

THE OLD CATHOLICS:
NOW THAT I KNOW!

By Father Peter Ulofu

A.M.D.G

FOREWORD

It is an honour to write this foreword for Peter Ulofu's book.

There are three strands to my impression of his work: first that he gives the account of going to a 'catholic' event and was surprised at the evangelical tone of the speeches. This is dear to my heart: why should 'catholic' mean conservative, reserved or quiet? No doubt some will say that such worship is 'proper' and 'dignified', but we have the greatest joy in what Jesus has done for us, so we should be shouting the name of Jesus from the hilltops...the Name above all Names. Peter's understanding of what God is doing has been shaped by this event, as, I suspect was everyone else who was there...

Then there are his comparisons of tenets or beliefs – the theology behind and the subtleties of the 'differences' between Roman Catholics and Old Catholics. In reality, there is so much more that unites than divides, and you will see this as Peter takes you through those characteristics that are distinct to Old Catholics. You will also find how they came about, and how when the Roman Church altered some principles, the reasons why the Old Catholics preserved them. Do not think that the Old Catholic way is like a museum: preserving the past just because it is the past. Old Catholicism is very much about today, which is why we say that we are: ancient in faith, modern in vision.

And to the third strand: Old Catholicism is alive and facing all the struggles and difficulties that the very first (Acts 2) church faced. Peter explains how the bishop was criticised and ridiculed by other churches and how the intent of the (Old Catholic) church was questioned. This, however, has happened to every church at certain points throughout history; it speaks of authenticity, for a church not questioned or criticised at some point is no church at all. This is most important as it means that the most significant part of the Old Catholic history is yet to happen. We are Old Catholics, but we are also catholics of the future. Peter captures this in this work, although as always: there is much more yet for you to discover...

I praise God for this work, and for those who read it, and for it's author, Peter Ulofu.

+ *Mar Trimlett*



Bishop Adrian S Glover, OCR, OSJ
Patriarch of the Old Catholic Apostolic Church – Worldwide.
AD2016, this day of St Edmund Rich, the 20th November.

INTRODUCTION

I was born a credo Roman Catholic. As a believing Roman Catholic, I was schooled to recognize only two Christian denominations: Roman Catholic, and Others. This wired me to eat, think and breathe Roman Catholicism. I defended and was ready to fight the fight of religion on everything Roman Catholic. My addiction was to such an extent that any attack on this Church instinctively charged me to wear my apologetic gloves. Among several of this feat is the fondly memorable episode which took place at a professional body's session. This was precisely at the Nigerian Bar Association Nigerian Bar Benin Branch Meeting. At this meeting, a Colleague, who is a Roman Catholic acquaintant of mine, was asked to lead the opening prayer. My joy was full at the sight of him approaching the podium. This was for the fact that I was not only going to be save of the wild ranting and associated discordance utterances in the name of prayer, but also the unemployment of the most less economic invocation, *in Jesus name.....amen.*(as I perceived then). To my dismay it was the direct opposite. My expectation that my colleague will start the opening prayer with the application of the Trinitarian sign of the cross was destroyed and dashed. He immediately began to call for a repeated chorus of *amen* after each loud sounding *in Jesus name*. Rather than the calm serenity expected, there were thunderous echoes of voices and sounds, in the name of praying. My emotions went high and vexed. As soon as the closure of the meeting was signal, I charged into the crowd searching for the Roman Catholic colleague of mine as though a father wanting to descend on his recalcitrant child. All through the crowd my colleague could not be found. I was soaked in anxiety and sacked with disappointment.

Now, the above orientation and disposition in the practice of my faith and attitude towards others wallows in the fond memory called *now that I know*. What is responsible for the now that I know conviction? What is the conviction in the now that I know? What Lessons are there to learn? The answers to the trio questions have been the *raison d'être* for this work.

BACKGROUND

Many, perhaps, may wonder the sort of sojourn that has caused the change from being a Credo Roman Catholic to a practicing Old Catholic. Beginning with the first question, my first response is simply this: the voices of my early childhood teachers in the faith are solely responsible. Everything I knew within this stage was taught faith rather than experienced faith. Like the proverbial text says *Train children in the right way, and when old, they will not stray* (NRSV Proverb 22:16). Although, in my case it may seem a departure from the faith by reason of adopting the Old Catholic path in place of the Roman Practice of the Catholic faith. Indeed the path of the Old Catholics is the *path of return* for not just Roman Catholics but all. This is because the path of the Old Catholics' very essence of evolvment is the pride of consistency with *that faith which*

has been believed everywhere [universally], always, and by all. (See Art. 1, Utrecht Declaration 1889)

With respect to the second question, the chief factor is the awakened realization and experience that my earlier practiced Catholicism was a masqueraded reality. Imagine a bucket filled with all sort of good and bad substance, causing disgusting odour and health hazard. And you were given the mandate to do something about the harm the bucket's content poses. With option A, you decided to take the option of getting a large wrapper and cover the bucket and it's contain in the belief that the unpleasant smell and its hazardous effects will be remedy. While with option B, you set at keeping the good and emptying the bad content from the bucket. The A option is Catholicism (outside Rome) wherever it exists *Roman clothed Catholicism*. The B option is the path of the Old Catholics. Catholicism finding and giving the expression of the locality it is situated. The key factor not the locality but that expression of the locality finding Catholicism. Putting the Horse before the Cart, The Horse being Catholicism while the local expression the Cart. This is my new pathway.

Following, the Old Catholics pathway, these lessons have been the testaments. The checkmate of the masqueraded Catholicism is come. The reign of the practice of Christianity that celebrates the outward form of religion and denies the power therein. (2Tm 3:5). The unveiling of the intended identity of the Catholic Church that is One, Holy and Apostolic is realized. The recognition and reversal of the perception that Catholicism to be authentic should be at the mercy of any given culture or region. Or worst still that Roman Catholicism is the Catholicism of the One, Holy and Apostolic Church. Hence, to be Catholic implies being Roman.

CATHOLICISM

Christ is the reference point for all Christian groups; in accordance with his declaration in Scripture:

I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. (John 14: 6. New Revised Standard Version / NSRV)

The Bible, aside the life and teachings of Christ is subject to multiple interpretations and serves as a manual for Christianity. Though the Catholic Church is one among several Christian groups, there is distinctiveness to her. The substance of the Catholic Church's distinctness has proven difficult to pin down through different ages and attempts. Some have attributed it to her apostolic succession but other Christian groupings (Orthodox, Episcopalians, some Lutherans and some Methodists) also either have it or claim to.

What then makes a church Catholic? This book attempts to answer this question, and to locate the growing number of independent Catholics within the Church's historical narrative. Another instructive fact about the identity 'Catholic' is that neither the Bible nor the person of Christ demonstrates a direct connection. What appears the closest pointer in the Bible is Jesus Christ's address reported in the gospel of John:

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit
(Matthew 28: 19. NRSV)

This text indicates the catholic *dimension* of Jesus' mission as being universal oneness through the Church. Supportive of Jesus' farewell instruction context above is the text of the gospel of John. It reads:

I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be one in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. (John 17: 20-21. NRSV)

In which the necessity of the universal oneness is desired.

Today, the unquestioned error is the fact that the context of what is known is a colonized rendering of the word Catholic. Within the Roman Catholicism, an example of a context is Jesus interaction with St Peter that is branded to convey the entire occasion.

And Jesus answered and said unto him, blessed art thou; Simon Barjona for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven (Mathew 16: 13-20. NSRV).

For Roman Catholics, this text's reference to Peter as the rock on which Christ's Church shall be built, and the one into whose hands were placed keys to the Kingdom of

Heaven, makes them the epitome of Catholicism and the basis for their unique claim of Catholicism. It is also on the basis of this text that the Roman Catholic Church justifies her doctrine of Petrine Supremacy; which is commonly but erroneously defined by the idea that the Pope is the Supreme Head of the Church because he is a direct successor of St Peter and, as such, has absolute authority over the Catholic Church. This is a shame, as it has been established by Biblical scholars that the “rock” in Mathew 16 references Peter’s confession of faith in the divinity of Christ; not the Apostle himself. The clarification is in consonance with the affirmations that Christ is “the head of the Church, the body of which he is Saviour’ (Ephesians 5:23 NRSV), and ‘the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything’ (Colossians 1:18 NSRV). In addition, while the phrase ‘I will give unto thee’ ...was addressed to Peter alone, the powers which follow were given to all the apostles. The words ‘whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven’ were spoken to all the apostles as further reaffirmed in the text of John 20:23. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.. The powers given to all the apostles through the laying on of hands at the consecration and ordination of Minister are inherited by the successors of the Apostles by what is commonly refer to a valid Apostolic Succession – a key tenet of Catholicism which will be detailed in later chapters. Full discussions of this topic can be found in both ancient and modern texts (c.f. Theophylactus of Ochrida c.1090 / Crosby 2012). Modern theological and historical scholarships make the presentation of Petrine Supremacy as scriptural anachronous. Jesus did not make Peter the first Pope because, in the words of the Lutheran-Roman Catholic Dialogue, this...

...derives from a later model of the papacy which it projects
back into the New Testament. (USCCB 1973)

The point to underscore is that the Bible does not explicitly affirm a *Catholic identity*. The identity “Catholic” signals both the representation of the great wounds of division with Christian groups and a toga of identity for the highest number of Christians in the world. This identity has travelled through murky water of history and has, on this sojourn, encountered questions such as: Who are Catholics? Why Old Catholics? Who are Old Catholics? Are there Old Catholics?

CATHOLIC IDENTITY

Historically, what might be called the ‘Catholic identity’ developed from a synthesis of recorded actions of the early church when the Apostles were still alive, the decisions and consequences of the Council of Nicaea and the immediate post-apostolic era (451-1054).

In the time after the death of Jesus, the religion of the apostles was called “the Way” (Acts 9:2; 11:26), and its adherents, “people of the Way”. ‘Church’ was used to identify groups who followed ‘the Way’ by reference to their place of worship; thus such names as, ‘Church of Corinth’, ‘Church of Ephesus’, ‘Church of Thessalonica’. And based on the pattern of their lifestyle these same people of the way began to be called ‘Christians’.

...and it was in Antioch that the disciples were first called
“Christians.” (Acts 11:26 NSRV)

Early Christian writers such as Tertullian, Justin Martyr, and Irenaeus used the word “catholic” -synonym for ‘general’- when referencing the entire church, as against any localised bit of it (Thurston, 1908). The earliest recorded use of the term ‘catholic church’ is in the letter of Ignatius of Antioch to the Smyrnaeans, written at about 110 A.D. (Knight, 2009). There is some rather arcane scholarly disagreement over how Ignatius meant the term to be precisely understood. It is clear from the context however, that Ignatius was keen to distinguish the Catholic Church which had the genuine right to admit new members through baptism, and other groupings which did not. We know from the second epistle of Paul to Corinthians and Romans 16 that there were false teachers seeking to infiltrate the early Church.

The large number of warnings in the Gospels about “false” prophets is an indication that at the time these works were written in the late first or early second century; there were many itinerant apostles and teachers visiting Jewish-Christian communities.
(Pickard 2013: 195)

Later adoption of the term ‘Catholic Church’ almost certainly evolved from Ignatius’ use as the people who bore the truth as taught by the twelve apostles, and the meaning of

the word itself –universal- which suggested that it was widespread. This is most fitting because Christ ordained that the Church be for everyone and not some select few

Additional informational on the use of the term ‘Catholic’ could be found in the account of the martyrdom of St Polycarp, which occurred at around 155 A.D. In his final prayers he noted thus

‘...all who had met with him at any time, both small and great, both those with and those without renown, and the whole Catholic church throughout the world, (Whitehead 1996).

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It is interesting to note that, as with modern day concerns with church identity, the word ‘Catholic’ was used for the purpose of distinguishing the true Church from rival bodies. Thus in this earliest stage the word ‘catholic’ meant ‘universal’, carrying with it the identity ‘Catholic’ - referring to the Church that was already considered universal (widespread) and carried the truth as taught by the Twelve Apostles in order to distinguish it from whatever sects, schisms or splinter groups that had grown-up here and there. This is most fitting because Christ ordained that the Church be for everyone and not some select few.

St. Polycarp was martyred around 155, and the account of his sufferings dates back to that time. The narrator informs us that in his final prayers before giving up his life for Christ, St. Polycarp "remembered all who had met with him at any time, both small and great, both those with and those without renown, and the whole Catholic Church throughout the world." We know that St. Polycarp, at the time of his death in 155, had been a Christian for 86 years. He could not, therefore, have been born much later than 69 or 70. Yet it appears to have been a normal part of the vocabulary of a man of this era to be able to speak of "the whole Catholic Church throughout the world. (Ibid.)

After its use by Ignatius, ‘Catholic’ became a validation of the church and, by the end of the 2nd century A.D. (or, perhaps, early in the 3rd), Clement of Alexandria declared:

...it is my opinion that the true Church, that which is really ancient, is one, and that in it those who according to God's purpose are just, are enrolled. For from the very reason that God is one, and the Lord one, that which is in the highest degree honourable is lauded in consequence of its singleness, being an imitation of the one first principle. In the nature of the One, then, is associated in a joint heritage the one Church...Therefore in substance and idea, in origin, in pre-eminence, we say that the ancient and Catholic Church is alone, collecting as it does into the unity of the one faith—which results from the peculiar Testaments, or rather the one Testament in different times by the will of the one God, through one Lord— those already ordained, whom God predestined, knowing before the foundation of the world that they would be righteous.(The Stromata Book VII Ch.17)

A century later, St Vincent of Lerins' depicts a *true* Catholic, buttressing salient hallmarks of "Catholic":

he is the true and genuine Catholic who loves the truth of God, who loves the Church, who loves the Body of Christ, who esteems divine religion and the Catholic Faith above everything, above the authority, above the regard, above the genius, above the eloquence, above the philosophy, of every man whatsoever; who set light by all of these, and continuing steadfast and established in the faith, resolves that he will believe that, and that only, which he is sure the Catholic Church has held universally and from ancient time; but that whatsoever new and unheard-of doctrine he shall find to have been furtively introduced by some one or another, besides that of all, or contrary to that of all the saints....
(Chapter XX, No 48 "Notes on a True Catholic")

The catching words being the association of Catholic to *universal* and *all* as opposed to an individual or some one matter. And then, the qualification that follows namely, whatever is recognized as belonging to all or universal carrying the sentiment of the ancient time.

At the Council of Nicea (325) the early Church Fathers formally accepted the word ‘Catholic’ as the name of the true Church of Christ. In same Council, belief in the ‘one holy Catholic and Apostolic Church’ became part of the Catholic declaration of faith (the Creed), and would remain so till today. Apostolicity in the Nicene Creed has two umbrellas, premised on being handed down from the Apostles through sacred tradition of teachings:

- (a) The existence of a valid ordained ministry that can trace its origin to a bishop, who can trace his to one of the Apostles. It is important to note here that **any** one of the early apostles can be referenced as the originating link of the Bishop.
- (b) An official sacramental authority been passed down through a succession of bishops. This is basically what is meant by ‘correct form’ in ordination.

Today, the above have been misunderstood to connote that ‘Catholic’ refers solely to the Roman Catholic Church. In *Dominus Iesus* -a declaration issued by the Roman Catholic Church’s Magisterium in 2002- the Roman Catholic Church recognizes other denominations, sects/schisms of the Catholic Church as valid churches, but reserves the identity “Catholic” solely for those in communion with the Bishop of Rome.

There exists a single church of Christ which subsists in the Catholic Church, governed by the successor of Peter and the Bishops in communion with him by the closest bonds, that is, by apostolic succession and a valid Eucharist, are true particular Churches. Therefore, the Church of Christ is present and operative also in these Churches, even though they lack full communion with the (Roman) Catholic Church, since they do not accept the (Roman) Catholic doctrine of the Primacy, which, according to the will of God, the Bishop of Rome objectively has and exercises over the entire Church
(John-Paul II 2000: IV: 17)

According to the Roman Catholic Church therefore, ‘Catholic identity’ consists in being in Communion with the Pope and the Roman Catholic Church; in her visible structure as it appears on this earth.

For our purpose, “catholic” will mean those with faith in God through Jesus and sacramental validity through the Apostolic Succession - i.e. an unbroken line of bishops

tracing descent through the laying on of hands (correct form) from the Apostles themselves with intent to pass on the succession (another aspect of correct form). It therefore does not reserve “Catholic” for the Roman Catholic Church, but extends it to all Christian groups with valid Apostolic Succession. On this truth, to identify the Catholic Church will comprise five sister congregations: Roman Catholic, Old Catholic, Anglican Catholic/Episcopalian, Eastern Catholic (or Eastern Orthodox) and Oriental (Coptic, Syrian, Nestorian).

WHY OLD CATHOLICA

The hierarchy of the Church in the immediate post-apostolic era was headed by five principal cities of Christianity, each overseen by a Patriarch (equivalent of Bishop). These cities were Jerusalem (where the Apostle James was the first Patriarch), Antioch (founded by St Peter), Alexandria (which had the largest library in the world at the time, and was founded by Mark the Evangelist), Rome (capital of the Roman empire, and also founded by St Peter) and Constantinople (capital of the Byzantine Empire and founded by the Apostle Andrew). All five were definitively recognized as constituting the Catholic Church, without modern distinctions which have arisen due to later difference and challenges. As in early apostolic times, the structure of governance was generally as typified in the first Council of Jerusalem - the five patriarchs were autonomous in their exercise of leadership. Whenever they needed to make doctrinal and moral decisions that would be binding on Bishops of all five principal cities' churches however, they would meet in Council (Concilium) and, when they agreed, issue a decree.

What has become of these five principal Christian cities today? How is it that there are strands of churches or different groups which lay claim to being descended from the traditional church of the apostolic era?-

Notably, the split between Rome and the other four Patriarchates, generally known as the great east-west schism of 1054, was the culmination of a long period of tension and disagreement. The tensions went as far back as the 9th Century at the least, and concerned both theological and political issues. Matters came to a head when Norman Knights (of the same stock as those who later conquered England in 1066) took control of Southern Italy which had previously been under the rule of the Byzantine Empire. In reality, what is called the Norman invasion of southern Italy, was not so much an invasion as a slow accumulation of mercenary knights taking over territories and fiefdoms for themselves. The Normans were what we would now call Western

Christians, and they set about replacing Eastern bishops loyal to the Patriarch of Constantinople with their own nominees. They also banned Eastern practices in the liturgy; replacing them with Romanised services. The Eastern Patriarchs saw this as yet one more example of the increasing autocracy of the Papacy which had long been claiming pre-eminence over the other patriarchates. Ironically, the Pope did not welcome the Norman take-over of Southern Italy and took arms against the Knights (the Pope at the time being a head of a real state with a real army. Unfortunately for the Pope, he given his alliance with the Norman ended of making himself a virtual prisoner of the Normans, and had to follow their dictate in church matters. Eventually the Normans invaded Rome, and installed their own Pope.

When the Patriarch of Constantinople found out that the Normans were forbidding Eastern-style worship and customs in Southern Italy he retaliated by closing the Latin churches in Constantinople and sponsoring written attacks on Western-style worship and customs. These prompted the Pope to send an official representative (legate) to Constantinople to try and solve the dispute. Though the Pope died either while the legate was on route or shortly after his arrival in Constantinople, the legate executed his mission. The patriarch however ignored the papal legate, the consequence was a stamp of the bull of excommunicating the Patriarch. The Patriarch responded in kind by excommunicating the Pope in return. At that time, it was expected that there would be a reconciliation of Patriarchates; but it never happened. The mutual excommunications were only revoked in 1965! It should be noted that though mutual excommunications were not novelty, what made this one historical was that it resulted in permanent schisms. To this day these Schisms have remained intact.

The patriarchates of Jerusalem, Alexandria, Antioch and Constantinople became the Orthodox Churches we know today, and the Roman patriarchate continued its expansion to become the Roman Catholic Church. Both traditions are therefore validly Catholic: a fact accepted by both Churches, though they do not have inter-communion

Another division of the Roman Catholic Church (though of little significance to our exploration of the Old Catholic tradition) is the 'Protestants', who were expelled in 1517 A.D. Among others, these groups include what became the Lutheran, Baptist, and Presbyterian Churches. Key among those excommunicated was Martin Luther, whose opposition to Church abuses such as the sale of Indulgences was responded to with Roman autocracy. Perhaps the history of Western Christianity would have been

different if the ancient, Eastern tradition of conciliatory councils for solving differences had been maintained.

The schism most significant to our exploration of the history of Old Catholicism is that between the Dutch Catholic Church and Rome. The schism culminated in the formal removal of Pieter Codde -Archbishop of Utrecht- in 1702 on grounds that he did not condemn Jansenism. Jansenism was a complex movement based more on a certain mentality and spirituality than on specific doctrines, but it was perceived by Rome to be a heresy, hence condemned. It is unknown if Archbishop Codde was himself a Jansenist, but many of his priests were, and he refused to condemn them. As a result, Rome ordered his removal from office. The Dutch Church refused the order (on the grounds, amongst other things, of their historical right to appoint their own Archbishop) and Codde remained leader of the Dutch Catholic Church until his death in 1710. In accordance with tradition, Dutch clergy elected a successor to Codde -Cornelius van Steenhoven- but Rome refused to ratify the appointment. The apostolic succession of Utrecht bishops was assured by the consecration of Steenhoven and three other bishops by Dominique-Marie Varlet, a French Bishop who in 1719, stopped briefly in the Netherlands to become coadjutor to the Bishop of Babylon. The story is excellently narrated by the historian Tighe (1999):

The Catholic clergy there persuaded him to confirm large numbers of people who, having been without a bishop for nearly twenty years, had been unable to receive that sacrament. Arriving in Persia he found himself bishop of Babylon, as his predecessor had died two year earlier, but a few months later he received a papal brief suspending him as bishop because he had confirmed "Jansenist schismatics." He was summoned to Rome to answer charges of Jansenism but went to the Netherlands instead. In 1724 Varlet agreed to consecrate the archbishop-elect of Utrecht, Cornelius van Steenoven, despite Rome's refusal to confirm the election. In response, Rome suspended them both from their episcopates. When Steenoven died the following year and the chapter chose C. J. B. Wuytiers as his successor, Varlet consecrated him - and Rome excommunicated them both. Similar scenario unfolded in 1739, 1739 and 1758. The Old Catholic

episcopate today derives its succession from these consecrations.

The independent Dutch Catholics might have remained a small local movement had it not been for the dogma of Papal Infallibility as it was formulated by the 1st Vatican Council of 1869-70. Traditionally, papal infallibility had been believed to reside in the Bishops gathered together in a general council, not in a single individual or select group of Bishops. Catholics (including bishops and clergy) who found the new formulation unacceptable joined the independent Catholics of Utrecht, and became the Old Catholic Church as defined in the 1889 Union of Utrecht (Heykamp et al, 1889).

There was also a key difference between Rome and the Old Catholic Church on belief in the 'Immaculate Conception' of Mary, the mother of Jesus. With Pope Sixtus, before the formal declaration (1854) of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception it was acceptable for Catholics to either believe or not on it. He however formalised the date on which the feast had long been celebrated. Until 1854 when Pope Pius IX declared Mary's Immaculate Conception dogma in the encyclica *Ineffabilis Deus*, the belief had only been a widespread one dating back to the early church. Additionally, in 1870 Pope Pius IX declared belief that the Blessed Virgin Mary had been born free from original sin and miraculously kept free from sin for the purpose of being a holy vessel for the conception of Jesus Christ.

Most early Church Fathers agreed that Mary was sin-free at the time of the Nativity. They disagreed, however, as to whether Mary was made sinless at her own conception, her birth, or at the Annunciation when she said "Yes" to God's call. Prominent medieval theologians (St. Bonaventure and St. Thomas Aquinas; for example) denied the Immaculate Conception, but accepted Mary's freedom from sin. In 1870, Pope Pius IX, using the newly formulated doctrine of Papal Infallibility, declared Mary's Immaculate Conception dogma in the encyclical *Ineffabilis Deus* (Pius IX 1854). It was probably the use of Papal Infallibility to impose a dogma when hereto there had been acceptable differing opinions, rather than the doctrine itself, that caused offence. This is particularly so, because the Old Catholics, Orthodox Churches and others do not accept the Immaculate Conception. Specifically, with the Orthodox Churches, Part of the problem is that their tradition does not have the same understanding of original sin as the Roman Catholic Church.

Orthodox theologian John Myendorff, in *Byzantine Theology*, has suggested the East would likely accept the Catholic dogma of the Immaculate Conception if they had a Western understanding of Original Sin. The East and West nonetheless seem to be getting at the same "mystery": Mary's sinlessness and holiness in her role as theotokos. (Bennett 2014)

In declaring the doctrine of Papal Infallibility, the Bishop of Rome intended to fortify the church against the growing trend of conflicting opinions within the church. Ironically it divided the church. Those who broke away as Old Catholics can properly be regarded as Catholics because they are of the same apostolic succession as Roman Catholics. Old Catholics tend to perceive of this historical event as the Roman Catholics breaking away from their own history and tradition.

WHO ARE THE OLD CATHOLICS?

To understand the phrase "Old Catholics" necessitates a focus on events surrounding the 1870 Vatican 1 Council, which culminated in the 1889 Union of Utrecht. However, to identify the group called "Old Catholics" one must ask: who were Old Catholics before, during, and after the Union of Utrecht?

Before the Union of Utrecht

It will appear a contradiction to speak about Old Catholics before the Union of Utrecht. It is however not because, though the phrase did not exist before then, the people who came to bear the identity did. Historically, the Archbishop of Utrecht independently elected bishops without the approval of the Pope; an affirmation of the position's Catholicity. Vatican 1 Council adjusted the doctrine of Papal Infallibility to repose the power to declare and impose dogmas on the entire Church in the Pope; power traditionally resident only in a general council of Bishops. This doctrinal shift was unacceptable to the Church of Holland, especially when the Pope exercised it to impose the dogma of Immaculate Conception; an issue on which differing beliefs had formerly been acceptable. The Church of Holland chose to abide by the old ways, split from the Roman Catholic Church, and thereafter joined with the Church of Utrecht to together become known as "Old Catholics".

The implication of these for Old Catholics is that they, by reason of their privilege of independent election through the seat of the Archbishop of Utrecht, are valid Catholics.

Consequently, their sacramental life is recognised as valid, based on Apostolic Succession shared by all Catholics.

At the Union of Utrecht

Before Pope Pius IX's 1870 declaration of the dogma of Immaculate Conception, he had declared belief in 1854 that Mary was conceived without sin. As at 1854, people held different positions on the belief of Mary's sinlessness; as they had the right to. Sixteen years later, in a bid to unite the Church, the Pope at Vatican 1 Council with the Bishops of the West reformulated the doctrine of papal infallibility. This was despite that the Council was composed only of Bishops close to the Pope and it was convoked in Rome, hence, hardly any Bishop of the Eastern Churches was in attendance. The reformulated dogma stated that the Pope, regardless of how informed he is, cannot make statements that are wrong in matters of faith and morals. Put into context therefore, the belief that Mary was conceived without original sin became gospel truth.

Following these developments, some Bishops began to question certain dogmas, and eventually considered them radically intolerable. This was because they found neither tradition handed down by the apostles nor the scriptures to back them. In 1889 a group of faithful Catholics (including Bishops) in Holland who could not accept the dogma of Immaculate Conception formed a union; the Union of Utrecht. It is to this group that the term "Old Catholic" became a referent. This group, unlike Martin Luther's, comprised of Bishops with apostolic succession; hence cannot be called Protestants, nor their catholicity invalidated. Also, while Rome broke away from tradition, Old Catholics insisted on upholding the tradition of ecumenical councils. In effect, Rome introduced a definition of Catholicism underscored by other Catholics being answerable or subservient to the Bishop of Rome.

Old Catholics were distinguished from the Roman Catholic Church along geographic and theological lines. While the former is the 1870 hierarchy of the Church of Holland and a considerable number of Catholics in Germany, Austria and Switzerland; the latter is adherence to beliefs and practices of apostolic era Catholicism.

After the Union of Utrecht

Three facts must be acknowledged for proper identification of Old Catholics after the Union of Utrecht: the right of the Archbishop of Utrecht to independent consecration of Bishops, the issue of Apostolic Succession, and the existence of the Churches of the West and the East. What do these historical facts which have greatly shaped the changing identity of Old Catholics today mean? How have they been instrumental to the establishment of the Old Catholic group since the Union of Utrecht?

The sacramental life of Old Catholics was validated by their possession of Bishops with apostolic succession, and an Archbishop with the authority to consecrate bishops without Rome's permission. The Union of Utrecht and their separation from Rome neither invalidated involved Bishop's link of consecration traceable to the apostles, nor the Archbishop's duty of consecration. Another subtle factor is the background realities that characterized the evolution of the West and East churches. As a historical event, it established a new bond of relation. Primarily, Old Catholics regards the Bishop of Rome as first among equal; he is respected in his position of honour, without any claim to universal control or authority of the Church

The groups that, going by the above, have since the Union of Utrecht come to be identified as Old Catholics are almost inexhaustible. Plummer and Mabry (2005) in identifying the independent Catholic paint this his reality within independent catholic of which old Catholics are a part.

The most visible Catholic churches of the non-Roman variety are the many Eastern Orthodox churches, which are largely national in origin. The Russian Orthodox, the Byzantine Catholic, the Armenian Orthodox, the Greek Orthodox, Syrian Orthodox, and many others-all are Catholics, and all are completely independent of Rome....There are non-Roman Catholics in the West as well. The world-wide Old Catholic Communion....Similarly, the Anglican Communion of churches extends to nearly every country on earth. They have the unusual distinction of being both Protestant and completely Catholic.

Old Catholics have, since the Union of Utrecht, maintained the traditional apostolic era organisational model of independent Churches. Hence memberships of the Old Catholics include the following: Reformed Old Catholics of Scotland, Liberal Catholics Church, and American Catholic Church of the United State, The African Catholic Apostolic Church, and Polish National Church; among others. Characteristically each Church is autocephalous; has its own leadership and valid sacraments, without reference to a central government as is Rome in the Roman Church.

THE OLD CATHOLIC CHURCH

A correct answer to the question: "what is the Old Catholic Church?" would state that it is a particular kind of Catholicism. It is the Latin West Church which evolved by rebelling against Rome's exercise of absolute authority over the Catholic Church through

the Papacy. It is distinct neither from Eastern/Orthodox Catholicism which was never neither Western nor subject to the Papacy. It is also different from Anglican Catholicism which, although had been in the Western Church, was never subject to the Papacy.

Clearly, the Old Catholic Church is not Roman, Orthodox or Anglican; even though each of these groups is also Catholic. What then hallmarks the Old Catholic Church as a distinct Catholic group? Answers to this question unravel the identity of the Old Catholic Church, and are subject of the succeeding pages.

The Declaration of the Union of Utrecht

One of the greatest claims to Catholicism for Old Catholics is the 1889 declaration of the Union of Utrecht. The declaration was to identify and reaffirm those who upheld the original teachings of Jesus Christ and the Apostles, and the traditions of the early Church. These traditions and teachings are summarily expressed by St Vincent of Lerins thus:

In the Catholic Church itself, all possible care must be taken, that **we hold that faith which has been believed everywhere, always, by all.** For that is truly and in the strictest sense 'catholic,' which, as the name itself and the reason of the thing declare, comprehends all universally. This rule we shall observe if we follow universality, antiquity, consent. We shall follow universality if we confess that one faith to be true, which the whole church throughout the world confesses; antiquity, if we in no wise depart from those interpretations which it is manifest were notoriously held by our holy ancestors and fathers; consent, in like manner, if in antiquity itself we adhere to the consentient definitions and determinations of all, or at the least of almost all priests and doctors (Christian Classics Ethereal Library)

Old Catholics regard themselves as “Original Catholics”, due to the Roman Catholic departure from the Church’s traditions of equality of bishops (established by the apostles) and reposition of globally binding decision-making powers in the ecumenical council. This much is stated in the eight point declaration of the Bishops assembled at Utrecht:

1. We adhere faithfully to the Rule of Faith laid down by St. Vincent of Lerins in these terms: "Id teneamus, quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus creditum est; hoc est etenim vere proprieque catholicum." (*Hold fast that faith which has been believed everywhere [universally], always, and by all.*) For this reason we persevere in professing the faith of the primitive Church, as formulated in the ecumenical synods and

specified precisely by the unanimously accepted decisions of the Ecumenical Councils held in the undivided Church of the first thousand years.

2. We therefore reject the decrees of the so-called Council of the Vatican, which were promulgated July 18th, 1870, concerning the infallibility and the universal Episcopate of the Bishop of Rome, decrees which are in contradiction with the faith of the ancient Church, and which destroy its ancient canonical constitution by attributing to the Pope the plenitude of ecclesiastical powers over all Dioceses and over all the faithful. By denial of his primatial Church we do not wish to deny the historic primacy which several Ecumenical Councils and the Fathers of the ancient Church have attributed to the Bishop of Rome by recognizing him as the *Primus inter pares* (*first among equals*).

3. We also reject the dogma of the Immaculate Conception promulgated by Pius IX in 1854 in defiance of the Holy Scriptures and in contradiction to the tradition of the first centuries.

4. As for other Encyclicals published by the Bishops of Rome in recent times - for example, the Bulls *Unigenitus* and *Auctorem Fidei*, and the *Syllabus* of 1864 - we reject them on all such points as are in contradiction with the doctrine of the primitive Church, and we do not recognize them as binding on the consciences of the faithful. We also renew the ancient protests of the Catholic Church of Holland against the errors of the Roman Curia, and against its attacks upon the rights of national Churches.

5. We refuse to accept the decrees of the Council of Trent in matters of discipline, and as for the dogmatic decisions of that Council we accept them only so far as they are in harmony with the teaching of the primitive Church.

6. Considering that the Holy Eucharist has always been the true central point of Catholic worship, we consider it our duty to declare that we maintain with perfect fidelity the ancient Catholic doctrine concerning the Sacrament of the Altar, by believing that we receive the Body and the Blood of our Saviour Jesus Christ under the species of bread and wine. The Eucharistic celebration in the Church is neither a continual repetition nor a renewal of the expiatory sacrifice which Jesus offered once for all upon the Cross; but it is a sacrifice because it is the perpetual commemoration of the sacrifice offered upon the Cross, and it is the act by which we represent upon earth and appropriate to ourselves the one offering which Jesus Christ makes in Heaven, according to the Epistle to the Hebrews 9:11, 12, for the salvation of redeemed humanity, by appearing for us in the presence of God (Heb.9:24). The character of the Holy Eucharist being thus understood, it is, at the same time, a sacrificial feast, by means of which the faithful, in receiving the Body and Blood of our Saviour, enter into communion with one another (1 Cor. 10. 17).

7. We hope that Catholic theologians, in maintaining the faith of the undivided Church, will succeed in establishing an agreement upon questions which have been controverted [i.e. in controversy - Ed.] ever since the divisions which have arisen between the Churches. We exhort the priests under our Church to teach, both by preaching and by the instruction of the young, especially the essential Christian truths professed by all the Christian confessions, to avoid, in discussing controverted doctrines, any violation of truth or charity, and in word and deed to set an example to the members of our churches in accordance with the spirit of Jesus Christ our Saviour.

8. By maintaining and professing faithfully the doctrine of Jesus Christ, by refusing to admit those errors which by the fault of men have crept into the Catholic Church, by laying aside the abuses in ecclesiastical matters, together with the worldly tendencies of the hierarchy, we believe that we shall be able to combat efficaciously the great evils of our day, which are unbelief and indifference in matters of religion.

It is crucial to note that the Union of Utrecht does not declare that everything before it is not Catholic; rather, it upholds all the first seven Ecumenical Councils of the Church. What it rejects is the change of tradition to ascribe the power of ecumenical councils to the Bishop of Rome through the doctrine of papal infallibility, and the dogmatic novelty imposed by the Papacy at the time. Today, identifiers with “Old Catholic” trace their connection to the Utrecht Union.

Rule of Faith

The oldest marker of Old Catholic identity is captured in their belief, what is termed the ‘rule of faith’. Unlike the declaration of Utrecht, it is earlier in time and generally upheld in other kinds of Catholic Churches, with slight differences. We might ask: *what is contained in the rule of faith? How is it particularly expressed in the Old Catholic Church?*

Old Catholics, in the rule of faith, profess belief in three things:

1. The Nicene Creed
2. The Seven Sacraments, and
3. Apostolic Succession
 1. Nicene Creed- This expresses essential truths believed by the Universal Christian faith: belief in God, the Holy Spirit, and the birth, death and resurrection of God’s son.
 2. The Seven Sacraments- These are Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Reconciliation, Marriage, Ordination, and Anointing of the Sick and Dying.
 3. Apostolic Succession- The tracing of legitimate expression of authority from one bishop to another to one of the Apostles. It is the litmus test.

Major and Minor Hallmarks of Old Catholic Churches

The Worldwide Old Catholic Communion is umbrella of Old Catholics in the world. Within it, various strands of churches that identify themselves as “Old Catholic” find expression. Outlining features of Old Catholic Churches is an inexhaustible task however, as there are no general features beyond their beliefs; each Church is distinct. In addition, the Churches which can trace their root from the Dutch Old Catholics are ever evolving. Below however are some features of Old Catholic Churches.

Liberal: Old Catholic churches permit diverse ways of doing or expressing religious beliefs and practices. Within a sacramental and Catholic context, they engage modern thought on the bases of inclusiveness and dialogue. In addition, the form of expression is not dynamic.

Jurisdiction (national autonomy): This refers to the individual autonomy of churches; as with the apostolic times where Churches were autonomous by reasons of leadership, history, ideology and geography. This division in jurisdiction does not create denominations, as Protestants are, since the characteristic marks of the one holy Catholic and apostolic Church remains intact.

Clergy: There is optional celibacy for the clergy, as was practiced in the apostolic times, and women ordination, in contrast with imposed celibacy of the Roman Church none inclusion of women to sacred orders.

Secular Clergy: The clergy hold secular jobs or outside employment for their personal maintenance. There is no salary allotted to members of the clergy by the Church, but they are provided with whatever is needed for the Mission.

No Sacramental Barriers: Reception of the sacraments is without artificial barrier based on marital status (divorce, remarried), conditions in life, or sexual orientation. For instance, in communion reception the belief is that just as with the one who call to take communion is the Jesus, there no indication where Jesus keep people away from him because of being tax collectors or Divorce. This sacrament is seen as a place of Refreshment. This gives the church the identity of being for all of God’s people and a church without walls

SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE OLD CATHOLIC AND ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCHES

It is instructive to note that between both Old and Roman Catholics the subject of similarities and differences arose only after the spilt, formalised by the Union of Utrecht in 1889. Within the first 100 years of Christianity these Churches were one in doctrine; hence, decisions of, for example, the seven ecumenical councils, are upheld in common. Consequently, the gamuts of their differences are developments succeeding the separation.

Similarities

Common Belief: Beliefs, outcomes of the seven ecumenical councils are held by both Churches. The referenced councils were: First Council of Nicaea (325 A.D), Council of Ephesus (431 A.D), Council of Chalcedon (451 A.D), Second Council of Constantinople (553 A.D), Third Council of Constantinople (680 A.D) and Second Council of Nicaea (787 A.D).

Historic Creed of Faith: These articulated tenets of the Christian faith consist of the Apostolic and Nicene Creeds. The former evolved out of early baptismal formulas, and the latter was compiled to reflect decisions of the council of Nicene (325 A.D).

Seven Sacraments: The practice of the following sacraments namely, Baptism, Confirmation, Confession (Penance), Eucharist, Unction (Anointing of the Sick), Marriage, Ordination (Holy Orders).

History of an unbroken Apostolic Succession: Both Churches lay claim to historical chain of consecration, going all the way back to Apostles. It is with reference to this that both Churches lay claim to being the perpetual of Jesus mandate on earth.

Differences

Papal Infallibility: Old Catholics accept only General Council of Bishops infallibility while Roman Catholics accept papal infallibility. Infallibility refers to incapacity to make no error or mistake.

Pope: Roman Catholic holds that the Papacy is a divinely inspired institution and the Pope possesses supreme jurisdiction over all local churches in the world. Old Catholics, on the other hand, hold that the Pope is a bishop like others; though by reason of petrine primacy he is first among equals in respect and not authority.

Congregation: In Old Catholic churches the congregation is actively involved, while in Roman Catholic churches the priest takes charge of the spiritual and the lay faithful take care of the social spheres of life.

Teaching: Old Catholics are liberal while Roman Catholics are dogmatic.

Ministry: While the Roman Catholic Church has a threefold order Ministry: deacon, priest, and bishop; the Old Catholic Church recognizes more than these three ministries: Cleric, Doorkeeper, Evangelist, Acolytes, Sub deacon, Deacon, Priest and Bishop.

COMPARISON OF SELECT BELIEFS OF OLD CATHOLICS AND ROMAN CATHOLICS

The key for unveiling the comparison between the Old Catholic and Roman Catholic on the side of the Old Catholics is the recognition that Old Catholics made of strand of Catholic with liberal, moderate and extreme application of faith. While for the Roman Catholic this is largely absent. We shall now consider this comparison under the following headings: Source of Revelation; Scripture; Tradition; Correct teaching, Expression of Correct teaching; The Church; The Ministry.

ISSUES	ROMAN CATHOLIC	OLD CATHOLIC
Source of Revelation	Scripture and Tradition	Scripture and Tradition
Scripture	The scriptures were written by human beings under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit; and its proper interpretation is safeguarded by the Church.	The scriptures were written by human beings under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit; and its proper interpretation is safeguarded by the Church.
Tradition	Catholic tradition explains the scriptures and completes them. It continues to develop under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.	Catholic Tradition aids explanation of the scriptures, and although its development has been guided by the Holy Spirit, it has not done so infallibly. Tradition contains errors, and Old Catholics continue to seek Gods will in understanding and reforming tradition
Correct Teaching	The Church's teaching is decided through the Supreme Magisterium of the Papal office. The Pope alone makes final decisions as to what is essential to Catholic teaching and practice, and he may designate his decisions "infallible."	Correct teaching is discerned through general councils, at which various regional churches are represented by their bishops.
Expression of correct Doctrine	Accepts the decisions of the first seven ecumenical councils and the later fourteen councils, including the First and Second Vatican Councils.	Correct teaching is discerned through general councils, at which various regional churches are represented by their bishops.
The Church	The Church is a body of people -living and dead- who confess the One faith, participate in its sacraments, and submit to	The Church is the body of people -living and dead- who confess the One faith, participate in its sacraments, and have

	the authority of the hierarchy	remained faithful to the essential teachings of the historical apostolic church.
The Ministry	Christ himself ordained the apostles and sent them forth to minister to the world. The laity receives the general priesthood and are responsible for ministering the grace of Jesus Christ in their homes and workplaces. The ordained ministry consists of deacons, priests, and bishops who have received the sacrament of Holy Ordinance by the Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands in an unbroken succession traceable to the apostles. They are responsible for the spiritual health of the laity and the propagation of the Gospel.	Christ himself ordained the apostles and sent them forth to minister to the world. The laity receives the general priesthood and are responsible for ministering the grace of Jesus Christ in their homes and workplaces. The ordained ministry consists of deacons, priests, and bishops who have received the sacrament of Holy Ordinance by the Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands in an unbroken succession traceable to the apostles. They are responsible for the spiritual health of the laity and the propagation of the Gospel.
The Pope	The papacy was founded by Christ, and continues to speak with the authority of Peter, the Rock of the Church and the first Pope. He speaks with absolutely authority over the whole church and can design certain teachings as infallible.	The Pope is the <i>primus inter pares</i> , the first bishop among equals, and has the right to be the official spokesman for the whole Christian church, In the same way the Archbishop of Utrecht is the first among equals for the Old Catholic communion

<p>Salvation</p>	<p><i>This has come about through the infinite merits of Jesus Christ, won by him through his sacrifice. This is infinite grace is available to those who through union with the One Church and Participation in its sacraments. By participation in the sacramental life of the church and works of mercy believers are sanctified and grow in the life of the Holy Spirit.</i></p>	<p><i>This is through the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ in which Jesus Christ liberate us from sin and allow us full union with God. .</i> Through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we learn to cooperate with God's will, growing spiritually, and exhibiting this growth outwardly through works of mercy.</p>
<p>EUCHARIST</p>	<p>Through it believers not only relive Jesus' offering of himself in history, but see it enacted in the flesh before their very eyes. Through the miracle of transubstantiation, the bread and wine become the actual, historical body and blood of Jesus Christ. When consumed by the faithful, they both physically and mystically join themselves to the Body of Christ.</p> <p><i>It is both general and individual. Individual is a required before participation in the Eucharist. Confession of ones sins to a priest is a</i></p>	<p>Through it believers re-enact the once-and-for-all historical sacrifice of Christ. After consecration, the bread and wine contain the real presence of Christ, which, when consumed by the faithful, mystically joins them to his Body.</p> <p>Old Catholics employ a general confession and absolution in the liturgy,</p>

<p>PENANCE</p>	<p>sacrament, which is complete when a person has performed the prescribed penance for his or her sins.</p>	<p>which, when done in the presence of a priest, suffices to absolve the people of their sins. For grave sins, individuals may make an appointment with a priest for private confession, of which pastoral counseling is also an important component. Both public and private confessions are seen as sacramentally efficacious</p>
<p>THE LAST JUDGEMENT</p>	<p>Unrepentant souls immediately enter a miserable state void of Gods presence, otherwise known as Hell. Believers go to Purgatory, where they are purified of their sins before being admitted into Heaven. Only saints and martyrs go directly to Heaven. At the general resurrection, the soul will be reunited with the body.</p>	<p>Souls enter an intermediate state in anticipation of the ultimate return of Christ, where they are purified by God's grace. Those who are unrepentant will experience this state as extremely uncomfortable, while the faithful will experience it as pleasurable. At the end of time, Christ will judge the living and the dead. The faithful will enter into eternal bliss.</p>

<p>THE VENERATION OF SAINTS:</p> <p><i>In Catholic tradition "praying to" and "worship of" should not be confused. Praying to a saint is simply talking to someone who is not physically present. Asking a saint to pray for you is essentially no different than calling a friend on the telephone and soliciting their prayers for a specific concern. Neither the saint nor the friend on the phone are physically present, and neither are being worshipped</i></p>	<p>All Christians are saints, but some are marked by a specific degree of holiness that is worthy of respect and the celebration of their memory: Saints may be prayed to in order to solicit their intercession, and also for the fulfillment of special requests, as most canonized saints have specialized areas of concern and assistance.</p>	<p>All Christians are saints, but some are marked by a specific degree of holiness that is worthy of respect and the celebration of their memory. Saints may be prayed to in order to solicit their intercession.</p>
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<p>MARY</p>	<p>She is an especially important saint, worthy of special veneration. She is believed to have been born without original sin (known as the Immaculate Conception) and to have been bodily assumed into heaven. She was perpetually a virgin, and is the Virgin Mother of God. She alone has the status of co-redemptrix, because the redeeming work of Christ would have been impossible without her.</p>	<p>Mary is an important saint, and worthy of special veneration. She was a virgin when she gave birth to Jesus.</p>
<p>SACRAMENT</p>	<p>A sacrament is an outward and visible sign of the real but invisible grace of God. Through the sacraments we can be certain that we have received grace, because they are efficacious on their own merits (<i>ex opere operato</i>).</p>	<p>A sacrament is an outward and visible sign of the real but invisible grace of God. They are efficacious according to the degree of our faith in them.</p>

HISTORY OF OLD CATHOLIC APOSTOLIC CHURCH: **PROVINCE OF NIGERIA**

Broadly conceptualised, three vintage points are appropriate in situating the historical sojourn of Old Catholic Apostolic Church in Nigeria. These are history traced from the distant past, from the recent past and then from present past. It should be noted that though identified distinctively are intertwined when understood as an evolved Church.

The distant past, traces the history of the Old Catholic Apostolic Church from the momentous assembly on the Church's birth, on Pentecost day. The text of Act 2:5 tells of the fact that people of every nation under heaven were present. And specifically, in verse 10 identified nations like Egypt and part of Libya, a pointer of the Church also in Africa and by extension inchoate Nigeria.

From the recent past, attention is directed on surrounding events that started with the autonomous recognition enjoyed by the Archbishop of Holland (Pope confirmed Lateran council), to the eventual spilt of the between the Rome and Utrecht of 1723 in Holland. The starting phase arrived at on mutual and friendly pact while the later borne from differences in doctrinal and political grounds

The final phase of identifying the historical antecedent of old is the present past. The Nigeria church, here locates its history from the Reformed Old Catholic Church of Scotland. The compass of tracing the historical journey is the consecratory (principal) role played by the Most Revd Andrew Hall of the Reformed Old Catholic Church of Scotland (ROCC) and the revival mandate to witness, war and win burdened on God's servant Raphael Fagbohun. This historical is ongoing. Suffices it to note that it is in this historical phase that name Old Catholic Apostolic Church was adopted from traditional Old Catholic Church for the particular Nigerian Province, and then, the African Catholic Apostolic Church of the Alexandrian Patriarchate.

NIGERIAN OLD CATHOLIC APOSTOLIC CHURCH: DISTANT PAST HISTORY

The reference historical take off point officially for Christianity is the Pentecost day. At point of history, the entire Christendom was one whole without the attended differences in name, doctrines and practices. However, through the fire furnace of doctrinal, political and geographical disagreement, Christendom as a whole became divided hence, took the identity of denomination, spilt group and separated churches. It is particularly within this prism that this aspect of history for the Old Catholic Apostolic Church province of Nigeria finds bearing.

Broadly theretofore, the history of the Nigerian Province of the Old Catholic Apostolic Church from Pentecost day can be said to have this trajectory pattern of existence. The starting point, after the Pentecost is the apostolic and immediate apostles' era. This is characteristically when the nature and structure of Christendom was Patriarchal; then the phase of when the church consisted of the survived patriarchates from which the church in Utrecht, Holland that perpetuate it existence. And lastly, from one of the Survived Patriarchate churches arose the body called the Worldwide Body of the Old Catholic Apostolic Church.

NIGERIAN OLD CATHOLIC APOSTOLIC CHURCH: RECENT PAST HISTORY

In strict terms, within this historical lens, the starting point of the history of Old Catholic Apostolic Church, Province of Nigeria is situated and likened with the allegory of identical twines. The twines in this context being the Rome and Netherlands. Rome, owing to the recognition accorded the church as constituted in the Netherland courtesy of Pope Eugene endorsement of autonomy. And then, the Netherlands (compose of churches of the distant land), by reason of being the sustenance church eventually birthed the Province church.

After the above phase, the once enjoyed mutual recognition and beliefs began to give way thus, introducing another stage to this phase of history. The phase being the trouble days between to the Roman Catholics and the Old Catholics. The following matters are germane in this regards: First, Old Catholics leadership not only refusal to sanction members of the Jansenism group but romancing with them as though given credence to their teaching by the Archbishop and church of Utrecht. Second, the years for the imposition of intolerable dogmas by the Church of Rome and then third the issuance of excommunication letter by both sides. The Church of Rome d the Archbishop to the Utrecht Church on basis of her stands on Jansenism. While the Old Catholics excommunicated the Church of Rome for departing from faith and belief accepted by all and at all times.

Of course! Preceding these crisis years (the earlier years of togetherness) between both Churches is where the Nigeria Old Catholic Apostolic Church historical sojourn is located. Although in subsequent years thereafter it is evident that it is more traceable to the Church of Holland it important not to gloss the factors that if any have change the face of the Old Catholic not be Roman Catholics. The awareness that the very essence of both churches greatly remain intact is most instructive in this regard.

NIGERIAN OLD CATHOLIC APOSTOLIC CHURCH: PRESENT PAST HISTORY

The Church's history is view from the point of entry of the church into Nigeria. The History map is traced from the source that gave birth to the Church in Nigeria. Three interwoven clear pathways are instrumental here. First, the path of the Old Catholic Apostolic Church through Bishop Adrian Trimlett Glover, the current presiding Bishop of Old Catholic Apostolic Church Worldwide resident in England; Second, the path through Andrew Hall of the Reformed Old Catholic Church of Scotland. And third, the path pioneered by Bishop Raphael Fagbohun, Province of Nigeria.

Beginning with Bishop Adrian, one instructive fact to note is the connection of this historical path with the Archbishop Arnold Harris Matthew. Basically, the line of apostolic succession of Bishop Adrian is traceable to Bishop Matthew. This is owing to the fact that the Old Catholic movement of Great Britain was pioneered by Bishop Matthew after being consecrated to this charge in 1908 by the Old Catholic Church of the Netherlands (subtly linking the province of Nigeria to the Church of the Netherlands). Furthermore by reason of the consecratory power transfer, Bishop Adrian being the consecrator of Andrew Hall (and Andrew being the Consecrator of Bishop Raphael (Scotland, 2015), the church of the Province of Nigeria historical links are tied to that of the Church of Scotland (Reformed old Catholic) and further to the church of Great Britain (Old Catholic Apostolic Church) and furthermore to the Church of the Netherlands (Old Catholic church of Utrecht.

In the totality of the traced historical path of Old Catholic Apostolic Church province of Nigeria these lessons are evident. Like the traditional birth of Christ (the object of all Christianity) and Church was marred with conflict, persecution and opposition, the Province of the Nigerian Church too had it fair of experiences in this regard. As with case of the persecution, being responsible for the escape of the baby to Egypt, the scattering of the earlier Christians out of Jerusalem, the baby province of Nigeria was not without its fairs of persecutions. Among several others the newspaper purported disclaimer publication context underscores the Nigerian province share of persecution. This is a case of attack on the church and Bishop Raphael:

Rev Fr Raphael Fagbohun, whose picture appears above; and now presenting himself as a Bishop of the Old Catholic Church of Scotland (ROCC-SCOTLAND) is no longer in full communion with the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church in Nigeria has no connection whatsoever with the supposed Episcopal ordination of the said Raphael Fagbohun as the first consecrated bishop of the Old Roman Catholic Church of Church of Scotland for Africa, said to have taken place in Glasgow recently.... All Catholics are hereby advised to note that the Catholic Church has nothing to do with his said

ordination and ignore the call to join the said Old Roman Catholic Church of Scotland. The Old Roman Catholic Church is not in communion with the Holy Father, Pope Francis, and the universal Church. Catholics are hereby advised to keep their distance from the above named Fr Raphael Fagbohun and his new church in the interest of their integrity of faith. May the Lord keep us faithful to his truth. (Guardian Newspaper Wednesday, 22nd April, 2015. p.10).

Also, of interesting reading and commentary in the Nigerian Province historical path is the sweet coincidence of impacts arising from the persecution. Basically like in earliest times, Africa (Egypt) was found a safe heaven for the baby Jesus, the historical path threaded by Nigeria Province Old Catholics is serving to provide the rescue mission base for the revival of authentic African Christianity under the auspices of African Catholic Apostolic Church of the Alexandrian Patriarchate. Suffice it to note that before the birth of the Province of Nigeria, Old Catholics have had years of expression in many other African nations (Cameroon, South Africa, and Gabon) however, with the birth in Nigeria it metamorphosis into a revival church, making a clarion call and masterminding the processes that has culminated into the birth of the African Catholic Church of the Alexandrian patriarchate. (Synod Document, Yaoundé Cameroon 2015)

On the whole, one fact that is instructive in the entirety of this phase of history is the sweet coincidence of lessons and experiences that occurs between the early Christians or churches and Old Catholic Apostolic church (Nigerian Province). These instances include those arising from early Christian's persecutions and oppositions by the power that be and others with rival groups (Sanhedrin, Sadducees, and Rulers of the people and elders of Israel). Another fact is reality the lessons of the blood of martyrs' of the early Christians serving as the strength for the growth and expansion of early Christians. Similar, for the church (province of Nigeria) her fair share of opposition, attack and persecution caused her to gained continuous spread and growth.

Indeed, one fact is most instructive about the entirety of the historical reality of the Old Catholic Church (Nigeria). It is settled fact that history repeats itself. It is in this that the church's ethos to forge ahead with her revival mandate of the church in the hope that as with the early Christians' churches that birth Christianity into the World, the Old Catholic Apostolic Church Nigerian province will restore back the authentic Christianity to the entire Christendom. This is the vision and mission of the Old Catholic Apostolic Church Province of Nigeria.

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