary factors that contributed not only to the acceptance and growth of Christianity but also to societal development of Igbo people. The work of the missionaries predisposed Igbo people to embrace several aspects of development in Igbo society. This is based on the testimony of the early missionaries as they evaluated the Igbo people's response to the Christian message and the emerging new way of life in Igbo society. Also, Igbo people's actions or inactions in accord with the cultural values such as sense of sacred, community, solidarity and respect for elders corroborate this view. We do not intend to discount completely the evangelization strategies employed by the missionary group. Nonetheless, looking closely at the cultural values of the people one can confidently conclude that these values helped in the acceptance of Christianity and the new way of life that accompanied the Christian message.

##### **i. Family, Community and Human relations**

African people have a strong sense of family lived in the context of the community. The community is the guardian of the individual, and so the rights individuals have are always in relation to the obligation they fulfil to the community (Onwubiko 1991: 14-15). The Community provides security and also the social, political, judicial and religions centres that cater for the needs of the individuals (Emeakaroha 2012). According to Gerald Tanye, "community life is the soul of African society" (Tanye 2010: 55). One of the European missionaries confirmed that Igbo people have "a deep sense of kinship" exemplified in their treatment of each other as "brothers" and in the offering of accommodation to each other in foreign lands on account of sharing the same village of origin (Jordan 1971:152). Igbo people, according to Anthony O. Nwachukwu, value human relationships as both sacred and life (Nwachukwu 2010: 87). Any Igbo missionary succeeds to the measure he/she takes seriously the Igbo attachment to the family and community.

The Igbo spirit of human relations draws them to rejoice and appreciate any good done to her members. Thus, the community appreciated the missionaries' strategy of introducing schools as a means of saving children from slavery. John Jordan articulated the many advantages achieved through the schools for children. Children were free to engage or not to

engage in sacrifice to idols, immodest dancing, and pagan rituals. They could freely practice their Christian faith, and because they now speak English, slave dealers fear them enormously (Jordan 1971: 90). Igbo children attuned themselves to learning from the missionaries in keeping with their educational development plan for Igbo people. This yielded fruits such that E. A. Ayandele, affirmed that Igbo people “achieved quantitative parity with the Yoruba, their rival who had had two generations of opportunities before the Igbo” (Ayandele 1979: 170). Although it was the children who were the immediate beneficiaries of education, the freedom enjoyed by the children of the community is considered as the freedom of the community.

Bishop Shanahan recognized the Igbo love for family and good human relations and so very early in his missionary work endeavoured to be part of the community. The people confessed their intimate relationship with this great apostle of Igboland thus:

He is no longer a stranger, but a member of a family. This fact alone makes what he can effect, and what he can prevent really incalculable. He is known everywhere, and he alone can go through the country without danger. Other Europeans dare not move about the country unescorted” (Jordan 1971: 90).

The dangers of not identifying with the family are enormous and can often be tragic. John Jordan, the biographer of Bishop Shanahan, told a story of how

as late as 1907, some cannibals about seventy miles from Onitsha way-laid a European who was making his way through their town on a bicycle. After tying him up for the pot, they next tied his bicycle securely to a palm tree so that it would not ‘run back and report to Government’ (Jordan 1971: 75).

The Igbo sense of community implies that the individual has rights only in relation to the community. Unfortunately in Igboland, only the free born (Diala) has rights, the Osu (those ritually offered to the deities) and the slave have no rights in the community (Ihenacho 2004: 100). When the early missionaries wanted to establish Christianity based on the redemption of slaves and outcasts and creating Christian villages for them, Igbo people were really appalled by such a decision (Ejizu 2010). Bishop Shanahan had to abandon the slave method because according to him Igbo people abhor slaves, and to continue with the slave method would make Christianity an unpopular religion among Igbo people (Jordan 1971: 30). This candid

confession of Bishop Shanahan shows that the first strategy was unacceptable in a community-oriented Igbo context.

The sense of community and solidarity extends to the living dead. Igbo people were not willing to enter into heaven preached by the missionaries without their kith and kin. An Igbo chief emphatically told the missionary that he would like to go to heaven only if his “brother-chiefs” would be there (Obi 1985: 120). Bishop Shanahan was surprised and shocked by such an answer and from then onwards became ever determined to evangelize the children through the provision of many schools where the children could learn the faith and subsequently evangelize their parents (Obi 1985: 120). Indeed, it became clear to him that seeking to convert those already formed in the traditional faith would be a herculean task.

## **ii. Success through Community’s Competition**

Igbo people exhibit a strong sense of competition as individuals or as a community. Being an egalitarian society where success is achieved through hard work and not by sheer inheritance, people endeavour to be outstanding in what they do; communities try to compete and outdo each other in certain trades or professions. When, therefore, the European missionaries introduced schools and Churches as a means of evangelization, no community wanted to be left out of the advantages accruable from having a school, a church or even from associating with the missionaries. Communities were proud to build a school because they considered achieving such a feat over and above another community as a new way a community could “get up”(Ekechi 1971: 104). Elizabeth Isichei is right when she says that Igbo people simply transferred to education the equivalent prominence of competitiveness that made them put a lot of effort into the cultivation of sufficient yams in order to take yam title. She went on to say that Bishop Shanahan fully exploited the people’s love for education (Isichei 1976: 168). The people’s love for education, according to Clarke, transformed it into the most suitable way of evangelizing Igbo people (Clarke 1974: 101).

The people’s love for education made them partners with the missionaries in establishing schools for their communities. In the spirit of competition, the people built and cherished the schools because it was both the fruit of their labour and the means of educating their children (Jordan 1971: 96). Education succeeded as an instrument of evangelization in most part because the local community bore the operational cost of administering the schools. They helped in building and providing materials for the schools, and also in paying the teachers’ salaries. The Christian community and the pupils all

contributed in paying the day to day cost of running the schools (Isichei 1976: 172). The Children used whatever means available to them like farming, making mats, keeping chickens, in order to raise their own contributions (Isichei 1976: 172).

Sometimes, Igbo villages took the initiative of inviting missionaries to establish school and mission stations in their communities. Those who invited Fr Lutz, according to Celestine Obi, promised to assist the missionaries provide a shelter for their future apostles (Obi 1985: 32-33). Several villages like Adazi Ani, Igbariam, Nteje sent delegates who trekked long distances to invite missionaries to establish the Church in their communities.

The Igbo competitive spirit has been helpful in executing self-help projects in many Igbo communities. However, Igbo people's emphasis on fund-raising in carrying out projects is becoming a growing concern to many people. Sometimes, the fund-raising is done in total disregard to the poor members of the community. Elizabeth Isichei criticized the ways funds are raised in most churches in Nigeria. She frowned at the practice of denying penitents the sacraments because of their inability to pay their dues. She feels that the practice is deplorable and could be called "simony" (Isichei 1976: 173). Although fund-raising exercises serve useful purposes in Igboland, the poor should be considered in all fund-raising activity in every Christian Church in order not to lay an impossible burden on them.

### **iii. Solidarity and Evangelization Breakthrough in Abakaliki**

Igbo people cherish, care and protect whatever belongs to them in keeping with the Igbo saying: ours is ours, and mine is mine. If they cannot lay claim to the ownership of a particular church or organization, for instance, they are most likely to exhibit a *laissez-faire* attitude towards it. It was this attitude that nearly ruined the progress of a mission centre in Abakaliki of Northeastern Igboland. This mission centre was not making any headway despite all the efforts of the missionaries. Indeed, the situation became so worrisome that the priest-in-charge gave up hope and suggested to Bishop McGettrick as follows: "Better close Abakaliki; we are getting nowhere" (McGettrick 1988: 133). The despondent words of the priest-in-charge serve as an example of what could happen if missionaries were to insist only on their laid out plans or strategies without considering the cultural disposition of the people they are sent to evangelize.

Luckily, Bishop Thomas McGettrick took the advice of a teacher who was a native of Abakaliki, and this became the turning point of that mission. The teacher advised the bishop that

the real natives of Abakaliki think the priest is a colonial servant as he lives in Abakaliki Township. The people in that township are strangers, not real natives of Abakaliki. It would be better to put a priest living in a town outside the Government station, among real Abakaliki people (McGettrick 1988: 133).

The Bishop heeded that advice and the result was immediately evident. The bishop confessed that as a result of that advice, he posted a priest to Ezza in 1949 and that led to the miraculous opening up and development of the bush areas of Abakaliki. The opening up of the rural areas of Abakaliki almost always began with infrastructural development in the form of building a Father's house and a school. Such buildings usually serve both as classrooms and for Sunday liturgical celebrations or other community activities (Nworie 2018: 78). Consequently, he was able to open several stations in Izzi, Ishielu, Mgbo, and Umezeoka in subsequent years (McGettrick 1988: 133). They took these stations as theirs and so sacrificed and looked after it.

#### **iv. Life: Sacred and Everlasting**

Igbo people love life and seek to preserve it from conception to natural death. Moreover, they believe that life does not end in earthly existence. They call their ancestors the "living-dead" because they consider them alive in the spirit world. Igbo people show their love for life in the giving of names associated with life (ndu) such as Nduka (life is greater), Ndukaihe (Life surpasses all things), Ndubisi (Life is primary), Ndukaku (Life is superior to wealth). They acknowledge God to be the source of life by names like as Chibundu (God is life), Chinwendu (God owns life), Chinenyendu (God gives life). They show their love for life through songs, through prayers, and in welcoming of visitors during the rite of giving and breaking of kola nuts (Uchem 2001: 60).

Given the above disposition about life, therefore, Igbo people accepted Christianity because it promised to give life everlasting. Msgr Theophilus Okere confirmed this Igbo disposition about life in his 1997 Odenigbo lecture. According to him,

the real gospel among gospels, that sound clearly in their ears and which caused their earliest acceptance and trooping en masse to the church of Christ are those few words called 'life everlasting' 'until life everlasting', 'and everlasting joy in the world to come' (Okere 1997: 71).

Okere's assessment that life everlasting was why Igbo people "trooped en masse" into Christianity still remains valid even till today.



Igbo people love everlasting life, but even while on earth they continually search for solutions to life's problems. This is at the root of the proliferations of healing ministries and independent churches in Igboland. Maboea calls these churches the "institute of healing"; the Catholic Church, the "institute of Grace" and the Protestant churches, the "institute of the Word" (Maboea 1994: 122). Africans cherish both spiritual and physical healing and search anywhere for healing in order to preserve life. Indeed, one of the foremost qualities of an ancestor is the openness to life and a natural death after reaching ripe old age (Lumbala 1998: 43). To die young and without children only qualifies one for burial in a bad bush or Ikirikpo (Echiegu 1998: 66).

In Igboland today, there is a positive cultural development that makes it possible for people who die young or without children to be given a befitting burial (Nworie 2018:166). There is an evolving Christian culture that permits the burial of every Christian either at home or within its immediate Surroundings. Such fundamental cultural change could not have been possible without Christianity.

Catholic missionaries preached about everlasting life in heaven but supported earthly life through the establishment of hospitals and dispensaries. The mission hospitals built that time still remains, even today, the backbone of health delivery in Igboland. New health facilities are still being built following the tradition of the early missionaries. It can be said without doubt that there has been continued development in the health sector thanks to the church missionaries.

Igbo people continue to recognize the role Christianity plays in promoting and prolonging life here and hereafter. During sickness, the Catholic missionaries cater for the spiritual and physical needs of the dying person. Families brought their children and loved ones to the hospitals run by early European missionaries for healing, and also made promises (often not kept) of leaving their children in the mission if they are healed (Obi 1985: 39). When medical help failed and the sick person was at the point of death, the people accepted baptism for the soul of the dying person. Jordan said that Shanahan hardly met any pagan parent who refused the baptism of a dying child. In fact, they frequently brought their children to receive baptism which Shanahan called the heavenly title (Jordan 1971: 71).

#### **v. The Sacred in Symbols**

Igbo people relate to natural and spiritual realities through representing them in material signs and symbols. For example, Igbo people use kolanut as a symbol of "life and

commensality”; Ofo, as a “symbol of justice” (Uzukwu 1983: 14); Ikenga, as a symbol of “achievement”(Ejizu 1991: 233). African symbolisms, according to Ekeke, help them to grasp spiritual realities through visible natural objects of human knowledge and experience (Ekeke 2012: 11-19). Thus, there are many symbols in Igbo traditional religion. According to Augustine Okwu, the images made from wood or mud merely represent but are not the actual supernatural presence in Igbo religious mind (Okwu 2010: 203). Igbo shrines have an abundance of “anthropomorphic idols” in the form of statues representing the spirit world (Arinze 2008: 211-212).

These objects of representations or religious icons can become a subject of disagreement between rival religious groups like Christianity and Igbo traditional religion. Worshippers see each other’s icon as either incomplete or meaningless, and according to Elizabeth Isichei, both were perplexed or repulsed by each other’s religious images (Isichei 1970: 213). While the missionaries treated Igbo religious symbols as wooden object devoid of any spiritual powers, Igbo people were puzzled as to what Christians were worshipping (in school halls devoid of images) as they kneel, stand, shut their eyes and open them during Christian worship.

Igbo people, according to Celestine Obi, use statues to decorate homes and to represent deities in their religion. That Christianity uses statues in their worship remains appealing to converts from Igbo traditional religion. The early missionaries benefited from that appeal in their work in Igboland (Obi 1985: 79). Missionaries who failed initially to tap into such appeal quickly reversed their missionary strategy in favour of statues in Igboland.

#### **vi. Sense of the Sacred extends to the New Religion**

The European missionaries sent to evangelize Igboland were insufficiently prepared for their mission. They neither knew Igbo language nor its cultures. Nevertheless, they met Igbo people to whom religion is *the value*. According to Chigere, values in Igboland always have a religious undertone because of the importance of religion in human life (Chigere 2000: 68). The position of religion in Igbo culture is further corroborated by Christopher Ejizu who calls it “the womb of the culture in the traditional Igbo background. It permeates most aspects of life, and infuses them with meaning and significance” (Ejizu 2010). Without religion, therefore, life for the Igbos would be meaningless and of no purpose.

The missionaries came to preach to Igbo people a new religion imbued with the European way of life and culture. Msgr Theophilus Okere speaking about the acceptance of Christianity and subsequent growth of the Catholic Church in the first Odenigbo Lecture in 1994 said that “Igbo people themselves after due consideration accepted that the God of our forefathers is the same God which the missionaries were speaking about. God is *Chineke* for the Igbos, Jahweh for the people of Israel, and God for the English people” (Okere 1997: 53). According to him, the missionaries rejected Igbo traditional worship but acknowledged that the God being spoken about everywhere in Igboland is the same God whose Gospel they brought to the people. God’s name, according to Okere, became the only meeting point between the missionaries’ gospel and the traditional religion of Igbo people.

Moreover, Igbo people were not completely closed to the idea of a new religion. Even those who were doubtful about adopting Christianity allowed their children to embrace it, and this is in keeping with the Igbo spirit of keeping up with changing times. Bishop Shanahan, the first bishop of Igboland, confirms the deep religious sentiment of the pagan people during the baptism of their children in the school:

All the heads of the village come with the children and their parents to the sacred ceremony. They assist with sentiments positively akin to piety, and once a child is publicly made a Christian, he is sacred in the eyes of the town’s people, and no one dare touch him (Jordan 1971: 91).

The Igbo sense of the sacred was easily extended to this unknown ritual of the Christian religion. Unlike the Christian missionaries, Igbo people believed that whatever is holy in one religion should be acknowledged as holy by another religion (Iroegbu 2011).

## **vii. Conversion of Elders and Authority Figures**

Igbo society is both an egalitarian as well as a hierarchically organized society. As an egalitarian society an individual can acquire or is conferred upon authority status (Green 1964: 186). The actions of those in positions of authority sometimes serve as an influence underpinning the actions of the rest of the community. The elders teach religion and morals and have the capacity to determine good or bad, acceptable or unacceptable conduct. When the missionaries came to Igboland they concentrated their efforts on the conversion of slaves and outcasts of Igbo society. The emphasis on these groups scandalized natives with freeborn ancestry (Obi 1985: 119). It was only after the conversion of King Idigo of Aguleri that the missionaries increased their chances of gaining influential people into Christianity. After his

conversion, King Idigo invited the missionaries to establish Christianity in his home town in 1890. Prior to that time, they had only the station at Onitsha (Obi 1985: 43). Indeed, the conversion of Joseph Idigo to Christianity in 1891 was a turning point in the missionaries' work. Nine years later, they evolved a regular strategy aimed at converting chiefs and influential people (Clarke 1974: 93). Thus, it became clear to all that Christianity is also for kings and freeborns.

Many other families embraced the Catholic faith because of the example of Idigo and his family (Obi 1985: 46-49). This new strategy yielded a big catch in the conversion of Samuel, the Obi of Onitsha. The conversion of influential people in the community eventually had a flow-on effect on the rest of the members of their family and the community at large. The conversion into Christianity of prominent Igbo sons, elders, chiefs paved the way for the entrenchment of Christianity in Igboland. Igbo people insist on not being separated from their kith and kins especially in matters of religion. An Igbo chief insists, to the bewilderment of the missionary, that "If I go to heaven and they all, my brother-chiefs will be down in this other place you speak of, Oh no! I would rather be with my own"(Jordan 1971: 31-32). In fact, Igbo people love being in the religion of their brothers and sisters.

## **5. Conclusion**

Missionaries engaged in preaching the gospel to any culture are to take seriously the relationship between the good news and the people's cultural values. This is most especially because values determine not only the acceptable way of behaving in a society but also have an enduring character since they continue to be handed on from generation to generation. In Africa in general and Igboland in particular, the above values such as sense of community, solidarity and sense of good human relation, sense of the sacredness of life, sense of the sacred and of religion, sense of respect for authority and elders continue to remain germane to the work of evangelization and societal development.

This essay has shown the indispensable place of cultural values in the successful missionary work among Igbo people. It has relied on testimonies of the missionaries especially Bishop Shanahan and some prominent Igbo people to show that these values as expressed in the people's day to day lives were responsible in most part for the growth of Catholic Christianity and societal development. It was the community's egalitarian spirit, for example, that made them to be competitive and also to have a strong sense of ownership of school and mission established in their communities. They funded and adequately looked after such schools.

Furthermore, through their pragmatic orientation to life, they sought for “what works” even if it was a new religion: Christianity. The Igbo love for travelling and learning made them seek modernity and learn a new culture, religion and way of life from the Europeans. They continued to maintain their sense of being visual which led them to cherish the Catholic liturgy especially the rich symbolism of its rituals. Indeed, Igbo people celebrated these rituals always conscious of being part of a community. They love life as lived in solidarity with each other in the community, and they strive to protect their life of solidarity both in this world and even in the spirit world. Thus, Igbo people were attracted to Catholic Christianity even more whenever elements of Igbo values come to the forefront, even if such value is as simple as a kiss of peace during the Mass.

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