

**A WELCOME ADDRESS PRESENTED FR. MARCELLINUS SA'AONDO, PRINCIPAL, ST. PETER'S COLLEGE, GARAKU ON THE OCCASION OF PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATION (PTA) GENERAL CONGRESS, HELD IN THE COLLEGE, 10:00 A.M, 27 TH MARCH, 2021.**

The Catholic Education Secretary,  
The Chief Inspector of Education,  
Garaku Area Office,  
The PTA Chairman, Barr. Orji Peter,  
PTA EXCO Members,  
The DPO, Garaku, Olorunshola Gbenga,  
The School Manager,  
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

I consider it a rare privilege and an opportunity to welcome you all to our 2021 General Meeting of PTA of St. Peter's College, Garaku. I would like to warmly welcome our guests, especially, the representative of the Chief Inspector of Education (CIE), Garaku and the DPO, Garaku; Olorunshola Gbenga. I would also like to affectionately, welcome all our dearest parents who have constantly extended their support in many ways especially in our struggles to make a name in the education industry.

PTA meetings are very delightful moments of stock taking, appreciations and a search for new ways to improve on the academic performances of our students and their moral upbringing in general. This forum is used to advise and make positive contributions that will help the Management in addressing and meeting the expectations of parents. I am extremely honoured to welcome all parents who are joining us for the first time. Thank you as you enrich our deliberations with your observations and advice. I welcome you in my humble words to this prestigious gathering. Our population is about 484 students, 33 teachers and 21 non teaching staff

There are three very important aspects of a school as an institution; the children, the teachers and the school environment. All these contribute greatly to the success of the school as an institution.

**Children** are the greatest blessing a family could ever boast of. They are a priceless treasure. Ps 127:3 says, children are a gift from the Lord. It considers it, a divine favour for anyone 'to see the sons of his sons'. The school exists for the education of the children and we are the vessel of that divine blessing and I consider your children, the greatest gift to the college. They are the reason for your daily struggles under the sun and in the rain. To have entrusted these children to us is the greatest treasure you have entrusted to us. They are the centre of every educational activity and the future of our country. Through our college programs, as through a clear window on a sunny day, students must come to see and know the richness and the joy of life lived in accordance with Christ's teaching, in response to his challenging demands of our times.

**Teachers** in *The Catholic School* are more than employees. They are educators and character molders. They are role models and mentors of the children. By their lives as much as by their instructions, 'they bear witness to Christ, the unique Teacher. In one way or other, they participate actively in the Church's life. It is only when teachers understand and accept the teachings of the Catholic Church and the moral demands of the Gospel that they can contribute to the achievement of the school's Catholic identity and apostolic goals." Catholic Education is holistic!! Catholic School in Community!! Teachers must teach our children Catholic and community values that are enduring. Given this background, teachers must take responsibilities seriously while we too must take teachers' welfare seriously. If teachers take responsibilities seriously and we take their welfare seriously, there should be no cases of failures, complaints, hence there is no such thing as 'Dull child', according to Ben Carson in a his book titled 'Thing Big.' Teachers' welfare must be our preoccupation.

**The Environment.** The school environment consists of things we see, like the structures to things we cannot see, like the school climate, school culture etc. This contributes greatly to the socio-physical, academic and emotional growth of a child. The kind of learning environment the school provides for the child is important!!! **According to Dorothy Law Nolte, CHILDREN LEARN WHAT THEY LIVE,**

- If a child lives with criticism, he learns to condemn.**
- If a child lives with hostility, he learns to fight.**
- If a child lives with ridicule, he learns to be shy.**
- If a child lives with shame, he learns to feel guilty.**

If a child lives with tolerance, he learns to be patient.  
If a child lives with encouragement, he learns confidence.  
If a child lives with praise, he learns to appreciate.  
If a child lives with fairness, he learns justice.  
If a child lives with security, he learns to have faith.  
If a child lives with approval, he learns to like himself.  
If a child lives with acceptance and friendship, he learns to find love in the world.

This environment is a Catholic environment! The Catholic Church sees the Catholic School as a privileged means of promoting the formation of the whole person. Catholic School forms part of the saving mission of the Church, especially for education in the faith. The philosophy of Catholic Education is accountable for the provision of quality education to young citizens within the context of Christian Gospel values as espoused by the Catholic tradition. This philosophy which is expressed in a growing number of Church documents and policy statements since the publication Declaration on Christian Education (*Gravissimum Educationis*) in 1965, guides the Catholic School in its functioning. These documents and policy statements have relentlessly emphasized that, ‘Catholic School is more than an educative institution; it is a key part of the Church, an essential element in the Church’s mission.’ The whole existence of a Catholic School, its operation, function, agenda, curriculum, activities both academic and otherwise, resonates with the message, values of Christ, who is the foundation of all Catholic educational enterprise. The ‘total-formation’ of the human person is also a key feature of Catholic schooling. This involves recognition that, human persons have different dimensions involving the physical, moral, intellectual, spiritual and the enhancement of a balanced development in all these separate dimension. Therefore, Catholic education has a specific mission of enhancing the total- formation of the human person (Vatican Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988; Vatican Letter on Catholic Education, 2006; Konstant, 1996; Grace, 2002).

**Developments:** Since our last Annual General Meeting in 2019, a number of projects have been completed, namely; administrative block, bakery, construction of an ultra modern multipurpose court, staff quarters and renovation/relocation of science laboratory, the new e- classroom for Information Technology, more TVs and computers, introduction of online classes, introduction of indoor games as part of extracurricular activities and the extension of building fence project, ***appointment of new Heads of Departments to help coordinate teaching and learning.*** We must thank you for making all of these developments possible.

**Challenges:** We could not hold our Annual General Meeting in 2020 due to the outbreak of COVID-19 which affected the entire academic session of 2019/2020 and many of our PTA activities. To continue where we stopped has been a problem. Our first major challenge is the rising cost of goods and services, especially, food stuff which calls for school fees adjustment to accommodate feeding and salaries. Time has come for us to adjust our fees to further improve our students’ feeding and introduce the 4<sup>th</sup> meal.

The rising wave of insecurity and abduction of school children is another source of worry. While work on the fencing has been temporarily stopped due to high cost of cement, we have keyed into the Federal Government security architecture for vulnerable schools in which, four (4) armed policemen will be stationed in the college. We are to provide accommodation, feeding and logistics. Correspondences on this matter will be presented in this meeting.

**Important information:** Refer the newsletter on IMPORTANT NOTICES.

**25<sup>TH</sup> PRIESTLY ANNIVERSARY:** Come 6th June, 2021, Our college Principal, Revd. Fr. Sa'aondo Marcellinus will be celebrating the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his priestly ordination. The college community will be organising a celebration in recognition of his (17) years of meritorious service and contribution to the growth of the college, the Church and humanity. We wish to solicit for messages of felicitations as follows: Cover pages N50,000, full page N10, 000, half page N5000. Let us join our indefatigable Principal in thanking God for His blessing and faithfulness!

Thank you for your time and sacrifice. Wishing you all, a fruitful deliberation! May God bless you!