

**A THEOLOGICAL AND BIBLICAL APPRAISAL OF OZO TITLE TAKING AND ITS  
IMPLICATIONS FOR CURRENT LEADERSHIP ISSUES IN *IGBO* CATHOLIC  
CHURCH (NIGERIA)**

BY

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION.....	x
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.....	xi
ABSTRACT.....	xiii
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 BACKGROUND.....	4
1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT.....	12
1.3 OBJECTIVES.....	14
1.4 PURPOSE.....	14
1.5 POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS IN IGBO SOCIETY.....	15
1.6 THE VATICAN II (1960-1975).....	16
1.7 MISSIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE.....	17
1.8 CULTURAL IMPLICATIONS.....	17
1.9 CANON LAW.....	18
1.10 THE BIBLICAL IMPLICATIONS.....	19
1.11 THE PASTORAL IMPLICATIONS.....	19
1.12 THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE.....	20
1.13 DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY.....	21
1.14 THE AREA OF STUDY.....	23
1.15 HYPOTHESIS.....	23
1.16 THE VALUE OF THIS RESEARCH STUDY.....	23
1.17 THE RESEARCH QUESTION OF THE STUDY.....	24
CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE: THE IMPACTS OF IGBO WORLDVIEWS ON OZO TITLE TAKING AND LEADERSHIP.....	28
2.1 INTRODUCTION.....	28
2.2 IGBO WORLDVIEWS.....	29
2.2.1 Introduction.....	29

2.2.2	Who are the Igbo? .....	29
2.2.3	The Origin of Igbo Traditional Religion.....	30
2.2.4	Education in Igbo Tradition.....	32
2.2.5	The Igbo Respect for Life ( <i>Ndu</i> ).....	35
2.2.6	Igbo Respect for Morality.....	37
2.2.7	Truth among the <i>Igbos</i> .....	39
2.2.8	Igbo Concept of Achievement.....	40
2.2.9	The Supreme Being (God).....	43
2.2.10	The Divinities.....	44
2.2.11	Chi.....	47
2.2.12	The Ancestors.....	48
2.2.13	The Reincarnation ( <i>Ilo Uwa</i> ).....	49
2.2.14	Kola Nut and its Significance.....	51
2.2.15	Man in <i>Igbo</i> Worldview.....	53
2.3	SUMMARY.....	56
CHAPTER THREE: THE OZO TITLE TAKING AND LEADERSHIP IN <i>IGBO</i>		
SOCIETY.....		57
3.1	INTRODUCTION.....	57
3.2	THE ORIGIN OF OZO TITLE TAKING IN IGBO SOCIETY.....	58
3.3	WHAT IS OZO TITLE TAKING? .....	60
3.4	THE PROCEDURES FOR OZO TITLE TAKING IN IGBO TRADITIONAL	
SOCIETY.....		65
3.5	NDISHI STAGE.....	68
3.6	MGWURUMOBI STAGE.....	70
3.7	THE ONUMONU STAGE.....	73
3.8	THE OZO UKWU STAGE.....	75
3.9	THE SYMBOL OF OFO.....	79
3.10	TYPES OF OFO.....	81
3.10.1	Personal Ofo.....	81
3.10.2	Lineage Ofo.....	81
3.10.3	Titular Ofo.....	81

3.10.4 Professional Ofo.....	82
3.10.5 Institutional Ofo.....	82
3.11 THE RITUAL USES OF OFO.....	82
3.11.1 For Praying.....	82
3.11.2 For Swearing.....	83
3.11.3 For Cleansing Ceremony.....	83
3.11.4 For Sacrifices.....	84
3.11.5 For Naming Ceremony.....	84
3.11.6 For Decision making.....	84
3.11.7 For Settling Disputes.....	85
3.11.8 For Sealing Covenants.....	85
3.12 THE PRESENTATION OF OFO TO ONYE NZE (TITLED PERSON).....	86
3.13 THE DUTIES AND PRIVILEGES OF OZO TITLE HOLDERS.....	87
3.14 THE BURIAL CEREMONY OF ONYE NZE (TITLED PERSON).....	88
3.15 THE NATURE OF CHRISTIANITY IN IGBO CATHOLIC CHURCH.....	92
3.16 CONFLICTS BETWEEN IGBO TRADITIONAL RELIGION AND CHRISTIANITY.....	94
3.17 SUMMARY.....	102
CHAPTER FOUR: THE BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL EVALUATION OF OZO TITLE TAKING AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR CURRENT LEADERSHIP ISSUES IN IGBO CATHOLIC CHURCH.....	103
4.1 LEADERSHIP IN IGBO SOCIETY.....	103
4.1.1 Introduction.....	103
4.1.2 Theories of Human Behavior and Leadership Qualities.....	103
4.1.3 Leadership in Pre-Colonial Igbo Society.....	106
4.1.4 Modern Leadership in Igbo Society.....	109
4.1.5 Leadership in the Bible.....	111
4.1.6 Old Testament.....	111
4.1.7 New Testament.....	113
4.1.8 Theological Implications.....	118
4.1.9 Cultural Implications.....	119

4.1.10 Missiological Implications.....	121
4.1.11 Pastoral Implications.....	122
4.1.12 Biblical Implications.....	123
4.1.13 Church Implications (Lumen Gentium).....	124
4.1.14 The influence of the Church in the Modern World (Gaudium et Spes.....	125
4.1.15 The Ecumenical Implications (Unitatis Redintegratio).....	127
4.2 SUMMARY.....	128
CHAPTER FIVE: THE THEOLOGICAL FRAME WORK OF VATICAN II, CHURCH MAGISTERIUM AND INCULTURATION AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR OZO TITLE TAKING AND CURRENT LEADERSHIP ISSUES IN IGBO CATHOLIC CHURCH.....	
5.1 INTRODUCTION.....	129
5.1.1 The Historical Development of Church Magisterium.....	129
5.1.2 The Early Church.....	131
5.1.3 The Medieval Period.....	131
5.1.4 Theologians.....	132
5.1.5 Council of Constance (1414-1418).....	133
5.1.6 First Vatican Council (1869-1870).....	133
5.1.7 Second Vatican II (1962-1965).....	133
5.1.8 Aggiornamento.....	134
5.1.9 Instrumentum Laboris (1993).....	135
5.1.10 The African Synod in Rome (1994).....	137
5.1.11 Ecclesia in Africa (1995).....	138
5.1.12 First synod of the Catholic Diocese of Orlu (2000).....	139
5.1.13 Theological Implications of Church Magisterium and Vatican II to Igbo Catholic Church.....	140
5.1.14 1983 Code of Canon Law.....	142
5.1.15 The Importance of 1983 Code of Canon Law for the Igbo Catholic Church.....	143
5.1.16 Inculturation and its Implications.....	145
5.2 SUMMARY.....	147

CHAPTER SIX: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY ON OZO TITLE TAKING AND LEADERSHIP IN IGBO CATHOLIC CHURCH.....	148
6.1    INTRODUCTION.....	148
6.1.1    Richard Osmer’s Research Methodology for Practical Theology.....	148
6.1.2    Data Collection Plan.....	150
6.1.3    Gaining Access to the Study.....	150
6.1.4    Interviewing.....	150
6.1.5    Data Analysis Plan.....	152
6.2    SUMMARY.....	153
CHAPTER SEVEN: DATA COLLECTION ANALYSIS: INTERPRETATION AND THEOLOGICAL APPRAISAL OF OZO TITLE TAKING AND LEADERSHIP IN IGBO CATHOLIC CHURCH.....	154
7.1    ANALYSIS OF ORAL INTERVIEWS.....	154
7.1.1    The Research Overview.....	154
7.2    RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND FINDINGS.....	155
7.3    SUMMARY.....	201
CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS.....	202
8.1    SUGGESTIONS.....	203
8.1.1    The Family and Leadership in Igbo Context.....	203
8.1.2    The Umunna (Communitarian) Leadership in Igbo Perspective..	205
8.1.3    The Ideal Leadership of Ozo Title Holders.....	207
8.1.4    The Ofo Symbols.....	208
8.1.5    The Ozo Institution.....	211
8.1.6    Some Pastoral Problems and Ozo Title Taking in Igbo Context..	213
8.1.7    Inculturating the Ozo Title Taking into Christianity.....	220
8.1.8    The Role of Dialogue in Igbo Context.....	228
8.1.9    Urgent Need to Form Seminarians in Igbo Culture.....	230
8.1.10 Urgent Need to cut Down the Excessive Expenses of Ozo Title Taking in Igbo Society.....	230
8.1.11 The Position of Slaves (Osu) and Ume in Ozo Title Taking.....	231

8.1.12 Reinventing the Ozo Title Taking in Igbo Context.....	232
8.1.13 We Must not repeat the Mistakes of the Past Missionaries in Igbo Society.....	234
8.1.14 The Ethical Values of Nze na Ozo must be Encouraged.....	236
8.1.15 Sick Call and the Sacrament of Reconciliation.....	236
8.1.16 Guidelines to Ozo Title Taking in the Igbo Church.....	237
8.1.17 Ozo Proposal Guidelines.....	238
8.1.18 Jubilee Celebration.....	239
8.1.19 Recommendation for Future Research.....	240
8.1.20 Conclusion.....	241
8.2 SUMMARY.....	247
WORKS CONSULTED.....	248
APPENDIXES.....	259
APPENDIX A: Permission Letter.....	259
APPENDIX B: Letter of Consent.....	261
APPENDIX C: Interview Questions.....	262

## LISTS OF PHOTOS, MAPS AND FIGURES

Photo 1.1 Igbo people in Diaspora.....	7
Map1.1 Igbo World.....	26
Map 1.2 Africa.....	27
Photo 2.1 Kola Nut.....	52
Photo 2.2 Kola Nut bowl.....	53
Figure 3.1 Disproportionate Treatment in South Africa.....	63
Photo 3.1 The Ofo Symbol.....	80
Photo 3.2 Nze's Stool.....	91
Photo 3.3 Red Cap and Elephant's horn.....	92
Photo Album 4.1 The Coronation of Nze Alphonsus Oforchukwu.....	97
Photo Album 4.2 Nze Alphonsus Oforchukwu and Lolo Dorothy Oforchukwu.....	98
Photo Album 4.3 Nze Alphonsus Oforchukwu and Nze Livinus Achonwa.....	99

Photo Album 4.4 Nze Aphonsus and Lolo Dorothy Oforchukwu with other Nzes.....	100
Photo Album 4.5 Nze Bartholomew Oforchukwu.....	101
Figure 5.1 Levels of Magisterium.....	130
Figure 6.1 The Four Tasks of Practical Theology According to Osmer.....	148
Figure 6.2 Relationships between the Four Tasks According to Osmer.....	149
Pie-Chart 7.1 What is Ozo title Taking in Igbo Communities?.....	155
Figure 7.1 What is Ozo title Taking in Igbo Communities?.....	156
Pie-Chart 7.2 What are the purposes of Ozo title taking?.....	157
Figure 7.2 What are the purposes of Ozo title taking?.....	158
Pie-Chart 7.3 Who could be admitted into Ozo title taking?.....	160
Figure 7.3 Who could be admitted into Ozo title taking?.....	161
Pie-Chart 7.4 What are the functions of Ozo title holders?.....	164
Figure 7.4 What are the functions of Ozo title holders?.....	165
Pie-Chart 7.5 Do the Igbos have Leaders?.....	167
Figure 7.5 Do the Igbos have Leaders?.....	168
Pie-Chart 7.6 What does the Church say about tradition?.....	169
Figure 7.6 What does the Church say about tradition?.....	170
Pie-Chart 7.7 What does the Church say about inculturation?.....	172
Figure 7.7 What does the Church say about inculturation?.....	173
Pie-Chart 7.8 What does the Church say about Ozo title holders?.....	175
Figure 7.8 What does the Church say about Ozo title holders?.....	176
Pie-Chart 7.9 What Pastoral Problems do Igbo Christians face with regard to Ozo title taking?.....	178
Figure 7.9 What Pastoral Problems do Igbo Christians face with regard to Ozo title taking?.....	179
Pie-Chart 7.10 Does Ozo title taking conflict with Christian Practices?.....	180
Figure 7.10 Does Ozo title taking conflict with Christian Practices?.....	181
Pie-Chart 7.11 How should the Church address these problems?.....	186
Figure 7.11 How should the Church address these problems?.....	186
Pie-Chart 7.12 What would be the guidelines for Ozo title taking among the Igbo Christians?.....	195

Figure 7.12 What would be the guidelines for Ozo title taking among the Igbo Christians?.....	196
Pie-Chart 7.13 What are the Missionary teachings that down-grade ozo title taking in the Church?.....	198
Figure 7.13 What are the Missionary teachings that down-grade ozo title taking in the Church?.....	199

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**DECLARATION**

I hereby acknowledge that the work contained in this thesis is my own original work and has not previously in its entirety or in part been submitted to any academic institution for degree purposes.

Joachim Oforchukwu

MAY 6, 2011.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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## ABSTRACT

*Igbo* society is one of the densely inhabited ethnic groups in Nigeria, an ethnic group with enviable cultures, traditions, and religions. The *Igbo* people are deeply religious by nature. They have a sense of deep respect for the sacred. The early Missionaries, Colonialists, and neighbouring ethnic groups have misconceptions of the *Igbo* people. The Colonialists have referred to the *Igbo* nation as Kingless race – *Igbo Enwe Eze*. Prior to the Vatican Council II, the Church had a negative attitude towards *Igbo* Traditional Religions. Unfortunately, this negative impression had resulted in an intensive controversy over the reconciliation of the *Igbo* Traditional Religion with the Gospel Message of Jesus Christ. In this dissertation scholarship, the researcher tried to explore the analysis of Ozo title taking and its implications for current leadership issues in *Igbo* Catholic Church. The purpose of this research study is threefold. First, to investigate if the *Igbo* nation has kings/leaders (*Igbo Nwere Eze*). Second, to demonstrate that Ozo titled holders had legislative, executive and judicial powers in *Igbo* communities. Finally, to establish that the Ozo title taking in *Igbo* communities could be inculturated into the *Igbo* Catholic Church.

In this study, small populations of *Igbo* communities were chosen. A small population of study permitted the researcher to do in-depth study (Miles and Huberman 1994). The target population of this study is clergy, *Ndi Nze na Ozo* titled holders and non- titled men. This research used both comparative and polemical methodologies. As an empirical study, the researcher found Richard Osmer's model in practical theology as a useful methodology. The data for this study therefore was garnered through in-depth interviews.

The result of this study indicated that the *Igbo* nation has leaders/kings – *Igbo Nwere Eze*. *Igbo* communities have conventional rules that were made and implemented by the Ozo titled holders. The *Igbo* communities operated on indigenous democracy, a democracy where every *Igbo* man has a voice. The study showed that *Igbo* republicanism goes with the consensus philosophy of *Umunna Kwenu*. This study demonstrated that the Ozo titled men are willing to listen to, and abide by the rules of *Igbo* Church leadership. The study proposed some pragmatic guidelines that would

serve as the benchmark in *Ozo* title taking across *Igbo* communities. These guidelines were made to safeguard the *Igbo* Church from syncretism.

# CHAPTER 1:

## INTRODUCTION

The *Igbo* nation is found in the South East of Nigeria. The origin of *Ndi Igbo* is shrouded in uncertainty. Presently, there are five States within the *Igbo* culture. Religion plays a central role in *Igbo* beliefs. Religion and philosophy are primarily concerned with the beliefs and practices of the *Igbo* people. There is an absence of a single central authority figure among the people. This absence of any cohesive authority has earned the *Igbos* a kingless nation – *Igbo Enwe Eze*.

The family is an important institution in *Igbo* communities. Family in *Igbo* community is formed through the marriage contract - *Ilu Nwanyia*. Polygamy is commonly practised among the pre-Colonial *Igbo* society. The choice of a wife is the concern of the entire family members (Ogbalu 1973). The extended family system is very strong among the *Igbo* people. Each village is divided into wards or kindreds, a kindred comprising of a number of related family groups called *Umunna* (Agbo 1995:94).

The *Umunna* council consists of *Ndi Ichie*, village elders, chief priests, diviners (*Ndi afa*), *Ndi Nze na Ozo* title holders, and age grades. The *Umunna* is responsible for making and executing of laws (*Iwu*) within the *Igbo* communities. The decisions of the *Umunna* cannot be set aside (Ogbalu 1973). This dissertation scholarship was conducted within the *Igbo* communities.

*Gaudium et Spes* called on the Church to engage in dialogue with contemporary society. The document acknowledged that science and culture have some values to teach the Church, but, also said that the Church has a mission to sanctify the World around it. Based on the above statement, this research was undertaken to explore the *Ozo* title taking and its implications for current leadership issues in *Igbo* Catholic Church. The question then is: "Do the *Igbo* have kings/leaders? What roles do the titled holders – *Ndi Nze na Ozo* play in *Igbo* Church leadership? Can the *Ozo* title taking be inculturated into the *Igbo* Catholic Church?" These questions constituted the thesis of this scholarship. In this study, in-depth interviews are used to gather information on the

Ozo title taking in *Igbo* community. The target population is the clergy, *Ndi Nze na Ozo* titled men, and non- titled holders in *Igbo* communities.

This research study is divided into eight chapters. The following is a summary of the content of each chapter:

Chapter one introduced the readers to the topic being investigated. This chapter described the background of the study. The chapter also examined the problem statement of the study. Chapter one also described the purpose and objectives of the study. The specific value of the study is also stipulated in this chapter. Furthermore, chapter one explained the methodology used in the study. This is an empirical exploration. The researcher used Osmer's (2008) model for Practical Theology.

Chapter two is the review of Literature. This chapter explored the worldviews of the *Igbo* people. The *Igbo* origin is not known since there was no written account of the *Igbo* people. The *Igbo* people are deeply religious. According to the *Igbo* Traditional belief, *Chukwu* is the creator of the universe. Family is an important institution in the *Igbo* worldview. *Umunna* plays significant roles in the lives of the *Igbo* people.

Chapter three examined the Ozo title taking in *Igbo* society. The Ozo title taking is one of the traditional customs of *Igbo* people. Title taking is regarded as one of the highest titles an *Igbo* man could take. An Ozo title holder is respected across the *Igbo* community. Thus, Ozo title taking is a social institution. A titled holder in *Igbo* community is regarded as a leader among his people. An Ozo man is an equivalent to a knight in the Catholic Church. A titled man in *Igbo* traditional society is a symbol of love, peace, justice, and a custodian of culture. A titled man does not lie. – *Onye Nze adighi atu-asi!*

Chapter four focused on the theological and biblical evaluation of *Igbo* leadership. Theories of human behaviour and leadership qualities were examined. Also, leadership in the pre-colonial *Igbo* community was explored. In the pre-colonial *Igbo* society, the Ozo titled holders exhibited leadership roles. They settled disputes in *Igbo* communities. The research study also examined leadership in the Bible, both Old and New Testaments. Jesus Christ remains the ideal leader in all ages and time.

Chapter five of this study examined the theological framework of Church *Magisterium*, Vatican II, other Church documents, as well as the role of inculturation.

These documents were duly applied to the specific *Igbo* Catholic situation. Inculturation is an important tool to incorporate an Ozo titled man into Christianity, that is dear to him.

Chapter six examined the research methodology used for the exploration of the dissertation. Since the field of investigation is on practical theology, Richard Osmer's research model was used. Osmer's research design (Model 2008) was most appropriate for this study. Ten participants – clergy, titled holders and non-titled holders were interviewed to gather data.

Chapter seven of the study dealt with the research findings of the study. Opinions, views, and arguments of the participants were fully represented. The analysis of the study indicated that a titled holder is a leader in *Igbo* communities. The *Igbo* people therefore had leaders. The research findings also demonstrated that the Ozo title taking in *Igbo* community could be incorporated into Christianity.

Finally, chapter eight concluded the study. This chapter assessed the Ozo title taking and leadership in the current *Igbo* Catholic Church. Pragmatic policy suggestions were made. These policy suggestions would be able to align Ozo title taking to Christianity. The *Igbo* family system is important in grooming leaders. *Igbo* society was governed by Ozo titled holders and council of elders. The findings of the study furthermore indicated that it is only the *Orlu* Diocese that alienates the Ozo titled holders from the Catholic Sacraments.

It therefore becomes necessary to inculturate Ozo institution into Christianity, especially, in the Diocese of *Orlu*, where the Church leadership used the 2000 Diocesan Synod to ban, ostracize, and excommunicate the Ozo titled holders. Renunciation of Ozo title does not resolve this problem created and nurtured in the Diocese of *Orlu*. Is it not funny that an Ozo title holder is regarded as a lapsed Christian in the *Orlu* diocese, but is warmly and affectionately welcomed and considered as a faithful son and Catholic in other Dioceses outside *Orlu*? The Diocese of *Orlu* must feed the sheep of Christ as enshrined in John 21: 15-18. Christianity is a religion founded on love, mercy and compassion of God. Jesus said, "Come to me, all you that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest, for my yoke is easy, and my burden light (Matthew 11:28). God

sought and fed the lost sheep that were scattered in Israel (Ezekiel 34:5-16). Jesus is the Good Shepherd that laid down His life for us (John 10:11).

The Ozo title taking is enshrined into *Igbo* worldviews. People are borne into a particular culture. The *Igbo* people are located in South Eastern Nigeria. The Ozo title is a social institution, in which *Igbo* sons are honoured for their contributions to the community. Unfortunately, some critics have argued that the *Igbo* have no leaders. This study has demonstrated that the *Igbo* have kings/leaders. The Ozo titled holders provided leadership in the *Igbo* communities. This study also provided pragmatic suggestions that would allow Ozo titled holders to lead both in the Church and *Igbo* communities.

## **1.1 THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF *IGBO* SOCIETY**

The historical account of the origin of the *Igbo* People is shrouded in uncertainty (Ogbalu: 1973). The *Igbo* traditional people, unlike the Europeans, strongly depended upon oral tradition, a situation in which events, history, and records are transmitted by word of mouth, from generation to generation (Oforchukwu 2010:18). This is the *raison d'être* why the *Igbo's* accounts of its origin are uncertain. However, historians have proposed two major hypotheses of the origin of *Igbo* people. One account has it that the *Igbo* people might have evolved from Nok, Ife, and Benin civilizations. This historical account is popular among the early colonialists, but is contrary to *Igbo* beliefs. The more accepted belief is that the *Igbo* people metamorphosed from the Stone to Iron Age to the Phoenician settlements in the *Maghreb* (Okigbo 1986:1).

Apart from the aforementioned account of the origin of the *Igbo* people, there is an oral traditional belief that the *Igbo* people migrated from the Jews. This belief, though orally transmitted, is common among the *Igbo* people. This historical belief is similar to the Archaeological records which have based its conclusions on *Igbo* circumcisions, naming ceremony, and the meaning of names assigned at birth. Supporting this account, in an interview held, Chief Bartholomew Oforchukwu noted,

There is no doubt that the *Igbo* people evolved from the Jewish people.

We have similar traditions, cultures and customs. We circumcise our children on the eighth day of birth which is also practised by the Jewish

people. Our naming ceremony is similar to the Jewish people. Based on these facts, we may conclude that the *Igbo* people migrated from the Jewish ancestors.

There are other historical records to support this view. Similarities in customs might move one to link the *Igbo* people with the Hebrews (Ogbalu: 1973). Also, Basden, one of the early Missionaries among the *Igbo* people, supported the views of Chief Oforchukwu. Basden (1966:31) noted,

The *Ibo* country lies within the recognized Negro belt, and the people bear the main characteristics of that stock. ..There are certain customs which rather points to Levitic influence at a more or less remote period. This is suggested in the underlying ideas concerning sacrifice and in the practice of circumcision. The language also bears several interesting parallels with Hebrew idioms.

In addition, in its well researched study, the *Ibo Benei-Yisrael* Association noted some of the *Igbo* customs that are similar to the Jewish people. In this research, the Association said, “Even to this day, *Ibo Benei-Yisrael* practises are still in line with the commands of the Torah. Even with the loss of the written record, the *Ibo Benei-Yisrael* people have maintained the customs and traditions of the ancient Israel in an oral form. A few of these customs still in practise are circumcision, separation of women during the menstrual cycle...the celebration of *Yom Kippur* and *Sukkoth*...” (Ilona 2003:10). The celebration of *Yom Kippur* is important as will be seen in the implication of the study when the researcher shall conclude his findings. However, this belief is common among both the elite and uneducated *Igbo* people. The relevance of this account will be developed in a comparative analysis of *Igbo* religion, culture, worldviews, and leadership.

The *Igbo* people are one of the three major ethnic groups in Nigeria (*Hausa*, *Yoruba* – the other two ethnic groups). *Igbo* is located in the South Eastern part of Nigeria. Unfortunately, there are no accurate figures of the *Igbo* people; this is also applicable to other parts of Nigeria. However, the *Igbo* population is estimated to be about 15-16 million people. *Igbo* people make up 17. 6% of the Nigerian population (Oforchukwu 2010: 19). The language spoken is called *Ibo*. Presently, the *Igbo* people

occupy the five (5) states of *Abia*, *Anambra*, *Ebonyi*, *Enugu*, and *Imo* (See the *Igbo* Map below). The *Igbo* people are also found in other parts of the country like *Bayelsa*, *Delta*, *Rivers*, and *Yenaguo* (Oforchukwu and Njoku 2002:19).

The researcher will at this time like to discuss the *Igbos* in diaspora. The *Igbo* people are scattered all over the world due to their love of adventure. They are the most travelled among the Nigerian ethnic groups. They are like the Jews. They are found everywhere in the world. After the unfortunate war of brothers and sisters of the Nigerian-Biafran war (1967-1970), many *Igbo* people emigrated outside *Igbo* land in search of greener pasture. The *Igbo* people are largely found in cities such as Lagos, Abuja, Kano and Kaduna. They are also found in other countries such as the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Gabon, and Canada. A large number of the *Igbos* are found in communities like London, New York, Atlanta, Houston, California, Washington D.C, and Newark. During the Atlantic Slave trade, many *Igbo* people were taken to the United States of America, Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, and Caribbean Islands. An *Igbo* man or woman makes his/her home wherever he/she goes. He/she organizes other *Igbo* people into communities. The *Igbo* people in these communities practise their religion and culture. They also organize themselves to celebrate the *Igbo* ceremonies such as the New Yam Festivals. Some of the *Igbo* people also take titles such as Ozo titles in their respective communities. In these communities, the *Igbo* people have leaders. Below is an example of the *Igbo* people in diaspora.

## ***Igbo people***

### ***Ndi Igbo***



***Photo 1.1: Igbo People in Diaspora. From left to right, O. Equiano • King Jaja of Opobo • Chinua Achebe • C.N. Adichie***

The *Igbo* people are deeply religious who believe in God known as *Chukwu* (Oforchukwu 2010:3). *Chukwu*, according to *Igbo* tradition, is the creator of the universe. This account is similar to the Judeo-Christian belief in the account of creation (Genesis 1:1-31). The *Igbo* people also believe in the minor gods called spirits (*Muo*). The ancestors have a special place in the lives of the *Igbo* people. They mean more than just being dead. Ancestors are regarded as guardians and promoters of the welfare of the community (Abanuka 2004:51). Among *the Igbos*, the spirits and ancestors are venerated while *Chukwu* is worshipped. *Chukwu* is also referred to as *Chineke* and *Osepuluwa*. *Chineke*, the creator, could be approached through numerous other deities and spirits in the form of natural objects.

The *Igbo* people attach much meaning to names, and this is the *raison d'être* they honour *Chukwu* by naming their children *Igbo* symbolic names. Names such as, *Oforchukwu* (God's justice), *Chukwuma* (God knows), *Chukwuka* (God is greater), and *Kenechukwu* (Thank God) are given to *Igbo* children. These are some of the ways the *Igbos* honour and respect *Chukwu* through a naming ceremony.

The head of the family – *Diokpara* (*Diokpara is the first son of a titled man*) or an Ozo titled person (Ozo is the name of one of the titles taken in *Igbo* society), offers prayers to this *Chukwu* for protection, progress, and favours. As a child, one of the prayers the researcher heard his grandfather, Chief Oforchukwu Ibewuiké repeatedly say was, “*Egbe bere ugo bere, nke si ibe ya ebere, nku kwa ya* (Live and let live).” Individuals could also invoke the names of *Chukwu*, *Muo* (spirits) or dead ancestors.

The ancestors played important roles for the family members. The *Igbo* people believe that they help to protect the family from misfortunes as well as helping family members to reap a good harvest. The ancestors could reincarnate among the children of their descendants. The reverence given to the ancestors serves as the ontological ground of moral principles (Abanuka 2004:54).

The *Igbo* people believe that both poor (*Ogbenye*) and rich (*Ogaranya*) people would be judged at the end of one's life. Judgment would be based upon one's righteousness, honesty, and commitment to community values. Also, attention would be paid to how an *Igbo* man/woman has helped the poor, orphans, and widows. The *Igbo* people believe that the poor man must be helped, no matter his condition in the community.

Sacrifices are central in the lives of the *Igbo* people. These sacrifices could take different dimensions. Each community has its priests (*Ndi nchu-aja*) that offer sacrifice on behalf of the family and *Umunna* (community). Goats, sheep, and chickens are often used for these sacrifices. Sacrifices like prayers are offered for protection, expiation of sins, for thanksgiving, and for help from God, *Chukwu*, spirits and ancestors. It is a common belief among the people that between God and man are the spirits of man's ancestors who have lived according to the tribal laws, rules, and ordinances. In *Igbo* communities, good virtues are praised, and sometimes rewarded. But bad behaviours and avarices are repudiated. There is a strong belief that evil men must be punished, either in this world or in the next. This has a moral overtone among the *Igbo* people. This inspires every *Igbo* son and daughter to live a good and upright life.

The *Igbo* people emphasized the role of education in the micro-society. Education is the future of *Igbo* society. Children are educated in the norms, customs, and traditions of the people. Education in the pre-colonial periods is transmitted by word of mouth from one generation to the next (generation). The family members, extended family, and community played an important role in the education of children. Children are taught the values and taboos of the society. Traditional education had strong moral sides (Oforchukwu and Njoku 2002:4). An *Igbo* child learns by being asked to watch elders do things that are difficult to do. Children learn from their parents or senior brothers and sisters by watching them and doing what and how they observe them do

(Ogbalu: 1973). Children were able to remember important events and dates, even though traditional education was based on oral transmission.

Marriage (*Ilú nwanýi*) is one of the three important events among the *Igbo* people (the other two events are birth and burial). Marriage is considered a community affair in *Igbo* culture. The way that not only one person marries a woman sums up the *Igbo* people's attitude to (marriage) *Ilú nwanýi* (Ogblu: 1973). The choice of a wife is not just the concern of the man. The entire family members must have a say in the choice of a woman to be married into the family fold. *Igbo* marriage is contracted to continue the institution of marriage and continuing the family lineage.

Bride price is an important event in *Igbo* traditional marriage. The bride price is negotiated between the two families. The dowry (bride price) helps to prevent divorce in *Igbo* culture. Also, the middle man (*Onye aka ebe*) plays a vital role between the two families of the bride and groom. He is always available to settle disputes or to convey an important message, when required.

Children, especially, male children, are valued and cherished. Childlessness is undesirable in *Igbo* culture. The male child is expected to inherit the parents' property. Divorce is unheard of, and therefore, is unacceptable in *Igbo* culture. A man could marry more than one wife. Polygamy is a social status which is acceptable in pre-*Igbo* society. An Ozo titled person in *Igbo* community has the prerogative of marrying many wives.

Some studies have been carried out in Ozo title taking in *Igbo* communities. In his study, Abanuka (2004:84) examined the different types of titles taken among the *Igbo* communities. In this study, Abanuka investigated Ozo as idealism. His study on Ozo as idealism is important for the following reasons. First, Abanuka tried to examine the origin of Ozo among the *Igbo* people through stories in *Igbo* oral tradition. Also, Onyedika has done a sketchy investigation of Ozo title taking in his Awa Lecture. In this Awa lecture, his investigation of Ozo title taking was limited to the *Isu-Njaba* community. His study however threw light on how Ozo title is taken in (and) among the *Isu-Njaba* people. Ogbalu (1973) was one of the early *Igbo* scholars to examine Ozo title taking in *Igbo* society. His exploration of Ozo title taking was in the context of social and political institutions.

Also, Odukwe (1985: IV) did an extensive study on Ozo title taking. However, her study on Ozo title taking focused mainly on *Onitsha* town. Odukwe's study was done in analytical context. Ogbukagu (1997) did a detailed study on Ozo title taking. His study examined how Ozo title is taken among the people of *Adazi-nnukwu* in *Anambra* State. His investigation of Ozo title taking was in the perspective of traditional *Igbo* beliefs and practises.

Besides, there are other *Igbo* prominent writers who demonstrated in their writings the clash between *Igbo* culture with the Christian Religion. For example, Chinua Achebe (1994) showed how Christianity conflicted with the *Igbo* culture. In his scholarship, Achebe was able to show the role of titled men in *Igbo* society. Achebe believed that Ozo title taking is an important institution in the *Igbo* community.

The modern *Igbo* came into contact with Christianity in the twentieth century. The *Igbo* people are receptive to other cultures which have made it possible to accept the Christian Religion. The *Igbo* people accept changes easily and adapt to them. European education and Christianity have a tremendous influence on the *Igbo* culture. The Nigeria-Biafran war that was fought among brothers and sisters brought explosive changes in the *Igbo* family systems (Oforchukwu 2006:11). These changes extremely altered the nature of *Igbo* worldviews, family systems, beliefs, *Igbo* leadership, ways of thinking, and the values of Ozo title taking. An Ozo man is noted for his honesty, sincerity, piety, leadership acumen, and devotion to traditions. An *Igbo* man without a title is considered as an *efulefu* (worthless man) among his people. But a man with titles, many children, many wives and barns is revered and respected. Onwu (2002:14) observed that the advent of Christianity in *Igbo* society conflicted with *Igbo* social values, *Ozo title taking* included. The views expressed in Onwu's study will be fully addressed in the research narrative. Also, efforts will be made to relate Onwu's findings to this dissertation exploration.

This study notes that up till today in *Orlu Diocese*, the Ozo titled men are ostracized and denied the Catholic Holy Communion and burial rites. These attitudes have created an atmosphere of distrust, dislike, conflicts, the calling of names and objections between the Ozo titled Catholics and the Church hierarchy in the *Orlu* Catholic community. One may wonder why the Catholic Diocese of *Orlu* has not

adopted Ozo title taking into its Catholic teachings? A brief history would help the reader to understand the genesis of the ban of Ozo title from the Catholic Diocese of *Orlu*.

The Catholic Diocese of *Orlu* held its first Synod on November 26, 2000, on the Solemnity of Christ the King. Prior to this Synod, a committee was set up to review some areas of Catholic teachings. Unfortunately, the committee was not open to divergent voices. However, Ozo title taking was banned in the Diocese. The Synod said that Catholic Christians must not take the *Nze* and Ozo title because it could not be taken without any modicum of idolatrous practice, overt or covert (Synod 2000:28-29). According to the Synod, the Ozo institution could not be Christianized (Synod 2000:29). Based on this principle, the Church leadership took a decision to ban the Ozo institution from the Catholic Diocese of *Orlu*. Also, the Church leadership called upon the titled holders who had already taken the title to renounce it (Synod 2000:29). According to the Church leadership in *Orlu* Diocese, sanctions which included excommunication from the Church Sacraments and exclusion from Christian funeral awaited offenders (Synod 2000:29). This decision was made in 2000.

However, due to a series of agitations in the Diocese of *Orlu*, the present Church leadership has constituted a committee to look into the 2000 Synod that banned the Ozo title taking in *Orlu* Diocese. This committee is, however, expected to submit its findings sometime in 2011. This is the situation of Ozo title taking now in the Diocese of *Orlu*.

Unfortunately, some scholars, analysts and writers believed that the *Igbo* people have no *leaders/rulers* among them. In most quarters, the *Igbo* are said to be without kings – *Igbo Enwe Eze*. Thus, this false assessment is due to ignorance of *Igbo* society and *Igbo* culture by our fellow Nigerians (Nwankwo 1985:14). It is therefore unfair to attribute this to *Ndi Igbo* (*Ndi Igbo* refers to *Igbo* people). The *Igbo* do have leaders as will be shown from this scholarly dissertation.

Based on these facts, it becomes crucial to do a scientific study to demonstrate that the *Igbo* have kings. What is important is that the *Igbo* had a well established pattern by which the *Igbo* society was organized. The *Igbo Umunna* (community) had customs, traditions, rules and regulations that guided everybody. Prior to the advent of

the Europeans in *Igbo* land, these rules were made and executed by the *Igbo* titled men.

To articulate this study effectively, the researcher will utilize politico-economic, religious, theological, biblical, exegetical, Church documents, Vatican II documents and other related documents to accomplish this all important task of incorporating Ozo title taking into *Igbo* Catholic Church. Furthermore, the theory of inculturation would be explored because of its relevance to the research problem of this study. This study will review inculturation as expounded by Vatican II and Pope John Paul II in *Ecclesia* in Africa (1995).

This study will also use literary and empirical methodologies, based on Richard Osmer's model (2008). Richard Osmer developed a framework for practical theology that focused on four key questions. The *Igbo* people, being the focus of this study, have a common culture, traditions and language. The institutions, social organizations, and religions are the same. What is significant is that the underlying principles and practices are the same everywhere in the *Igbo* communities (Ogbalu: 1973).

## **1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Before knowledge of the Europeans and full exposure to Christianity, the *Igbo* people were noted for having strong ties to their customs, traditions, and ways of life. Title holders were respected for their accomplishments. *Nze na Ozo* (*Nze* is the name of a titled man in *Igbo* society) title holders performed special leadership functions in the community. They helped to govern and maintain peace and order. Ozo titled men settled cases with elders among its people. The *Igbo* people maintained a lively and stable culture before the advent of Christianity. One of the most significant signs of the development of *Igbo* culture is its system of law and order. The work of elders and Ozo titled men showed how functional the *Igbo* culture was before it came into contact with the Christian Religion.

However, before Christianity ever arrived in *Igbo* land, there were some customs of questionable character. First, the *Igbo* people have the custom of killing twins. Secondly, the *Igbo* have the custom of sacrificing human beings to the gods and deities. Thirdly, the *Igbo* have a custom of burying a king (*Eze*) with a human being. These *Igbo*

customs conflicted with the teaching of Christianity. Christianity questioned these *Igbo* customs and maintained that *Igbo* culture is devoid of good values. Also, some analysts have written the *Igbo* people off as a nation without leaders. However, it has been established that there were pre-colonial kings in *Igbo* land as exemplified in *Nri* hegemony (*Nri* is an ancient *Igbo* city-state in *Anambra*, Nigeria). The theory of *Igbo Enwe Eze* (*Igbo Enwe Eze* is a term which states that the *Igbo* people have no king/leader) therefore should not be taken seriously, as this study will demonstrate.

The *Igbo* society stands divided and disunited between those who defend the *Igbo* traditions and those who have accepted Christianity but criticize some *Igbo* values. These tensions have led some analysts to question the role of *Ozo* titled holders in *Igbo* Catholic Church. Today, there is a big problem in accepting *Ozo* titled men as leaders. The main problem to be considered in this Dissertation is fourfold:

1. To demonstrate that the *Igbo* have leaders/rulers.
2. To investigate the roles of the *Ozo* titled holders in the *Igbo* community.
3. To investigate the importance of the roles of the *Ozo* titled holders in the *Igbo* Catholic Church.
4. To examine the problems and issues raised by the European Missionaries' interpretation of Christianity, *Igbo* culture and religion and Church leadership in regards to *Ozo* title taking by *Igbo* Christians.

To effectively answer the main problem of this Dissertation, the researcher will align this research with Christ's teaching on leadership. In view of this, Matthew 20:24-27, cf. Mark 10:42-45 and Luke 22:24-27 will be crucial in this investigation. In these passages, the concept of leadership, as used by Christ refers to service. Thus, greatness could be beneficial only when used as servants of all. These Biblical passages will be expounded in detail in chapter four of this dissertation.

### 1.3 OBJECTIVES

The main objective of this dissertation is to assess the Ozo title taking and its implications for current leadership issues in *Igbo* Catholic communities. The thrust of this effort will aptly be directed to providing policy makers with evidence to re-assess their perceptions on *Igbo* leadership. To achieve this task, the researcher intends to create awareness of the *Igbo* worldviews that have been misunderstood and misrepresented by the earlier European Missionaries and colonialists in *Igbo* society. The primary objective of this study is to emphasize that the Ozo titled holders exhibited leadership characteristics, and therefore, the *Igbo* have leaders (*Ndi Igbo Nwere Eze*). The objective (i.e., how it enhances leadership in the *Igbo* Catholic community) will be considered later in this dissertation.

### 1.4 PURPOSE

An Ozo titled man is respected for his accomplishments in the *Igbo* society. He is part of the law making process in the *Igbo* community. He also helps to settle disputes in the family and village square (*Umunna*). His honesty and sincerity is unquestionable. But when Christianity came into the *Igbo* society, some of the values attached to Ozo title taking were questioned by certain Church leaders. Some of the *Igbo* traditional taboos were integrated into Christianity. First, the killings of twins were abolished by Christianity. Secondly, *Osu* (Outcast) was also admitted into Christianity. Prior to the advent of Christianity, the *Osu* people were not allowed to intermarry with the *Diala* (free born) (Achebe 1994:156). Incidentally, they were also not allowed to take titles in some *Igbo* communities. However, the *Osu* became part of the component of the new Christian Religion. These people accepted Christianity with open arms. The White man also succeeded in turning the *Igbo* people against themselves. These incidents generated tensions and conflicts between *Igbo* traditional customs and Missionary Christianity. Missionary Christianity regarded *Igbo* traditional customs as barbaric, irrational and unfair. A Christian missionary is commissioned by the Lord to make disciples, followers of Christ. Jesus commands all Christians to share the Gospel, the message of His death and resurrection that conquered the penalty and power of sin. Jesus says: Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the

name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age" ( Matthew 28:19-20). On the other hand, Christianity (from the Greek word *Χριστός*, *Khristos*, "Christ", literally "anointed one") is a monotheistic religion based on the life and teachings of Jesus Christ as presented in the New Testament. This distinction between Christianity and Missionary Christianity is important in this study because it will help to correct the mistakes of the early Catholic Fathers and missionaries in *Igbo* Catholic community.

Also, the imperial and British governments as well as analysts argued that the *Ndi Igbo* had no king – *Igbo Enwe Eze*. This slogan has penetrated into the mind and hearts of other Nigerians to believe that the *Ndi Igbo* had no leaders. Unfortunately, this attitude has also affected some *Igbo* to believe that the *Igbo* could not be ruled and (or) led by any *Igbo* son or daughter.

Based on the aforementioned realities, the purpose of this research study is twofold:

1. To demonstrate that the *Igbo* had a king (leader).
2. To reconcile both *Igbo* traditional custom and Christianity by integrating and incorporating the *Ozo* title taking into Christianity.

To achieve this purpose, the researcher will formulate a theoretical frame of reference from theological, biblical, and pastoral perspectives as means of helping the *Igbo* people to re-organize and re-orient themselves.

## **1.5 POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS IN IGBO SOCIETY**

The pre-colonial political system of the *Igbo* was based on a *Democratic Republican* system of government. It differed from the political systems of its neighbours (the *Hausa* and *Yoruba* hegemonies) and Africa. It was segmentary in nature. The *Igbo* political structure lacked a central authority figure. This system of government provided its citizens with equality of opinions and expressions. This system of government was witnessed by the British Colonialists when they first arrived in *Igbo* land. The pre-colonial *Igbo* communities were organized and ruled under the following segments:

1. The Family members (*Ezi na ulo*)

2. The Council of elders (*Umunna*)
3. The Ozo titled men (*Ndi Nze na Ozo*)
4. The Diviners (*Ndi na-agba afa*)
5. The Aga-grades (*Ndi Ebiri*)
6. The Chief priest of Ani (The Earth Goddess)
7. The *Umuada* (Daughters)

These individuals perform important roles both politically and religiously among the *Igbo* people. These members are duly consulted when important decisions that would affect the community are to be decided. Consequently, this study will identify the leadership roles, functions, and duties which each of these institutions performed in the pre-colonial *Igbo* society.

## **1.6 THE VATICAN II (1960-1975)**

The Second Vatican Council was promulgated by Pope John XXIII in 1962. It opened under Pope John XXIII on 11 October 1962 and closed under Pope Paul VI on 21 November 1965. The Vatican Council speaks for the Church in the modern world. The Second Vatican Council was the beginning of revolution in Christianity. The thrust of this study is to empower the *Igbo* Catholic Ozo title holders as instructed by the teaching of the Vatican Council II on leadership. The call of the Second Vatican Council was one of simplicity. It was a call of back to basics. This call would encourage the *Igbo* Catholic members to live authentically the message of the Gospel, first as *Igbo*, Catholics, and then as titled men. The documents of the Second Vatican Council would help people to understand clearly the pastoral, missiological, theological, biblical, cultural, and canonical implications of the teachings of the Church among the *Igbo* Christians for Ozo title taking and leadership. The thrust of this study is to demonstrate that *Igbo* titled men performed a leadership role in the light of the Second Vatican Council (1960-1975). To understand the message of Christ afresh, the missiological, cultural, and canonical implications will be investigated.

## 1.7 MISSIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

The mission of Christ is important in the teaching of the Church. To appreciate clearly the mission of Christ, one has to understand what the Bible says about Christ's mission to the world. *Dei Verbum* is crucial for one to understand the mind of Christ to his faithful. Some biblical passages will shed more light on how Jesus wants his message to be understood and applied to the *Igbo* Christians. Some key passages like Matthew 9:36-38 and Luke 10:1-24 will be discussed in this study and applied to the Church in *Igbo* society. These biblical passages emphasize the principle of harvest and compassion of Jesus Christ, which will be expounded later in this exploration.

## 1.8 CULTURAL IMPLICATIONS

The Second Vatican Council is upfront on the need to implant the Christian faith in the customs and language of the people. Jesus was born into the Jewish culture. Jesus used imagery and metaphors that are common in Jewish culture to preach the Gospel message. Jesus did not use words that are unfamiliar to his Jewish brothers and sisters to teach them about God. Jesus used the seed as an object lesson to explain the Parable of the Sower (Matthew 13:1-23). In the Parable of the Sower, Jesus compared the human heart to soil. He described four different hearts according to their responses to the Word of God (Wiersbe 2007:92). The seed here represents the Word of God which was a common word for the Jewish people. This demonstrates that Jesus used his native language, idioms, metaphors, and imagery to explain the Word of God to his people. Supporting the use of native customs to preach the Gospel, the Council Fathers (*Ad Gentes* n.22) said,

So too indeed, just as happened in the economy of the incarnation, the young Churches, which are rooted in Christ and built on the foundations of the apostles, take over the riches of the nations which have been given to Christ as an inheritance. They borrow from the customs, traditions, wisdom, teaching, arts and sciences of their people everything which could be used to praise the glory of the Creator, manifest the grace of the Saviour, or contribute to the right ordering of Christian life.

The example of Jesus and the documents of the Vatican Council II challenge the *Igbo* Church of the need to incorporate the *Igbo* customs and traditions into Christianity. The *Igbo* people would feel at home with their languages, expressions, idioms, proverbs, imagery, and metaphors being integrated into Christianity. The objective of this study is to explore the ways in which Ozo title taking could be adapted into Christianity. Adaptation is an inseparable aspect of evangelization. It is the presentation and re-expression of the Gospel in forms and terms proper to a culture. Adaptation is necessary for the *Igbo* Catholic community for different reasons. First, in a true adaptation, there are no winners or losers. Second, this would help us to re-interpret the Ozo title taking in the light of the Gospel without being unfaithful to either. Third, it would add a genuine faith in the process of adapting Ozo title taking into the *Igbo* Catholic community.

## **1.9 CANON LAW**

Canon is derived from the Greek word *Kanon* which means a rule or direction. Canon Law (Boudinhon 1910) is the body of laws and regulations made by or adopted by ecclesiastical authority, for the government of the Christian organization and its members. The word “adopt” used here is important in this research study. This research study will adopt the local law which would apply to the *Igbo* community. It means that there are some elements in Canon Law borrowed by the Church from civil law or even from the writings of private writers who are not experts in ecclesiastical society. The ecclesiastical laws are different from the Divine Laws established by Jesus Christ to his Church. The purpose of Canon law is to help the organization of the Church for the good of the people of God. The local law will be used for the specific needs of the *Igbo* Catholics with regard to Ozo title taking.

Canon Law is an authority Jesus gave to Peter and other apostles as exemplified on the Binding and Loosing principles (Matthew 18:18-20). The Church has the power to make rules and regulations that will guide its faithful. This power to bind and loose also extends to today’s priests, ministers, pastors, bishops, and the pope. The main objective of this study will be to create pragmatic suggestions that will apply to the *Igbo* Church in dealing with the Ozo title holders.

## 1.10 THE BIBLICAL IMPLICATIONS

The Council Fathers reiterated that the Bible is the Word of God. The text of *Dei Verbum* (p.11) states that the Bible is divinely inspired. The first words in No. 105 say, “God is the author of Sacred Scripture.” This means that God wrote the Bible through the instrumentality of the sacred writers. The Gospel of John explains this fact clearly about the Word. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God (John 1:1). The implication of this is that the Bible is the Word of God. God guides the Church through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit as she interprets the Word for the nourishment of the people of God.

It has already been established that the Bible is the Word of God. Hence the purpose of this study is to examine some of the Biblical texts and apply them to the lives of the *Igbo* Christians. Jesus said that, “Heaven and earth will pass away, but the Words of God will not pass away” (Matthew 24:35). Ephesians 5:21-33 will be crucial in this study. This text will be applied to the *Igbo* Catholic families. Saint Paul gave a biblical injunction on how people of faith should live in a Christian family. The biblical importance of this text is that the *Igbo* Christians are like the Christian family which Paul addressed. However, it is important to note that in this passage and similar ones, Paul defines two types of families: the normal and small Christian family, and the bigger family – that is the Church which is the Family of families. This distinction will be explained later in chapter two.

## 1.11 THE PASTORAL IMPLICATIONS

The early Missionary understanding of the *Igbo* culture is unwelcoming. Basden, one of the early missionaries did not study the *Igbo* language, customs, and traditions. He misunderstood the *Igbo* cultures. According to Basden,

The black man himself does not know his own mind. He does the most extraordinary things, and cannot explain why he does them...He is not controlled by logic.

This shows that missionary Christianity runs into conflicts with the *Igbo* traditional culture because of the inability of the missionaries to understand the *Igbo* culture. This

misunderstanding created a pastoral problem for the Church in *Igbo* land. This also accounts for why the *Ozo* titled men are not accorded proper respect in the *Igbo* Catholic Church. For example, as this study will demonstrate that in Orlu Diocese, an *Ozo* titled man is denied the Sacrament of Reconciliation, Holy Communion, and a decent Christian burial. This has generated misunderstanding among the *Ozo* Christians in Orlu Diocese. While in other Dioceses in the *Igbo* Church, *Ozo* title taking is not a problem. It is important for the Church in Orlu Diocese to have a re-think on its local law that prohibits the *Ozo* titled holders from the sacraments. The Church in the Orlu Diocese must have a re-think because the *Igbo* *Ozo* title holders are created in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1: 27). This means that man bears God's characteristics (Oforchukwu 2010:130).

This study is undertaken to create an understanding between the Catholic Church in the Orlu Diocese and the *Ozo* titled members.

John 21:15-19 is crucial in this study. In this Biblical text, Jesus challenged Peter to feed his sheep. It is crucial to note here that Peter's shepherd role is tied to love (21:15-17). The Vatican Council II (1975:10) encouraged the Church to implant the Gospel in the tradition and customs of the people. This would be encouraging the integration of the *Igbo* Catholic Church into Christianity.

## 1.12 THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

The Vatican Council II is an important Church document. The document focuses on the entire human person and its world. If the Church is to make a real contribution to the world, it will need to understand that world (Sullivan 2007:40). Supporting the Council Fathers, the *Gaudium et Spes* (1965 n.2) says,

Therefore, the Council focuses its attention on the world of men, the whole human family along with the sum of those realities in the midst of which it lives, that world which is the theatre of human history.

The Church Fathers recognized the need to work in collaboration with the Holy Spirit as we discern the mind of God. Both pastors and theologians need to work according to the dictate of the Holy Spirit. Supporting the need to work along with the Holy Spirit, *Gaudium et Spes* (1965 n.44) says,

With the help of the Holy Spirit, it is the task of the entire people of God especially pastors and theologians to hear, distinguish and interpret the many voices of our age, and to judge them in the light of the Divine Word, so that revealed truth can always be more deeply penetrated, better understood and set forth to greater advantage.

We live in a changing world. This is important as the pastors and theologians discern the mind of God. Theology must recognize this and work according to the signs of the times. Pope John XXIII (*Pacem in Terris* 1990:107-27) invited the Church to read the signs of the time. The signs of the time would then help the Church to take root in any culture, and in any age – including the *Igbo* Church.

The task of this research is to remind the Church in *Igbo* society of the teachings of the Vatican Council II and the need to apply them to *Ozo* title holders in the *Igbo* Church. The theological works of the Council Fathers should shed light on the mind of God through the influence of the Holy Spirit. The *Igbo* Church can no longer ignore the signs of the time in the modern world. If the Church wants to be relevant to the *Igbo* Catholics, it must generate theology that is peculiar to *Igbo* problems.

### **1.13 DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

Selecting a suitable research design and methodology is a matter of logic (Mouton 2001:55-58). Research design (Mouton 2001:55) is a road map that guides the planning of the research. Newman et al (1997:37) noted that the research design section describes the type of research design used. The research design is important because it guides the researcher to know the type of questions to ask and what elements to include. Creswell (2003:5) argued that knowledge of the design is crucial in research study. The methodology of this research will be both comparative and polemical. However, Osmer's (2008) model for practical theology will be employed. Osmer's model is appropriate for this research exploration. Richard Osmer developed a framework for practical theology that focused on four key questions. The following questions posed by Osmer (2008): What is going on in a given context? Why is this going on? What ought to be going on? And how might the leader shape the context to form the basis for this dissertation? Using this model in this dissertation is important

because it is aimed at equipping the *Igbo* leaders to guide their communities with theological honesty.

The researcher will analyze and compare the different viewpoints of scholars, documents, theologians, participants in this study, and the Church Fathers on the Ozo title taking and leadership principles in *Igbo* communities. Since the research is polemical, this will offer the researcher the opportunity to argue for and against the modalities of Ozo title taking in *Igbo* society. To achieve the desired objective of this research study, the researcher will employ the textual, historical, source, and redaction criticisms (Mouton 2001:55-56) that are available at the time this study is conducted. Redaction criticism is extremely crucial for this study because it will help the researcher to articulate the different theologies that would aptly apply to the Ozo title taking in the *Igbo* Catholic Church.

This study is also an empirical research (Brannard 1996:46). This means that the researcher will articulate the best method for the study. As an empirical study, the researcher should employ both intensive in-depth interviews and a focus group discussion to gather data for the study. The interview questions will be similar for all the respondents. On the other hand, the focus group discussions will help the researcher to solicit views about the Ozo title taking among the *Igbos*. This is important because the views that this study will generate will help to create pragmatic suggestions towards Ozo title taking in the *Igbo* Catholic Church.

Finally, this study will employ the theological and pastoral methodologies. The theological method will consist of interpretations of Vatican II, inculturation, the Bible passages, and the criticisms of missionary Christianity. Similarly, the pastoral method will consist of reconciling both *Igbo* traditional customs and Christianity. These methodologies are crucial in this dissertation exploration.

## **1.14 THE AREA OF STUDY**

The study is limited to *Igbo* communities. The target population for this study will include clergy, *Ndi Nze na Ozo* titled men, and non-titled holders in *Igbo* communities. A small number of participants allow researchers to do an in-depth study (Miles and Huberman 1994). Based on this principle, the researcher will interview ten interviewees (clergy, titled holders and non- titled holders) who are selected for this study.

## **1.15 HYPOTHESIS**

It is anticipated that this study will generate a set of suggestions that will help to explain *Ozo* title taking and its relationship to leadership in the *Igbo* Catholic Church.

It is particularly believed that this study will identify European missionary interpretations and applications of Christianity as the major problems the *Igbo* customs and traditions have today.

The study would be able to establish that *Ozo* title taking as *Igbo* tradition is a social organization that is aimed at according respect and recognition to title holders and its leadership role in an *Igbo* community.

Through its leadership role, it is anticipated that the *Ozo* title holders will help to prevent the concentration of authority in any one association among the *Igbo* people.

It is anticipated that the *Orlu* Diocese is the only one in *Igbo* society that has not fully accepted the Catholic *Ozo* title holders into its fold.

It is expected that the committee the present leadership of the Catholic Diocese of *Orlu* sets up to review the 2000 Synod that banned the *Ozo* title holders will submit its report some time this year, 2011.

It is envisaged that this study will demonstrate that *Ozo* title holders should play a significant theological role in the current leadership of the *Igbo* Church.

## **1.16 THE VALUE OF THIS RESEARCH STUDY**

This study will examine the role of *Ozo* title holders that has undermined the effectiveness of *Igbo* leadership. *Ozo* title taking is an important institution among the *Igbo* people (Ogbalu 1973). *Ozo* title taking is founded on very firm moral principles that affect the lives of the *Igbo* people for good. The candidate for *Ozo* title taking should be

a symbol of moral and spiritual excellence in the *Igbo* community. For example, the Ozo title holder should say the truth at all times (*in season and out of season*). He should be fair in his settling of disputes among his people. Also, he should be a religious man who lives a holy life, upholds publicly (and even privately) the morality of the *Igbo* community and observes its taboos. This study is important because no study has been done on Ozo title taking and its implications for current leadership issues in the *Igbo* Catholic Church.

Based on the aforementioned facts, the significance of this study is to examine the Ozo title taking and its implications for current leadership issues in *Igbo* Catholic Church. The value of this Dissertation is fivefold:

1. This study would generate a rich set of suggestions that could be applied to any part of *Igbo* community. As a result, the findings of this study could be used to create a model for the *Igbo* title taking and leadership policy.
2. To do a scientific study to demonstrate that the *Igbo* have leaders.
3. This study would create awareness about the role of Ozo title holders in the *Igbo* community.
4. The research findings of this study would assist students, teachers, Catholics, and *Ndi Igbo* in cultural classrooms.
5. The baseline data garnered in this study should serve as guide for future researchers in their quest for additional knowledge.

## **1.17 THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS OF THE STUDY**

The researcher respects the ethical issues that are involved in this study. The participants were informed about the purpose of the study. Their consent was requested. Their confidentiality was respected. Their consent was requested before any of their views were mentioned in the study. The ten participants were informed that their participation would be voluntary, and that they would be free to discontinue from the study without any consequence.

The interview questions were explained to all the participants. The interview time was scheduled that was suitable to the participants. The participants were informed how long the interview would last (usually 20-50 minutes). To avoid any bias, the interviewer

remained neutral throughout the interview sessions. This method helped to guarantee the authenticity of the study. The interview questionnaires were the same for all the participants. The same open-ended questions were asked to all the participants in this study. The focus of the interview was on Ozo title taking and leadership among the *Igbo* Catholic Church in Nigeria.

The research questions of this study will include the following:

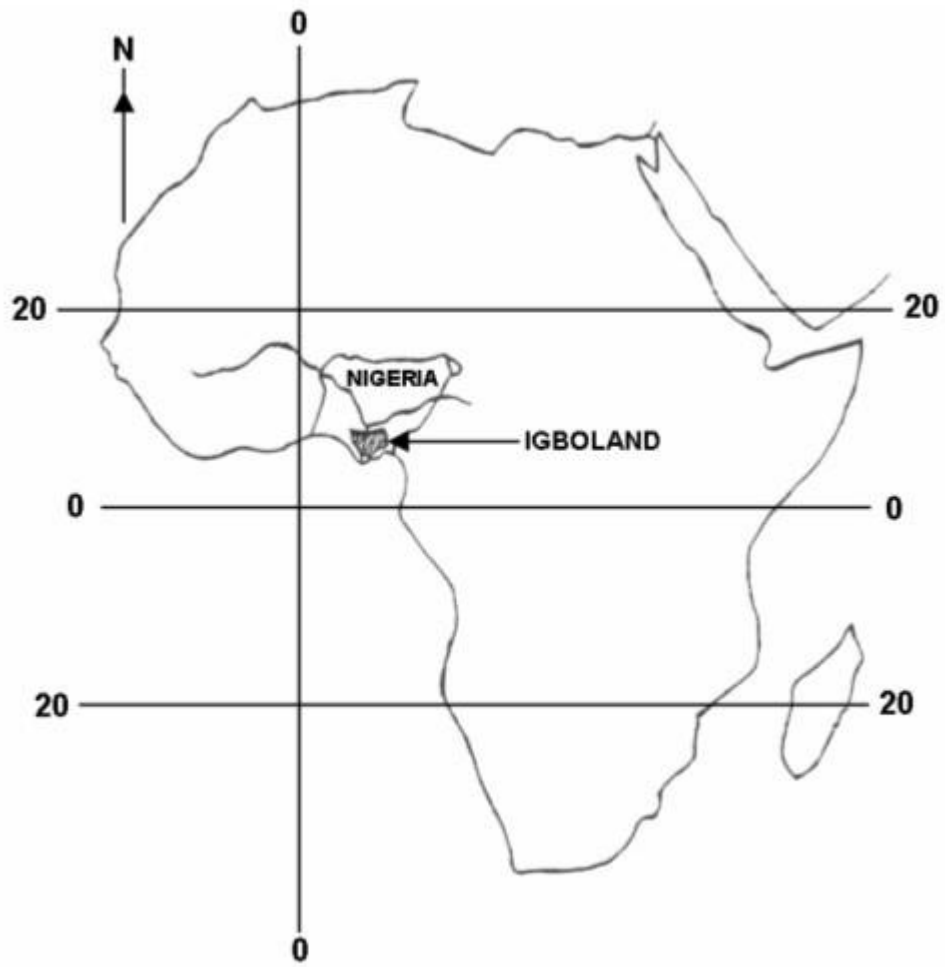
- RQ1: What is Ozo title taking?
- RQ2: What are the purposes of Ozo title taking?
- RQ3: Who could be admitted into Ozo title taking?
- RQ4: What are the functions of Ozo titled holders?
- RQ5: Do the *Igbo* have leaders?
- RQ6: What does the Church say about Ozo title?
- RQ7: What does the Church say about inculturation?
- RQ8: What does the Church say about Ozo titled holders?
- RQ9: What pastoral problems do *Igbo* Christians face with regard to Ozo title taking?
- RQ10: Does the Ozo title taking conflict with Christian Practices?
- RQ11: How should the Church address these problems?
- RQ12: What would be the guidelines for Ozo title taking among the *Igbo* Christians?
- RQ 13: What are the missionary teachings that down-grade Ozo title holding in the Church?

These research questions are important because they helped to resolve the issues that were raised in this dissertation. Also, the research questions were used to appraise the theological and biblical basis for Ozo title taking and leadership in the *Igbo* Catholic Church.

***IGBO WORLD***



**Map 1.2: Africa**



**MAP OF AFRIKA SHOWING THE LOCATION OF NIGERIA AND IGBOLAND**

## **CHAPTER TWO:**

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE:**

### **THE IMPACT OF *IGBO* WORLDVIEWS ON OZO TITLE**

### **TAKING AND LEADERSHIP**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

A review of literature will provide the reader with overview knowledge of *Igbo* society (Oforchukwu 2010:16). It is important to understand the *Igbo* man/woman and his/her worldviews in the global society. The *Igbo* man/woman has been misunderstood by his/her neighbours, Africans and the entire world. The cause of this misunderstanding is partly due to misinformation from bad press (Onwu 2002:1). Also, some people have not been able to understand the culture, traditions, and the worldviews of the *Igbo* people. The early European Missionaries did damage to the *Igbo* culture by their inability to study and learn the *Igbo* traditions. This has caused a lot of problems to the *Igbo* culture and its proper way of relating to God, gods, spirits, ancestors, and deities. This chapter will devote itself to explain the *Igbo* culture, *Igbo* man, and his micro-worldviews. Also, literature that deals with the origin of the *Igbo*, *Igbo* Traditional Religions, and *Igbo* concept of life will be explored. In addition, *Igbo* morality, *Igbo* idea of truth, and ancestors will be considered.

## **2.2 IGBO WORLDVIEWS**

### **2.2.1 Introduction**

This first literature review chapter will concentrate on the *Igbo* worldviews. The intent is to help the reader to understand who the *Igbo* man/woman is. Understanding the *Igbo* man/woman would help the reader to appreciate what the *Igbo* man/woman stands for. This section will begin by asking who are the *Igbo*?

### **2.2.2 Who are the *Igbo*?**

At the introduction of this study, the researcher sketchily discussed the origin of the *Igbo* people. Based on this fact, I am not going to talk about the origin of the *Igbo* people as a race. The *Igbo* people are found in the Southeastern part of Nigeria (Onwu 2002:2). These *Igbo* people are mainly found in the five states of Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo (Oforchukwu and Njoku 2002:18-19). The *Igbo* people are also found in other parts of Nigeria like Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Delta, Rivers, and Yenoguo states. The basic cultural traits of the *Igbo* people include the following: the linguistic, social, political, economic, ritual, and cultural traits (Onwuejeogwu 1975).

The *Igbo* culture and religion are tied together. *Igbo* religion and traditions are two inseparable concepts. The people's life, way of living, and behaviours are tied in the *Igbo* religion and traditions. Nwala (1985:112-200) noted that "A people or an individual may have a philosophy but no religion, but no people or individual may have a religion without a philosophy. Religion and philosophy are related both in the belief and practise content." Religion is an intrinsic part of culture. On the hand, culture is itself the totality of knowledge and behaviour, ideas and objects that constitute the heritage of the *Igbo* people. The *Igbo* culture constitutes the *Igbo* beliefs, customs, ethos, behaviour, and morality.

Since the culture and religion are tied together, the *Igbo* people are by nature religious. Every action of an *Igbo* man/woman has a place and role in its religion. In his study about the *Igbo* people, Leonard (1900) observed,

They are in the strict and natural sense of the word a truly and a deeply religious people, of whom it can be said that they eat religiously, drink

religiously, bath religiously, dress religiously, and sin religiously. In a few words, the religion of these as I have all along endeavored to point out is their existence and their existence is their religion.

Other scholars hold the same view with what Leonard said about the *Igbo* people. Supporting this view, Jordan Basden (1971:115) said, “The average native (*Igbo*), was admirably suited by environment and training, for an explanation of life in terms of the spirit, rather than of the flesh.”

### **2.2.3 The Origin of Igbo Traditional Religion**

In the preceding section, the researcher has been able to establish who the *Igbo* people are. It was ascertained that the *Igbo* people are deeply religious. The task here is to trace the origin of *Igbo* traditional religion. This task would help one to know more about the *Igbo* culture, religion, tradition, and race.

In every race, religion is an integral part of its origin. One is not talking about the superiority of any religion over others. The Jewish people, the people of God, trace their origin from the Creator (God). The Genesis account of the creation is important to understand the relationship of the Jewish people with God (Genesis 1:1- 2:3). The initial creation account of Genesis is not created *ex nihilo* (Daniel 2008). Rather, its content was born out of a rich plethora of creation accounts permeating the ancient Near East. According to Daniel (2008), “One striking example of this is seen in the similarities between Genesis and the *Enumah Elish*.” The Biblical account of creation could be divided into three major parts: the origin of the universe (Genesis 1:1), the origin of the earth (Genesis 1:2-2:3), and the origin of man (Genesis 2:4-2:25). An interesting incident to note in the Genesis creation account is that it has a divine and religious undertone. Genesis says, “God rests on the seventh day.”

The Christians believe in God’s Revelatory theory. Revelation is God’s disclosure of Himself to man. In the final age, God revealed Himself to humanity through His Son, Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-2). The aforementioned facts will help us to articulate and understand the origin of *Igbo* traditional religion.

As mentioned above, Christians believe in Revelation theory. The *Igbo* people also believe that God revealed *Chukwu* to their ancestors. *Chukwu* is a Supreme Being among the *Igbo* people. *Chukwu* is worshipped. According to one worldview, *Chukwu* (also called *Chineke*, *Osepuluwa*) created the universe (*Uwa*). The universe is divided into two levels: the human world (*Uwa*) and the spiritual world (the sun, *Igwe*, sky, etc.). *Chukwu* therefore revealed himself to the *Igbo* ancestors who worshipped him by offering sacrifices of praise, petitions, and thanksgivings. The *Igbo* people as noted earlier, are by nature religious. It is therefore in the nature of the *Igbo* people to be religious. *Igbo* culture is rooted in religion, and religion is also rooted in the *Igbo* culture. Culture and religion are two inseparable realities among the *Igbos*. Religion is the determining principle of *Igbo* life. As noted by Onwu (2002:3), religion is *Igbo's* basic philosophy and philosophy is their basic religion.

The issue of the origin of *Igbo* traditional religion is a difficult one. This is a topic that has not attracted much scholarship. A lot has been written on the *Igbo* traditional religion, but not on the origin of *Igbo* religion. When this question was asked, Chief Oforchukwu simply observed, "Religion came into being out of quest and curiosity." *Igbo* traditional religion came into being out of fear of what was happening in the early *Igbo* periods. This mode of explanation could be termed psychological theory (Onwu 2002:3). The early *Igbo* missionaries termed it that the *Igbo* people are worshipping inanimate objects. Taylor Basden called the *Igbo's* curiosity and things happening around them that were not fully understood animism. The underlying principle here is that religion is used to reduce the curiosity, fears, tensions, and anxiety of the people. This is the belief upon which the psychological theory is anchored at the end.

The origin of the *Igbo* traditional religion could be built upon the sociological theory which suggests that *Igbo* religion stems from social needs. The sociological theory noted that the society is the society (Emile Durkheim). Durkheim did not focus on what motivates the actions of individuals. It is the collection of individuals that make up the social facts of society. In view of this, it is the society that determines what is sacred or taboos among the people. In *Igbo* society, the *Umunna* (community) had its needs, what it considers to be sacred, and its taboos that existed before individuals. Sociological theory that focuses on religion is significant to social solidarity and the

integration of the relevant society within which the feelings, beliefs and practises are common to *Igbo* people. *Igbo* religion therefore originated when they were in need of food (during scarcity) and peace. During these periods of needs, they looked for a deity, in most cases, *Chukwu* to pacify. The chief priest, in the process to pacify this deity, would sacrifice fowls to *Chukwu* for protection, prosperity, and safety. This theory could be a myth, but it is a belief among the *Igbos* on how its religion came into being.

All along, the researcher has been engaged in discussing the origin of *Igbo* traditional religion. The next section will discuss the *Igbo* education. It will concentrate on how an *Igbo* man/woman was educated before the advent of Christianity.

#### **2.2.4 Education in *Igbo* Tradition**

In the pre-colonial periods, the *Igbo* people had no schools. Education at this period was informal. Since there were no schools, an *Igbo* child was not assigned to a particular teacher or teachers. There were no classrooms where children would be educated for a period of time. There was no school calendar to guide how children were taught or educated. Parents were the first teacher children had in the pre-colonial era. The mother was always with the child. The mother had an enormous influence on the child. The mother took care of the child, protected him/her, and taught him/her the basic things the child should know. A child learned from the mother how to speak (Oforchukwu and Njoku 2002:2-3).

Children's education was the prerogative of parents, village members, and community. It is important to note that in the *Igbo* tradition, a child does not only belong to the parents. A child in the *Igbo* traditional set up belongs to the community. A child is not only an asset to the parents, but also to the community. A child therefore is educated according to the norms, customs, and traditions of the community. This is the *raison d'être* why every member of the community has a stake in the upbringing and education of the child. According to Ambrose Okeke (1991:15),

Education in the wider sense of the term has all along been an essential factor in the way of life of the *Igbo* man. Parents, guardians relatives and a wider circle of kinsmen in *Igbo* land consider it a sacred

trust of discharging their obligations as it concerned the socialization of the *Igbo* child. As a matter of fact, the entire village took part in this socialization process.

As the child grew up, other members of the family could send the child on errands. The extended family could tell the child stories of the tortoise (*Mbe*), *Idu na Ali*, and other related *Igbo* folktale. The child therefore learned a lot through the parents, village members, and community.

A child is meant to learn through watching and imitating adults. After watching adults do certain duties and works, children become experts in the field. Children learned adult roles as well as the skills necessary for survival, in short, by imitating adults engaged in their daily activities and by assisting parents and other adults as they engaged in such activities. The English adage that says, "Practise makes perfect becomes a reality among the *Igbo* people." The more the child learns from the parents, village members, and community, the more expert he/she becomes in learning a particular skill.

In *Igbo* traditional education, the child is taught about the oral tradition. Stories, events, history, and other important incidents in *Igbo* land were transmitted from one generation to the (other) generation. *Igbo* people could remember an event that took place many years ago through remarkable incidents, i.e., when a person was born or through a war that was fought between two tribes within the distant communities.

Proverbs were important means of educating a child before the invasion of the Europeans. They were used for different purposes. Proverbs were used to bring out clearly the meaning of obscure points in conversation (Oforchukwu and Njoku 2002:4). Children are taught how to use language creatively and effectively. How to use proverbs correctly is part of *Igbo* education. According to Ambrose Okeke, "The proverbs, the riddles, and the ideation of *Chi* and *Anyanwu la eseelu*, the ability to distinguish between a killing herb and healing one, all these constitute a veritable storehouse of intellectual exercise. Proverbs and riddles are used to hide a saying from the ordinary turn of mind. They help in selecting and analyzing issues and problems of the moment. Traditional education exposed the child to this training (1991:19)."

*Igbo* traditional education helped to form the child's character. Character formation is important for the *Igbo* people. Parents are the first to teach children about the norms and taboos of the community. Immediate family members are also entrusted with the task of teaching children the norms of the community. All other members of the community see it as part of their entrusted duty to teach children about acceptable norms and taboos of the community. According to Okeke, "Everyone in the home, in the village, and in the community wanted the *Igbo* child to be sociable, truthful, brave, humble, have stamina and be of unrepachable conduct at all times. For this reason, everyone joined in correcting or praising any child whenever and wherever he/she failed or succeeded in showing acceptable norms of behaviours (1991:18)."

*Egwu-Onwa* (moonlight) is important for the *Igbo* education. Every community had a village square or playgrounds. Stories and folklores told around the fireside and in the moonlight are principally designed to train up children morally and physically (Ogbalu 1973). Religious training was carried out during the moonlight play. There are certain taboos a child should know within the community. The moonlight play was an opportunity to communicate those taboos to children. *Onwere ihe ala na-aso nso* (There are certain things that the land abhors). Each child must know these taboos by heart to avoid committing them. Violation of any of these taboos attracted punishment.

The *Egwu-Onwa* (moonlight play) was also used to teach children about games, wrestling, singing, and dancing. Most times, parents could come out to watch children during the moonlight play (Ogbalu 1973). This was an event no child would like to miss. There was no punishment if any child missed it, but it was rewarding to be present. As a child, the researcher still remembers his own moonlight periods. There were certain things learned in the moonlight play that one could not have learned, if missed. Elders, experienced people, and warriors used the moonlight period to teach children about the traditions and customs of the *Igbo* people.

The *Igbo* education had moral undertons. But, *Igbo* education was taught mainly for the purpose of preserving the *Igbo* tradition. An *Igbo* child was taught to respect, revere, and value the *Igbo* customs. As Oforchukwu and Njoku (2002:4) put it, "The primary aim of this traditional and oral education was to promote the cultural values of the *Igbo* people.

The next part of this discussion will examine about *Ndu* (life) in the *Igbo* worldview. Life is important for the *Igbo* people. The *Igbo* people have a profound respect for life.

#### **2.2.5 The *Igbo* Respect for Life (*Ndu*)**

In an earlier chapter of this research study, it was noted that the *Igbo* people are by nature, a religious people. They value and respect life, and for this, they could go to any length to preserve and protect life. The *Igbo*'s understanding of life is not different from the Biblical notion of life. Jesus says, "I came that they might have life and have it to the full." (John 10:10). An *Igbo* man's understanding of life is religious-inclined. The *Igbo* people use proverbs to express what life is. Thus, they say, "*Ndu bu isi* (Life is first).

Marriage plays an important role for the preservation of life. In the *Igbo* worldview, every man is expected to marry (Ogbalu 1973). Any man who has reached the age of marriage, but has not yet married, was considered as a serious matter among members of the community. It is the sacred duty of the members of the community (*Umunna*) to look for a wife for such a man. Marriage is contracted among the *Igbo* people so that life would continue from one generation to the next generation.

Childlessness among the *Igbo* people is unacceptable. It is considered that childlessness is a short means to end life on this earth. As Onwu (2002:10) observed, "Childlessness was considered a threat to life among the *Igbo* as it hits the very root of that traditional primary value, life." *Igbo* tradition provided the *Igbo* people with the means of solving the problem of childlessness in order to continue life on earth. A man could marry more than one wife as a means of resolving the problem created by infertility among the *Igbo* people. Polygamy was accepted among the *Igbo* people. It was one of the means to continue life among the *Igbo* people.

Marriage is sacred, and ordained by *Chukwu* (God). *Chukwu* has commanded *Igbo* people to marry. *Chukwu si anyi mubawa* (God has instructed us to increase and multiply). If *Chukwu* has asked the *Igbo* people to increase and multiply, it means that life will be continued through marriage.

Life is considered as sacred among the *Igbo* people. It is a taboo for any person to kill or to take his/her life. Suicide and homicide were among the taboos of the *Igbo* people. Children were educated on these taboos so that life would not be tampered with. Suicide was a crime against the mother earth (*Nso-ani*). It is considered an abomination (*Alu*). Any person who committed it is not buried by *Umunna*, but strangers (Achebe 1994:207). Suicide is a sin against *Igbo* custom. The person who committed suicide is buried in *Ajofia* (Evil Forest). He is not given a befitting burial, even if he was an elder. He would not be considered as an ancestor. He would not reincarnate to any children. He was considered to have been rejected by the gods, ancestors, and *Umunna*.

Life is valued. Abortion is not thought about in *Igbo* worldview. When we speak of abortion, we mean induced abortion (MacKinnon (2001:164). It is important to distinguish induced abortion from spontaneous abortion or miscarriage. For the *Igbo* people, abortion is one of the ways to terminate life. Nobody has the right to terminate life by any means. If anybody commits abortion, that person has incurred the wrath of the gods.

The *Igbo* people practised human sacrifice. This was different from taking one's life or the life of another. Human sacrifice was one of the ways to appease the gods. It was an honourable duty to the gods. As Onwu (2002:10) puts it, "In most cases when human beings were killed (twin killing and human sacrifice) the traditional *Igbo* saw such as a fulfillment of convinced religious obligation and for the good of the land."

The *Igbo* people give names to children to indicate how much they value *Ndu* (Life). Names such as *Nduka-uba* (life is greater than wealth) are examples of such *Igbo* names. The *Igbo* people value wealth, but it would never be equated with its respect to human life. Also, supporting this view, Emenanjo (2001) noted,

Rural *Igbo* had very respect for *Ndu* (Life) because it comes from God.

It is greater than money or wealth. It cannot be founded by a blacksmith.

All things are only useful if they have life.

The *Igbo's* respect for life could be compared with the Biblical command, "Thou shall not kill (Exodus 20:13). The *Igbo* worldview permitted the *Igbo* people to seek from the diviners or fortunetellers on how to preserve life. They could sacrifice human beings in

most cases and fowls to appease the gods so that human life would be preserved. The *Igbo* traditional prayers (*Igo Ofo*) and sacrifices to the deities are mainly petitionary for the welfare of man (Onwu 2002:10).

### **2.2.6 *Igbo Respect for Morality***

Morality has a special place among the *Igbo* of Nigeria. The *Igbo* concept of morality is tied to its idea of religion. There isn't much difference between the *Igbo*'s view of the sacred to life itself. Life, for the *Igbo* people, is sacred. Morality is seen in the way an *Igbo* man conducts himself. A traditional *Igbo* man prays every morning. In this prayer, he would pray for the protection of his family, village members, and community. He would vindicate himself from wrong doings by saying that he has not done any harm to any man. He would also pray to *Chukwu* for good health, long life, protection and progress. He would end his prayers by saying that if he had done any wrong to any person, he would call the gods for vengeance.

The traditional belief is that no *Igbo* man would harm his fellow *Igbo* man. But, as human beings, there is bound to be animosity, hostility, and hatred between and among brothers of the same *Umunna*. When this exists, a brother could accuse his brother of a wrong doing. The accused person could take his case to the *Umunna* (kindred members) to prove his innocence. The *Igbo* people believed in the concept of *Ofo na Ogu* (the law of retributive justice). It is strongly believed by the *Igbos* that *Ofo na Ogu* has the power to vindicate anybody who was wrongly accused of any crime provided his hands are clean. There are different ways to settle such an accusation among the *Igbo* people. The *Umunna* could ask the accused to swear by the *Ofo*, which is a symbol of justice and truth. The accused person could also call upon the *Ofo na Ogu* to show his innocence. It is only an innocent person who could call upon the *Ofo na Ogu*; otherwise, the person would incur the wrath of *Amadioha* (the god of thunder and lightning). Ejizu (2002:24) observed that "Together with its adjunct *Ogu*, *Ofo* is used in maintaining or claiming innocence."

The *Igbo* community has its acceptable norms, behaviours, taboos, and prohibitions. These norms were meant to deter abnormal behaviours among its people. There are sanctions against people who willingly committed crimes against brothers or

any other member of the community. There are rituals of punitive measures against any crime committed; otherwise, the entire *Umunna* would suffer from such crimes. Intermarriage is prohibited between brothers and sisters in the community. A man would not willingly murder any member of the community. There are some sacred objects that should not be killed. These norms are meant to promote and encourage peace and brotherly harmony in the community.

Among the *Igbo* people, stealing is considered a crime against one's community. More importantly, nobody was allowed to steal *Ji* (yam) because it is a sin against the mother earth, and is punishable. There are other sacred trees that nobody was permitted to tamper with. Trees like *Oji* (kola nut) were considered sacred. It is only males that could pluck it. Women, on the other hand, were not allowed to pick any kola nut that fell from the tree. It is the prerogative of the males to pluck, bless, and break the *Oji* (kola nut). This tradition is not affected by the advent of Christianity. This tradition is strongly observed, even till today in *Igbo* community.

Incest is strongly prohibited among the *Igbo* people. If unfortunately, anybody commits incest, it has its peculiar purification. It is the duty of the eldest in the *Umunna* (community) to purify it. It is a destabilization of the community's peace and harmony. It is an abomination, and as such, the gods need to be appeased through sacrifices. The adherence of this tradition has a moral undertone. It is believed that those who keep the traditional norms to the letter would be protected by the gods. Also, it is the *Igbo* belief that those who keep the traditional customs, when they die, would be accepted and given the status of the ancestors. This belief helps people to avoid committing such crimes as incest, murder, and other related abominations in the *Igbo* community.

The *Igbo* ancestors instituted a body of codes called *Omenala*. The *Igbo Omenala* regulates the *Igbo* behaviours, action, morality, and ethics. The aim of any *Igbo* man is to live in accordance with the precepts of *Omenala*, so that, when he dies, he would be accorded a decent burial. The *Omenala* tells the *Igbo* people what to do, to avoid, and when and how the *Omenala* is celebrated. These *Omenalas* are handed from generation to generation. There are particular months in which the *Igbo* people celebrate the *Iriji* (New Yam Festival). This festival could not be celebrated outside the prescribed *Igbo* calendar. The essence of *Igbo* morality was primarily to keep the

harmony, well-being and effective co-existence of members of the community made up of the living, the dead, and children yet to be born (Onwu 2002:10).

### **2.2.7 Truth among the Igbos**

*Ilu Igbo* (proverbs) are used to express the concept of truth among the *Igbo* people. Truth is valued and cherished. With *Ilu Igbo* (proverb), the people communicate what they believe about truth. The *Igbo* people could use proverbs to express: *Ezi okwu bu ndu* (truth is life). When an *Igbo* man says this, he expects that any dealing with you would be nothing but the truth. The *Igbo* man believes that truth strengthens human relationships, morality and organizations.

*Ofo* is a symbol of truth. The *Igbo* people use proverbs to express this truth. The *Igbo* people use *Ofo* as a principle of life, truth, and justice. *Oji Ofo ga-ala* (a man of truth must not be stopped, no matter the condition on the way).

Also, an *Igbo* man is expected to say the truth at all times. Truth could be bitter at times. When brothers are quarrelling, an elder is expected to say the truth. When the truth would be said, an elder could say, *Ezi okwu na-eluilu* (truth is bitter). For the *Igbo* people, even though truth is bitter, it must be said. The *Igbo* philosophy of truth is central, fundamental, and must be said regardless who is involved. *Ezi okwu amaghi Eze* (truth does not know a king).

Having established some of the proverbs to express truth, it is important to note that it helps to know how to deal with people. The *Igbo* word for falsehood is *asi*, or *Obughi Eziokwu*. When somebody is noted for lying or not saying the truth, it means that he/she cannot be trusted, relied on, or depended upon. When the *Igbo* people established that such a person could not be trusted, he/she would never be taken seriously any longer. He/she is considered as *Efulufu* (useless person) in the community.

The *Igbo* people hate *asiri* (rumour mongering). When they say that *Onye a bu Onye asiri* (this person is a gossip or he/she goes around spreading rumours) whether truth or untruth about somebody in the community. The gossip in question is never taken serious in the community. He/she could manufacture issues about somebody or something at any time. Rumour mongering or gossiping could bring misunderstanding

among friends, brothers, and members of the community. This is why gossiping is considered destructive among the *Igbo* people. The gossip is dangerous in the community (Onwu 2002:11). Once it is established that such a person is a gossip or rumour monger, he or she is avoided in the community because he/she could bring disunity in the family, village, and community.

Having dealt in a nutshell with the *Igbo* concept of truth, the researcher now moves on to the next topic. In the next topic, the researcher will examine the *Igbo* concept of achievement. This discussion will expose the nature of *Igbo* man.

### **2.2.8 *Igbo* Concept of Achievement**

In the *Igbo* set up, a man/woman is judged by his/her efforts, not on the basis of his/her family. An *Igbo* man/woman is adjudged by his achievement. Every man and woman has his/her *Chi*. *Chi* could be translated as destiny. Every man is left to discover his/her *chi*. One thing is to have *Chi*, another is to discover it. It is through the discovery of one's *Chi* that one is able to achieve his/her goal in life. Goal achievement is central in *Igbo* cosmology. In *Igbo* worldview, it is believed that what a person would be in life has already been determined by his/her *Chi*. Some people may work hard, yet they achieve less. An *Igbo* man says, "*Omege ma chi ya ekwala, onye uta atalaya* (nobody would blame anybody who has tried his/her best without a success).

In the *Igbo* worldview, even though it is believed that a person achieves his/her potency depending upon his/her *Chi*, he/she is expected to succeed in life. *Akara aka* (destiny) does not mean that a person should not try to achieve success in this world. No matter what one's *Akara aka* (destiny) is, you are expected to marry more than one wife, beget many children, own a barn, and earn titles. These are the marks of achievement in the *Igbo* worldview.

Hard work and laziness are two opposing words that help a person to succeed or fail in life. The *Igbo* people appreciate hard work. A man who works hard is praised and appreciated. If a man is looking for a wife, the first thing people would ask is, "Does he/she work hard"? People are prepared to allow a hardworking person to be his

prospective in-laws. It is believed that a hardworking person would cultivate yams that would feed his entire family.

Titled men are respected in *Igbo* worldview. It is not easy to earn titles among the *Igbo* people. Each title is expensive to earn. It is not meant for *Ofeke* (lazy person). The number of titles a person has indicates that he/she has discovered his *Chi* (destiny).

Abanuka understands this when he says (2004:74),

The titled men and women are the perfect examples of those who both discovered their destiny and accomplished its demands happily and successfully.

Ozo title is the highest title an *Igbo* man aspires to earn in his life. It is a mark of achievement. People who have Ozo titles are praised, respected, and appreciated. An Ozo man is considered as being wealthy. To support this view, Abanuka (2004:74) observed,

In some areas of *Igbo* land, one of the highest titles for men is the Ozo. The Ozo titled man, *Nze*, lives in fullness of accomplishment, he is wealthy as depicted by the endless rows of yam in his barn, he has many wives, and children.

The Ozo man who has achieved the highest potency in his life is accorded different honours as a mark of his accomplishment. First, he is seated differently in any gathering. Second, he is given a befitting burial when he dies. Third, he is honoured as an ancestor among his people. These are some of the privileges an Ozo man, who has discovered his *Chi* and accomplished his potency in life, enjoys. The subject of Ozo title taking in *Igbo* society will fully be discussed in chapter three (3) of this dissertation.

Laziness, on the other hand, is despised among the *Igbo* people. Lazy people are those who have not achieved anything in life. These people have not discovered their *Akara aka* (destiny). The lazy people are the *ofeke* who have no titles (Achebe 1994:6-8). Lazy people are buried differently as we have seen from the point of view of an Ozo man. The lazy man, on the other hand, is buried with hoes and rubbing of mud on the hands and feet (Abanuka 2004:80). The burial rite accorded to a lazy man has moral implications. It is a lesson for the living so that they should work hard to achieve their potency.

The *Igbo* concept of hard work is rooted in the Bible when God said, "...subdue the earth and conquer it" (Genesis 1:28). God has given the *Igbo* man the tool to succeed in life. The *Igbo* is afraid to fail. He wants to succeed in all his endeavours. The mandate to control the land is a first step for success for the *Igbo* people. In view of this, Onwu (2002:12) says,

The *Igbo* is afraid of failure in life. He believes that nature has endowed him with the ability to subdue his world and succeed and therefore had to do just that. The mandate to control the land is a mandate to be successful.

This view was also supported by Afigbo (1994) when he observed, "It is quite clear that the *Igbo* saw failure in his world as a terrible calamity which implied damnation and so did everything possible to avoid it." An *Igbo* man wants to succeed in life. He wants to be accorded a befitting burial when he dies. He wants to earn a position with the ancestors in the next life. This is the drive that pushes the *Igbo* man to work hard in order to accomplish what his *Chi* has for him.

An *Igbo* man values wealth as well as a good name. In the *Igbo* worldview, any ill-gotten wealth is repudiated, abhorred, and rejected. In the pursuit of wealth, an *Igbo* man is expected to be upright, honest, and truthful. Titles are only given to trustworthy, honest, truthful, and sincere *Igbo* people. There have been cases of people whose titles were revoked to send a message to other *Igbo* sons and daughters of the need to be upright.

The philosophy of *Igbo* people about wealth is to work hard to achieve (wealth) it. An *Igbo* man/woman is proud to fend for himself/herself. He/she does not solely depend on what his/her parents or family had, but what he/she is able to achieve in life. The *Igbo* saying that, "*Nkem bu nkem, nke anyi bu nke anyi* (mine is mine, but ours is ours)" is a driving force that makes an *Igbo* man/woman work hard in order to accomplish his/her goal, purpose, and aims in life. This pressure that is placed on every man/woman as a result of our culture and way of life makes us work extra hard to succeed in life (Nwachukwu 2002:1). We have what is called the British pride, the American pride, and we also have from time immemorial what is known as the '*Igbo* pride' which some historians refer to as '*Igbo* identity' (Onwu 2002:12).

### 2.2.9 The Supreme Being (God)

The discussion on God is important in the *Igbo* worldview. Each religion in the world has its idea of God, *Igbo* included. The main purpose here is to examine God in the *Igbo* worldview in order to know its functions and attributes. The *Igbo* people believe in the Supreme Being. In *Igbo* language, there are many names used to express the name of God (Abanuka 2004:2). In this section the researcher will examine some of these *Igbo* names now.

1. *Chukwu* – God. Ogbalu (1973) argued that the *Igbos* believe in one Supreme Being called *Chukwu*. Adama (1987:9) maintained that *Chukwu* is the creator of the world. *Chukwu* is the Great One from whom beings originate (Arinze 1970:9). Abanuka (2004:4) said that *Chukwu* is derived from *Chi* and *Ukwu*. *Chukwu* therefore means the being that embraces the fullness of reality. According to Abanuka, *Chukwu*, one of the *Igbo* names of the Supreme Being or God possesses all ontological characteristics without exception.

2. *Chineke* – God. *Chineke* is also referred to as a Supreme Being (Adama 1987:9). Nwala (1988) called *Chineke* the creator and uncaused cause of the universe. But Abanuka (2004:6) disagreed that *Chineke* could be regarded as the God who creates in *Igbo* cosmology. According to Abanuka, *Chineke* has caused a remarkable trouble among scholars in *Igbo* religion and culture. In *Igbo* tradition, *Eke* refers to share (Nwoga 1984:56). *Kee*, on the other hand, means to divide. According to Nwoga, *Eke* is one who shares, *Kee* is to divide. In view of this, Abanuka (2004:6) suggests that *Chineke* does not represent creation in the *Igbo* language. However, Abanuka agreed that the *Igbo* seem to have the idea of the origin of the world from God.

3. *Osebuluwa (Osepuluwa)* – God. *Osebuluwa* is another name for God (Abanuka 2004:2). Nwoga (1984:57-58) observed that *Osebuluwa* is borrowed by the *Igbo* from their *Edo*-speaking, *Efik*-speaking and *Yoruba*-speaking neighbours respectively. But Nwala (1988:7) maintained that *Osebuluwa* should be understood in the context as the Lord, Sustainer and foundation of the universe.

4. *Obasi – bi-n'igwe* – God who lives in heaven

5. *Eze di n'igwe* – God who is in Heaven

6. *Igwe ka Ani (Ala)* – The God of Heaven that is greater than Earth.

7. *Ama ama amacha amacha* –the God who is incomprehensible and beyond one's thought.

The *Igbo* people have other names for God. They also express God through theophoric names given to children at birth. These names help the *Igbo* people to convey the concept of God as one who is present, good, merciful, just, benevolent, and powerful. The *Igbo* believe there is only one God who is the creator of the universe. God's form, ways, and thoughts are unknown to the *Igbo* people (Isaiah 55:7-9). God, for the *Igbo* is believed to be everywhere and invisible. He is the fountain of justice and the defender of the poor, weak and orphans. He is believed to control the whole universe and could be reached through minor deities. This idea was well expressed by Cardinal Arinze (1970:10-11) when he said, "The *Igbo* think it more courteous and more within man's range to appeal to the spirits to obtain request from God. But the *Igbo* need no one to tell them that without God, not even the strongest *Alusi* (spirit) can do anything."

### **2.2.10 The Divinities**

Apart from God, the *Igbo* people believe that there are other gods who command influence in their lives. These gods are known as *Igbo* pantheons or intermediary spirits (Nwala 1988:8). The *Igbo* pantheons control the forces of the visible universe for good or for bad. Ilogu (1974:34) classified the *Igbo* pantheons as, "*Anyanwu* (the sun god), *Igwe* (the sky god), *Amadi-oha* (the god of thunder and lightning) and *Ala* (the earth goddess)." These gods with a small "g" are mere divinities or spirits, with powers derived from God (Nwala). The researcher will now discuss a few of these *Igbo* pantheons, not necessarily according to its hierarchical order.

*Ani (Ala)* is one of the *Igbo* pantheons. *Ani* is one of the most common divinities in *Igbo* land (Nwala 1988:9). *Ani* is the goddess of fertility in human beings, animals, and crops (Abanuka 2004:20). Without *Ani*, life would be impossible for the *Igbo*, who attach much sentiment to the land (Uchendu 1965:96). According to Uchendu, it is out of respect to the earth-goddess that the *Igbo* are ideologically opposed to the sale of land. *Ani* is also the custodian of public morality in cooperation with the spirit of our departed ancestors. *Ani* is the goddess that ensures peace, prosperity, and welfare of

the community (Abanuka 2004:20). According to Ubah (1982:93), the *Ani* goddess is the nearest and dearest of all the *Igbo* gods.

As a merciful goddess, *Ani* helps the *Igbo* people with many things. The *Igbo* people ask her for children, prosperity in trade, and for protection. The *Igbo* people believe that before going to any war, *Ani* must be consulted.

*Anyanwu* is the next *Igbo* pantheon, and is the sun-god. This is the god that makes crops and trees grow for the *Igbo* people. Uchendu (1965:96) distinguished between the physical and spiritual phenomena of the sun. The spiritual aspects of the sun are called *kamalu* or *Amadioha*, which is the lighting spirit. It is believed that the *Amadioha* lives in the sun. Ilogu (1974:35) maintained that *Anyanwu* is regarded by the *Igbos* as a benevolent divinity and prayers are offered to it for good health.

*Igwe* is the sky- god (Abanuka 2004:20). In *Igbo* mythology, the sky-god is the husband of the earth goddess (*Ala*) (Nwala 1988:10). According to the *Igbo* belief, the sky is bigger than the earth. The *Igbo* people usually say that *Igwe k' ala*, meaning that the sky is larger than the earth. The sky (*Igwe*) is the source of rain (Uchendu 1965:97). Rainmakers claim the power to bring rain during the dry season of the year as well as having the power to bring dry season during rain season. The *Igbo* people strongly believe in the power the rainmakers have over rain. Uchendu (1965:97) agreed that the science of rainmaking could be acquired by anybody who can afford to pay the fee.

*Amadioha* is the next deity to be considered. This is the god of thunder and lighting. Talbot (1969:46) observed that *Amadioha* is considered as a god of vengeance against the wicked among the *Igbo* people. Thunder is believed to destroy dangerous medicine or charms (Abanuka 2004:21). The main function of *Amadioha* is to get rid of the community of bad, evil, wicked, and dangerous people, thereby enhancing prosperity and welfare of people within the community.

*Ahijoku (Ifejioku)* is an important god among the *Igbos*. This is the god of yam and agriculture (Abanuka 2004:20). *Igbo* traditional society is basically a farming community, and yam is their most highly valued crop (Nwala 1888:9). Supporting this view, Cardinal Arinze (1970:16) said, "The yam spirit receives his special cult before and after the planting season. The New Yam Festival is one of the most widespread in *Igbo* land."

Women call her *Nwanyi-dim* – a co-wife (Uchendu 1965:98-99). According to Uchendu, she acts as a social sanction which controls the behaviour of women in the home. There are certain things that women are not allowed to do with yams. Women are not allowed to throw away yams in anger. This is an offence against *aha njoku*, and is punishable. In certain *Igbo* communities like *Isu-Njaba*, nobody is allowed to work on *Eke* market day, not even men are permitted. Anybody seen violating this rule is fined by the community. To steal any yam is a sin against the earth goddess and community. The earth goddess has to be pacified through a sacrifice performed by the *Ezeji* (yam chief). Out of respect for the yam spirit, fighting is highly prohibited on the farm. Quarreling on the farm must be appeased, and an egg is usually broken on the spot to ask for forgiveness (Uchendu 1965:99).

There are other gods that exist in different communities in *Igbo* society. We have just examined a few of the *Igbo* pantheons. These *Igbo* gods, as we have just discussed, are referred to among the *Igbo* people as minor gods. These gods are different from the Supreme Being, God (*Chukwu*). However, these gods share certain attributes with the Supreme Being. Ogbukagu (1997:261) argued that the minor divinities are gods which by the true nature of existence cannot be said to be created. The minor gods share aspects of divine status with God (*Chukwu*). Supporting this view, Awolalu 1979:72) said,

It is not correct to say that they are created, since they share aspects of divine status. It will be correct to say either that they emanated from the Supreme Deity, or they were engendered by Him, or they were brought forth by Him, or they came into being in consequence of Him. All these are saying the same thing – namely, that the divinities have the attributes or qualities or characteristics of the Supreme Being and they are in consequence, offspring of God.

### 2.2.11 *Chi*

For Ogbukagu (1997:289), *Chi* is a deity. But for Okere, the *Igbo Chi* is the divine double or personal guardian and protector that is variously conceived as part of God in man which presides over the individual as he/she works out his/her destiny. Idowu (1976:60) sees *Chi* as the inner man, the essential person, and this is conceived as something which man obtains from the deity himself. According to Idowu, man or woman must give an account of how he/she uses his/her talent before the deity. For Metuh (1981:68-69), *Chi* is characterized as the immanent presence of God in man or man's guardian angel in life. For Ilogu (1974:40-41), *Chi* is conceived as the divine particle in man by which he shares in the Supreme Being and the basis of man's immortality and communion with the ancestors. Cardinal Arinze, on his own part, sees *Chi* as the spirit, or genius or spiritual-double with which God has endowed every sentient being. For Nwala (1988:10), *Chi* could be classified into two headings, transcendence and immanence -transcendentally *Chi* is the divinely endowed spirit of God which functions as a guardian spirit, personal to each human being. According to Nwala, *Chi* is the man's conscience.

*Chi* is different from the self. For Okere, the self could pray to *Chi*. In some circumstances, the self could blame or praise his/her *Chi* for achievement or failure attained in life. The self could manipulate or even negotiate with his/her *Chi*. The *Chi* could not be shared with any member of the family. The *Igbo* people believe that *Otu nne na-amu, mana obughi out Chi na-eke* (born from the same mother, but have different *Chi*). *Chi* in *Igbo* tradition is conceived as a guardian angel, a divine force, or one that deputizes for the Supreme Being, God (*Chukwu*). It is in this sense that no man/woman has control of his/her *Chi*. One operates under the guidance of his/her *Chi*. For Ogbukagu (1997:289), the success and failures people encounter in life are ascribed to the competence of their individual *Chi*. For the *Igbo* people, *Madu anaghi ebute Chi ya uzo* (you can't run faster than your *Chi* -destiny). For Nwala 1988:10-11), to be in conflict with one's *Chi* is to court disaster in this life and sorrow in the next. For Ogbalu (1973), people speak of *ezigbo Chi na ajo Chi* (good and bad *Chi*) when they are fortunate and unfortunate as if a person has two *Chis*.

### **2.2.12 The Ancestors**

The ancestors have a special place among the *Igbo* people. For Uchendu (1965:102), the ancestors are part of the invisible segment of the community. For Abanuka (2004:44), the ancestors are considered as not very far removed from the living. Cardinal Arinze (1970):17-18) believes that the *Igbo* family is not made up of only those members who are still alive, and that the invisible ancestors, or the living dead members are very much a part of it.

The ancestors are given their due honour and respect among the people and community. For Uchendu (1965:102), the ancestors are honoured and not worshipped. The respect and reverence they receive depend on their accomplishment (Abanuka 2004:44). According to Abanuka, there are three levels of ancestors. First, those who died in a good ripe old age are considered as ancestors when they die. Second, all those who died young, but have achieved significant roles in life are also considered as ancestors. Third, which could be referred to as anonymous ancestors; i.e. those who did not cause any problem, nor make any significant accomplishment when they were alive. The primary duty of the ancestors is to guide and promote the welfare of the community members. In the *Igbo* worldview, it is believed that communion and communication go on between the dead ancestors and the living (Ogbukagu (1997:263). For Field (1961:197), customary rites and ceremonies are good links the living have with the dead who instituted these legacies. The dead ancestors watch to ensure that the living preserve the traditions and customs of their progenitors. The ancestors detest abominations such as theft, murder, and incest. They exercise protective and corrective duties on the family, kindred, and *Umunna* (community). Mbiti (1970:83) sums up the roles of the ancestors as guardians of family affairs, traditions, ethics and activities.

The *Igbo* people offer sacrifices to the dead ancestors. For Ogbukagu (1997:264), some old men who lived extra-ordinary lives on earth are deified when they die. For Uchendu (1965:102), the ancestors are scolded during sacrifice when they failed their protective duties. According to Uchendu, no elaborate sacrifices are made to the ancestors when there are continuous deaths in the family, crop and business failures. They are simply given ordinary food eaten in the home to express their strong detestations of their nonchalant attitudes toward the community. For the *Igbo* people,

sacrifice is a way to express gratitude for blessings received, hope for future favours, as well as to ask for protections from the gods and ancestors against wicked people and spirits.

The ancestors are conceived to come back in the form of reincarnation. *Ilo Uwa* (reincarnation) is one of the ways an ancestor is remembered in the family when he/she comes back to the family. The ancestors who come back to life are those who have lived upright, virtuous, and righteous lives. For the *Igbo* people, not to reincarnate is the greatest punishment inflicted on the ancestors who lived incestuous, murderous, and wicked lives. Their souls would continue to wander on earth. They could come back in the form of trees, dogs, and other inanimate beings. For Ogbukagu (1997:264), the type of life a man lived helps to determine what place his spirit would occupy among his forebears in the domain of the ancestors (spirits). In the *Igbo* tradition, not all the ancestors are worshipped, deified, and honoured.

The researcher has discussed the role and place of the ancestors in the *Igbo* traditional religion. A link has been established between the ancestors and reincarnation. The next section will discuss reincarnation in detail in the *Igbo* worldviews.

### **2.2.13 Reincarnation (*Ilo Uwa*).**

Reincarnation (*Ilo Uwa*) can be clearly understood as the *Igbo* belief in life after death. The *Igbo* people believe that life continues after death. For Abanuka (2004:55), death is not the end of earthly striving and achievement. For the *Igbo* belief, death is significant because it is a gate into the ancestral abode. The important question that looms in the mind of every *Igbo* person is that people are rewarded for living a good life, but punished for their evil lives. It is under the *Igbo* belief in rewards and punishments that gives real meaning in the belief in reincarnation. Supporting this view, Onwu (2002:7) observes,

Death is not the end of life. There is another life after death and the most practical way to make it meaningful is the belief in reincarnation which includes physical resemblance, character traits, oracular pronouncements of which

point to the fact that the dead are somewhere waiting for their return to the world of time and space. The notion of judgment which people fear is so clearly spelt out by reincarnation belief.

For Ogbalu (1973), reincarnation is *ino uwa*, i.e., a person is born again usually in his family, *Umunna*, or by any of his descendants like *ada*, *nwadiala*, and his sons. For Okere, reincarnation in *Igbo* is known as *Ilo-uwa*, returning to the world, not a returning into the physical world, but perhaps more accurately into *Uwa*/world in the sense of destiny. For Abanuka (2004:56), reincarnation is called *Ilo Uwa*, literally a return to this worldly existence. Belief in *Ilo Uwa* (reincarnation) is universal among the *Igbo* (Basden 1966:286).

In the *Igbo* worldview, it is easy to determine how an ancestor has reincarnated within the family, kindred, or community. When a child is born into the family, the members would consult an *afa* (diviner) man to determine the ancestor that has reincarnated a child. When the diviner has determined the ancestor, the child is named the dead ancestor's name. This could be done through a religious ceremony. Sometimes, a person might wish to reincarnate in a particular family, kindred, or community. Most often, the dead ancestor who reincarnated into the child, might have some striking resemblances bodily, emotionally, or behaviourally with the child. This is why the *Igbo* people say, "*Nwata a na-emeka onye a* (this child behaves like this man). The striking resemblances between the child and the dead ancestor who reincarnated is one of the scientific ways the *Igbo* people determine the particular ancestor that came back to life within the family. Supporting this view, Abanuka 2004:56) observes,

The reincarnation of an ancestor in the form of a new born child, which is mainly determined by an identity of bodily characteristics of the child with that of the ancestor, is a way of proclaiming a real influence of the dead or ancestors in the continuity of the community. The influence of the dead in the community can be good or bad.

The *Igbo* people also believe in the *Ogbanje*. But *Ogbanje* is quite different from the belief in reincarnation. *Ogbanje* is a belief that a child is being born again and again within the community. For Onwu (2002:7), *Ogbanje* phenomenon is the repetitive coming and going of people especially of children into one's family. The *Ogbanje*

phenomenon is not welcomed in the family. Reincarnation, on the other hand, is welcomed among the *Igbo* people because it is only considered that people who have lived and died well would be able to be born again in the form of a child.

When an *Ogbanje* child dies he/she is not buried within the compound, but in *ajofia* (evil forest). The child in question is also mutilated to prevent him/her from being born again. Sometimes, the mutilated child is born with such mutilation marks (Chinua 1994:79). These incidents have caused the *Igbo* people to strongly believe in the *Ogbanje* phenomenon.

The *Ogbanje* children had a group that operates together to achieve its purpose. The *Igbo* believe that even if a child does not want to torture his/her mother, his/her companion would compel him/her to die. They are usually bound together by oath, known as *Iyi-uwa*. According to the *Igbo* worldview, the *Iyi-uwa* (oath) could be destroyed by a strong medicine man. The *Ogbanje* phenomenon is in opposing direction with the *Igbo* belief in reincarnation. But these two opposing beliefs are universal among the *Igbo* people.

In the next section the researcher will discuss about the significance of kola nut (*Oji*) among the *Igbo* people.

#### **2.2.14 Kola Nut and its Significance**

Kola nuts are sacred trees produced by *Cola acuminata* and *Cola nitida* trees (Ogbukagu 1997:191). For Ogbalu (1973), kola nut (*Oji*) is an important fruit among the *Igbos* and it is held almost sacred. There are two types of kola nuts: *Oji-ugo* (whitish) and *Oji-ibube* (light reddish) among the *Igbo* people. Between the two types of kola nuts, the *Oji-ugo* (whitish) is highly valued among the *Igbo* people. It is symbolic. *Oji-ugo* (white kola nut) symbolizes luck, good face, and prosperity (Uchendu 1965:74). According to Uchendu, it is an honour to be offered *Oji-ugo* among the *Igbo* people.

*Oji* (kola nut) is the first thing that is presented to a visitor. It is a mark of acceptance. There are rituals or ceremonies that accompany the kola nut. In most places in *Igbo* society, it is the prerogative of the oldest man to pray and break the kola nut. For Ogbukagu (1997:194-195), the authority to dismember a kola nut always rests

with a titled man and/or an eldest non-titled person among a gathering. The breaking is usually accompanied by prayers of protection, good health, prosperity, and long life to God, god, ancestors, and spirit of the community. But if there is no kola nut (*Oji*) at the time a visitor came, other substitutes such as *Nzo and Afufa* (fruits) may be presented. The kola nut (*Oji*) is the greatest symbol of *Igbo* hospitality (Uchendu 1965:74). The *Igbo* people say that, *Onye wetere Oji wetere Ndu* (one who brings kola nuts brings life). From the aforementioned analysis, three things are involved when kola nuts (*Oji*) are presented to visitors: the presentation, the breaking ceremony, and the distribution of the kola nuts.

There are *Igbo* customary rules observed with kola nuts among the *Igbo* people. Usually, women are prohibited from climbing, breaking, and praying over kola nuts. These privileges; to break, pluck, and pray over the kola nuts are strictly reserved to men. Failure to observe these rules could upset the spirit of the ancestors, an action contrary to *omenani Igbo*. This tradition of presenting and breaking the kola nut (*Oji*) is still observed among the *Igbo* people.

The researcher has examined the *Igbo* view of kola nuts. The next task will be devoted to investigate about man in *Igbo* thought. What is man? Who is man? What is man's origin? These important questions will be explored in the next section.



**Photo 2:1: *Oji* (Kola Nut)**



**Photo 2.2: Okwa Oji (Kola Nut Bowl)**

### **2.2.15 Man in Igbo Worldview**

Man has been an object of study in different disciplines. King David devoted his time to ask, “What is man, that thou art mindful of him? (Psalm 8:4-6, KJV). The best answer to whom man is comes from the Bible. According to the Bible,

And God said, let us make man in our image, after our likeness and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God He created him, male and female he created them (Genesis 1:26, KJV).

From the Biblical point of view, man is created in the image and likeness of God. In the *Igbo* worldview, man lives with his family and extended family members. The extended family system and *umunna* are an integral part of every *Igbo* man. Also, man is made up of three components: spirit, soul, and body (1 Thessalonians 5:23). The Greek words used in New Testament Scripture for man are: *Soma* (body), *Psyche* (soul), and *Pneuma* (spirit) (Bohac 1993:16). God commanded man to be in charge of other creatures, and to increase and multiply. According to the Bible,

And God blessed them, and God said unto them, be fruitful, and multiply and

replenish the earth, and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea  
And over the fowl of the air, and over every living that moveth upon the earth  
(Genesis 1:28, KJV).

Man enjoyed fullness of life until he revolted from God. After man's fall, he lost the privilege of God's completeness. God cursed man when he said "For dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return" (Genesis 3:19b). This picture describes how death came into man's life. Freud's theory of human development reflects man's three basic behavioural instincts. Freud advanced the theory of man's sexuality (*libido*), life (*Eros*), and death (*Thanatos*) (Bohac 1993:52-54).

Apart from God, the *Igbo* worldview, religion, and philosophy are focused on man. The *Igbo* view of man is opposed to the evolutionary theory. God (*Chukwu*) is the creator of the world (*Uwa*) and *mmadu* (man). Like the Biblical concept of man, the *Igbo* philosophy upholds that man is made up of life (*Ndu*), intellect (*Uche*), and body (*Ahu*) (Onwu 2002:7). The *Igbo* people also believe that man lives to die. Death is a change from this world to the other world. When death occurs, man becomes *Ozu* (corpse).

God (*Chukwu*) is central in the life of *Igbo* people. An *Igbo* man cannot live without God (*Chukwu*). There is no room to deny or doubt God's existence. Akunne (1995) captures this view when he says,

For us *Igbo* philosophy without God is like a house without a roof. To philosophize whether there is God or not and to marshal out argument for or against it is the absurd thing any *Igbo* man is expected to do.

It is from this God (*Chukwu*) that man's existence spumes from. *Chukwu nwe ndu* (life belongs to God). Also, the *Igbo* philosophy emphasizes that *Ndu bu onyinye Chukwu* (Life is a gift from God). But man believes that life does not end with death. Death is the beginning of a new life. Every *Igbo* man wants a fulfilled life, a life that is complete with the ancestors in the other world. This is why the *Igbo* people strongly believe in the theory of reincarnation. Man also believes in the concept of judgment, where good deeds, lives, and conducts are rewarded, while bad behaviours and wickedness are punished.

In this analysis the researcher has been able to discuss the *Igbo* worldview. The *Igbo* worldview helps to shape the social structure and the code of conduct that governs

society. This body of rules gives direction to the *Igbo* institutions. One could therefore summarize the discussion on the *Igbo* worldview in the following prepositions:

From the aforementioned discussions, it is evident that the *Igbo* world is made up of both living and dead ancestors. It is conceived that the dead members of the family still communicate with the living members. The dead ancestors have supernatural powers, and therefore could appear in the form of dreams, visions, and/or spirit to human beings. The dead members of the family guide and protect the family members. The Living members also sacrifice to the ancestors when necessary, praying for prosperity.

In addition, the family is an important institution among the *Igbo* people. The family is called the *Ezi na ulo*. The *Igbo* concept of family is antithetical to the Western worldview. The *Igbo* world strongly believes in the extended family system. The *Igbo* family system is its social security. The members take care of one another. The community exercises influence on individuals. The individuals live for the community. Mbiti (1997) captures this idea of community when he says, "We are, therefore I am, and since I am, therefore we are." Real life is lived in the community. According to Maimela (1991:5-6),

Individuals were continually reminded that a fulfilling life cannot be lived in isolation from their human fellows. Rather life is possible in communal relationships in which individuals try to strike a balance between their private life and their social life.

Life does not end with death. The *Igbo* people believe that there is life after death. This is why every *Igbo* man aspires to live an upright, righteous, and virtuous life. For the *Igbos*, good deeds must be rewarded, while evil doers must be punished. The best life is to aim at living with the dead ancestors when one dies. And, it is conceived that it is only those who respect the laws of the land could be accorded a place with the ancestors.

The *Igbo* believe in the *ogbanje* and reincarnation phenomena. The reincarnation phenomenon has a moral undertone. It inspires every *Igbo* man and woman to aspire to become an ancestor. Also, there are taboos in *Igbo* society. These taboos are considered serious if any man violates the law of the land. The land must be purified

with sacrifices, when violated. Otherwise, the ancestors must visit the living with endless epidemics, diseases, and punishments.

### **2.2.16 Summary**

The researcher has discussed at length in this chapter about *Igbo* worldviews. In this discussion, he explored who the *Igbo* people are, how they are educated in the pre-colonial era, their views on respect for life, morality and truth. Also discussed was the *Igbo* concept of achievement. Also investigated was *Igbo* beliefs in God, gods, ancestors, divination, *Chi*, and the kola nut.

The place of man in *Igbo* worldview was also examined. Creation in the Bible has similarities with creation in the *Igbo* traditional religion. Man is central in these accounts. Man is created in the image of God and likeness. *Chukwu* also created man, and asked him to populate the world.

*Chi* is important for the future of the *Igbo* people. It is considered as one's guardian angel. It could determine what a person would be in life.

Ancestors have a special place in *Igbo* culture. They are considered as being part of the family. They are honoured among the *Igbo* people. People could pray to them for assistance. They are conceived to come back to the family through reincarnation, a belief that is still observed by the people.

The place of Kola nut was also examined. Kola nut is important in the *Igbo* Worldview. It is respected by all *Igbo* sons and daughters. It is celebrated. It is the first thing to be presented or offered to visitors. It is symbolic. It is a symbol of acceptance among the *Igbo* people.

Life does not end with death. Both the Bible and *Igbo* traditional religion believe that there is life after death. Both the Bible and *Igbo* traditional religion believe that good people will be rewarded, while evil people will be punished.

## CHAPTER 3:

# THE OZO TITLE TAKING AND LEADERSHIP IN *IGBO* SOCIETY

### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

Culture is important for any society. Culture defines the way people live, walk, speak, laugh, dress, and worship. It is through culture that the identity of race or people is known. The *Igbo* tradition is one of the cultures in the world. The *Igbo* culture is unique, and the *Igbo* race is identified through the *Igbo* code of conduct, rules, behaviours, and practises. The *Igbo* are known for their practises like title taking, masquerades, and other social institutions.

The main focus of this section is to explore the *Ozo* title taking among the *Igbo* people. This research study involves both literary and empirical components. It needs an empirical level to arrive at some of the mysteries of *Ozo* title taking. The *Igbo* society is founded on oral traditions. In some cases, the researcher will employ empirical resources based on oral traditions because of its advantages. In view of this, Abanuka (2004:84) noted,

There are at least two advantages for chiefly basing our study on the oral traditions. First, there are still living members of the community who hold these titles, and their accounts of the ceremonies, rituals, and symbols of each title should be relied upon as going as far back as possible to the primary sources.

Basing our study on the empirical component is important because it will help us to grasp the way *Ozo* title taking was done in the *Igbo* traditional society. Also, the empirical method will assist us to know some of the rituals, ceremonies, symbols, and mysteries behind *Ozo* title taking in *Igbo* society. We shall therefore begin our investigation by tracing the origin of *Ozo* title taking in *Igbo* society.

### 3.2 THE ORIGIN OF OZO TITLE TAKING IN *IGBO* SOCIETY

The origin of Ozo title taking in *Igbo* society is debatable among scholars. Its origin, genesis, and foundation are uncertain. No *Igbo* man/woman has a true idea of when and how the Ozo title taking began among the *Igbo* people. This is where the empirical method in this study is helpful. When this research study began, the researcher approached some *Igbo* title holders to ascertain from them what they knew about the origin of Ozo title taking among the *Igbo* people. Each person approached was not sure when the *Igbo* people began taking the Ozo title. Each answer was based on *omenani* (tradition). This reflected the answer Nze Alphonsus Oforchukwu gave to the question of the Origin of Ozo title taking:<sup>1</sup>

Ozo title taking is part of our way of life. I could not recollect when Ozo title taking began in *Igbo* land. But it is what we grew up with, we saw our fathers and grand-fathers taking titles. We also followed in their footsteps. It is our *omenani* (tradition) in *Igbo* land.

In his own study on Ozo title taking among the *Isu-Njaba* community, Onyedika Otuwurrune encountered the same problem. There was nobody among the *Isu-Njaba* title holders who could actually trace the origin of Ozo title taking in *Igbo* society. Those Otuwurrune interviewed were not sure when the Ozo title originated. According to Otuwurrune (1997:9),

When I put the question to some elders, it appeared to them irrelevant and some of them claimed it existed with the *Igbo* from the beginning.

The *Igbo* believe that Ozo title began as an institution among the people (Ogbalu 1973:32). As an institution, the *Igbo* people began with those who could afford to pay the fee before they were conferred with the title. Today, as it was in the beginning of *Igbo* society, title taking is very expensive, and could be taken by wealthy people. This view confirms Ikekamma's finding (1982:61),

Ozo title is one of the most recognized of all the native institutions in *Igbo* land. It is a sign that a man is greatly honoured in the community. Many persons take the title to exhibit wealth.

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<sup>1</sup> Nze Alphonsus Oforchukwu currently holds the highest Ozo title in *Amugbara* community.

It is also conceived that *Ozo* title taking among the *Igbo* people originated in order to honour the ancestors who had distinguished themselves when they were alive. In the same manner, *Ozo* title taking is one of the ways to worship the spirits, *Njaba*, and gods in *Igbo* society. The ancestors and spirits are given a special place among the *Igbo* people. It is not surprising that title taking originated to pay respect and to worship the ancestors who are the custodians of culture, tradition, and customs. Supporting this view Otuwurrune writes (1997:10),

Traditional religion is a religion in practice, certain things or practices were added to it, as a way of worshipping the ancestors, some spirits, *Njaba*, and the Almighty God.

Apart from the aforementioned origins, there are other oral traditions that link the origin of *Ozo* title taking to *Igbo* mythology, legends, and folklores. These mythologies have linked the origin of *Ozo* title taking to slavery. It is conceived that one of the slave owners made a trip to one of his business associates. In this journey, the slave owner travelled with one of his slaves who was dressed with a red cap on his head. On arrival, the slave was accorded a dignitary reception more than his master. His master became angry, and as a result, prohibited his slaves from wearing red caps, but well placed *Igbo* members were allowed to wear red caps which have become one of the requirements for *Ozo* title holders. According to Abanuka (2004:85),

When they arrived at the residence of the friend, because of the slave's attire and general presentation which made him look like an elderly man the host gave a place of honour to the slave instead of the master. This incident taught an unforgotten lesson to the master. According to this story, from that day henceforth, slaves were allowed neither to put on a red cap nor to have facial marks. Instead, the highly placed members of the society began to put on red caps and have marks carved on their faces.

### 3.3 WHAT IS OZO TITLE TAKING?

Ozo title taking is unique to *Igbo* people. It is as old as is the *Igbo* nation. Its beginning is not known, but has strongly been connected to legends. Ozo title is a cultural institution or establishment among the *Igbos*. For Ikekamma (1982:63), Ozo is a big title taking that is respected and honoured in *Igbo* land. Ozo title taking differs from community to community in *Igbo* society. In *Isu-Njaba* and its environs, Ozo title is the biggest title among the community. In an interview conducted on July 20, 2010, Nze Alphonsus Oforchukwu observed that Ozo title is a symbol of status in *Isuobishi* community of *Igbo* land. On his own part, Nze Cornelius Agwunobi noted that Ozo title is a tradition of the *Igbo* people. In his own view, H.R.H Eze Robert Ogbenna of *Oluokporo*, said that Ozo title taking is a title given to wealthy and good people in *Igbo* communities. But in some communities like *Nteje* in *Anambra* state, Ozo is not the highest title, but considered as second greatest of all the titles taken by the people.

The Ozo title is regarded as sacred in *Igbo* tradition. It is believed that the Ozo title is instituted by the gods. This is partly the reason why it is limited to a certain class of people. The non-initiated members were not allowed to participate in any of the Ozo title ceremonies. For Ikekamma (1982:64), the music of Ozo title is meant only for the initiates to dance. According to Ikekamma, if one is not initiated into Ozo title, he should not come close when the music is beaten on the drums.

The Ozo title taking is not taken by some *Igbo* communities. But Ozo title taking is wide spread in *Igbo* land. In some communities that do not embark on Ozo title, they have other comparable titles. These areas like *Obowo* community have the *Iwa-akwa* ceremony which is important for the people. For Abanuka (2004), the *Igbo* areas which do not take the Ozo title have other equivalent titles. But for Ikekamma (1982:63), not all towns engage in Ozo title taking, but those who take the title are many, ranging from *Awka* to *Onitsha*.

The Ozo title taking is discriminatory in *Igbo* society, one that does not admit all classes of people. The Ozo title taking is exclusively reserved for men. In *Isu-Njaba* community, women are not allowed to take the title. There is no way women can take the Ozo title, because of the social stigma bestowed on women all over the *Igbo* land

(Otuwurrune 1997:11). The holder of the Ozo title is called an *Nze*. But when a man takes the Ozo title, the first wife, by virtue of her rank, becomes the *Lolo* with all the privileges accorded to her.

It is conceived that slaves (*Ohu*) are generally not allowed to take the Ozo title. It is reserved for *nwadiala* (free sons). For Abanuka (2004:86), slaves (*Ohu*) cannot be raised to the rank of Ozo. In most communities in *Igbo* society, slaves (*Ohu*) and *Ume* were banned from embarking on the Ozo title taking. This has been practised from time immemorial. However, there are some communities that allow the slaves (*Ohu*) to take Ozo title. For example, in *Isu-Njaba* and its environs, slaves are permitted to take the Ozo title. However, H.R.H Eze Robert Ogbenna noted that slaves could not exceed the *Onumuonu* stage. According to Eze Robert Ogbenna, there is a limit that a slave could not surpass in Ozo title taking in the areas where slaves are allowed.

The issue of discrimination is not limited to the *Igbo* *Osu* system. Discrimination is globally acknowledged, experienced and even practised. However, the degree of discrimination differs from culture to culture. There are some kinds of discriminations in America, India, South Africa and other countries. There is even social discrimination in religion.

In America, the struggle between the rich and the poor hinges on race (Dike 2007:30). The “Jim Crow” law has dominated the American society for decades. The name “Jim Crow” stood for a system that separated the Black people from the White - a system called segregation (Milton, 1987). This system was prominent during the 1930s and 40s especially in the South. This law designated where one could stay, eat, live and also where to shop. Above all, the law designated on which side of the bus one could sit. Discrimination was clear and apparent during the 1930s in the United States of America.

The African-Americans were extremely discriminated against socially, economically, educationally, and politically. The “Ghetto” was created, maintained and condoned by the white institutions (The Kerner Report, 1988). The consequence of this was the continual segregation of the Blacks in the American society. Also, segregation (Wilson, 1996, Massy and Denton, 1996) contributed to poverty, joblessness, frustration, anger, hatred and antisocial behaviours of the people of colour.

Unfortunately, many States and cities in the United States of America imposed legal punishments on people for associating with members of the rejected race (Dike 2007:31). The American laws forbade intermarriage. It was difficult for a White man to marry from the African-American race. Efforts were made by various states to enforce discrimination laws. In spite of these enforcement laws, discrimination still persists because there remains discrimination in employment, housing and also in marriage (Dike 2007:32).

India also practises the caste system. The Hindu caste system believes that all men are born unequal, a system rooted in ancient and sacred Indian text books. Unfortunately, this belief is enshrined into the Hindu religion. The concept of the untouchable in the caste system is one of the most discriminatory aspects of the caste system in India. It is seen as one of the worst racist phenomenon in the world. The untouchables or the outcasts in India perform the menial jobs in the society.

There have been many steps taken to abolish the caste system in India. Mahatma Gandhi fought against the Indian caste system. The strongest and most frontal attack on the caste system has been the Constitution of India that was adopted on November 26, 1949 (Dike 2007:33). However, in spite of all these steps taken to guarantee equality, there are still cases of racial discrimination in India. The Orthodox Hindus treat anyone who works in any kind of a degraded job as untouchable and do not have any contact with such a one.

South Africa also experienced racial discrimination. South Africa is an African country blessed with natural resources. It was first settled by the Dutch in the 17<sup>th</sup> century and much later by the English settlers. After many years of struggles between the Dutch and English settlers, South Africa became a British colony/dominion. Unfortunately, the strategists in the National Party (NP) created apartheid as an instrument of segregation of the races and also as a means of controlling the resources of the people. The aim of apartheid was to maintain white domination while extending racial discrimination. Racial discrimination was institutionalised in 1948 with the enactment of apartheid laws. There was prohibition of intermarriage between the whites and the non-whites. These laws were enforced. Anybody who protested these rules was either fined or imprisoned. It was on the basis of these laws that Nelson Mandela was

imprisoned for about 26 years. However, the political and racial doctrine of apartheid was officially abolished in the early 1990s. The election of Nelson Mandela in 1994 as the first black president of South Africa saw the triumph of democracy over apartheid. The figure below explains the apartheid policy in South Africa in 1978.

<b>Apartheid and the People of South Africa</b>		
	<i>Blacks</i>	<i>Whites</i>
Population	19 million	4.5 million
Land Allocation	13 percent	87 percent
Share of National Income	< 20 percent	75 percent
Ratio of average earnings	1	14
Minimum taxable income	360 rands	750 rands
Doctors/population	1/44,000	1/400
Infant mortality rate	20% (urban) 40% (rural)	2.7%
Annual expenditure on education per pupil	\$45	\$696
Teacher/pupil ratio	1/60	1/22

**Figure 3.1: Disproportionate Treatment in South Africa**

There are also divisions in other nations across the globe (Dike 2007:33). People also disagree and discriminate against one another on the basis of religion. We live in a changing society. For example, today, the society is witnessing conflicts in Nigeria, Israel, Palestine, Sudan, and a global terrorism that has reached the American society. There is a constant influx of people from other cultures. We witnessed the terrorist attack on the Americans on September 11, 2001. For the past few months, Nigeria, Egypt, Palestine, and other areas have experienced Muslim-Christian conflicts, which destroyed many lives and property. In Guyana, a colour-caste system has produced a racially divided labour market (Dike 2007:33). All these no doubt show that both racial and religious discriminations are witnessed and experienced across the globe.

The *Igbo* of Nigeria also had their own share of certain forms of discrimination in regards to Ozo title taking. *Ndi-biara abia* (visitors) were strongly excluded from taking the Ozo title in the communities they live. Before any man is admitted into the Ozo circle, enquiries are made concerning his character to ascertain the type of life he lives. This is the reason given why visitors are banned from taking the Ozo title. It could be that the visitor might have committed one crime or the other which is inimical to the rules that guide the selection of the titleholders. Consequently, to save his life, the visitor fled his home to another community. According to Otuwurrune (1997:11),

In the traditional *Igbo* society concepts of good and evil, *onye biara abia*, a sojourner, may have committed evil in his home or community that demands death or propitiatory sacrifice, this may be due to an abomination or sacrilege. To save his life, he flees to a foreign land. A person who commits heinous crime and is faced with the danger of losing his life may run to the protection of another community. He then alienates himself from his own community and therefore loses his social status and rights. This explains in part, why sojourners may not attend the assembly of the indigenes.

Apart from the aforementioned class of people, the Ozo title is conferred on people of good character and behaviour. It is not conferred on people of questionable character. The Ozo title institution has its code of ethics. This code of ethics is strictly followed when new members are to be initiated. Questions are asked pertaining to the character of the new members to be initiated. The titleholder must be honest, sincere, truthful, and a custodian of the people's tradition. For Onyebuagu<sup>2</sup>,

The life of a titled man is centred on his integrity. He is expected to live above all mean behavior. He must not be a thief, a debtor, or a liar. He must not embezzle public funds or encourage others to do so. He must not show partiality in judgment since his testimonies are taken to be correct. As a custodian of the people's tradition, he must cherish and observe all the progressive norms of his people.

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<sup>2</sup> Nze Onyebuagu is the author of *Sanctity of the Ozor Institution and the Local Church*. But the date of publication was omitted by the publishing Company, Page 4-5.

The members of the Ozo title holders must live aboveboard. They are seen as models in the *Igbo* traditional society. People look upon them as decent people. A title holder is a symbol of love, honesty, truth, peace, unity, and harmony in the *Umunna* (community). In addition, a title holder must defend the rights and privileges of widows and orphans. These ethical values help to unify the members in the community. This is why the Ozo title is never conferred on anybody whose character is unknown to the people, visitors, and/or questionable individuals in the community. This is why before one becomes an *Nze* or Ozo title holder; certain considerations must be made (Otuwurunne 1997:9). These considerations ensure that the Ozo title is not given to just anybody in the *Igbo* community. The titleholders, among other things, must ensure the continuity and preservation of the *Igbo* customs, traditions, and Ozo institutions (Oforchukwu 2010).

The Ozo title is not conferred on paupers, less affluent and lazy individuals within the *Igbo* community. The Ozo title is expensive, which has made the Ozo title only for wealthy people. Otuwurunne (1997:12) noted that only morally upright rich men can take the *Nze/Ozo* title. The title holders have been criticized on this ground, and will form the basis for our critique of Ozo title taking in *Igbo* tradition.

### **3.4 THE PROCEDURES FOR OZO TITLE TAKING IN IGBO TRADITIONAL SOCIETY**

The task of this section is to investigate the process of Ozo title taking in some communities in *Igbo* society. The *Igbo* nation is too large; efforts therefore will be made to examine some of these processes in some *Igbo* communities.

The process of Ozo initiation in *Igbo* society is a complex, but an interesting one. The Ozo initiation ceremony is taken in stages. *Igbo* society is arranged in kindreds, villages, and towns. The process of Ozo title taking differs slightly from community to community. One begins first with one's kindred (*Umunna*). The first thing one who wants to be initiated into Ozo title society would do is to announce his intention, first to his community. He would do this by meeting the highest Ozo title holder in his community. This process is common among the *Igbo* communities. Among the *Igbo* communities,

this process is called the inquiry period. In *Amugbara* village, the initiate would buy kola nuts, palm wine, and snuff to announce his intention to take the title. The highest Ozo title holder in *Amugbara* community would tell him the day to convene other title holders in the community. On the day of the meeting, the initiate would inform the title holders his intentions. They would welcome his idea, but would tell him that they would send him a message.

The Ozo title holders would use this opportunity to examine the aspirant's character to know the type of person he is. Ozo title is not given to just any person in *Igbo* land. His character would determine whether he is fit to be conferred with the Ozo title. In *Isiobishi*, the Ozo title could be inherited by the first son of the family. In some cases, it could be given to a progressive person in a certain family. These are the issues the title holders would have to look into before allowing the aspirant to continue with the title. This preliminary inquiry is important in the process of Ozo initiation. First, it eliminates the possibility of conferring the Ozo title to questionable characters. Second, it gives the title holders latitude of time to know the background of the family to ascertain whether the family is a member of Ozo title taking in the village. Third, this time serves to see if the candidate to Ozo title taking would be able to manage the expenses of the Ozo title taking. Part of these reasons were given by Otuwurunne (1997:12) when he writes,

An *Nze* is a symbol of moral and spiritual excellence in the community. He must speak the truth as he knows it at all times and in all situations. He must be fair and just when adjudicating over cases or settling quarrels and disputes among his people. As a father of all, he must mediate and pacify and not instigate or terrify.

In *Isuobishi* town, the preliminary stage of Ozo title taking is called *Ozo Ulo*. The *Ozo Ulo* is where an aspirant begins. The *Ozo Ulo* is an important stage in the Ozo title taking for the *Isuobishi* people. First, you would have to be known by your *Umunna* (kindred) before you could be allowed to move into other stages of the title taking. Second, the *Umunna* would be able to investigate and know the type of person the candidate is. Third, it is the *Umunna* (kindred members) who would recommend the candidate for the wider community.

In *Nteje* community in *Anambra* State, the preliminary stage of the Ozo title taking is called by a different name. An aspirant to Ozo title taking would not be allowed without doing what is called *Amamoulu*. It is observed that before one does the *Amamoulu*, he would participate in a race called *Oso Amamoulu* (Ikekamma 1982:66). This race is the process by which the candidate announces his intentions to his *Umunna* to do the *Amamoulu*. The *Amamoulu* stage usually occurs during food scarcity in *Nteje* community. This has a challenging undertone, one that would allow the candidate to prepare fully for the *Amamoulu* preliminary in terms of money, food, and other related expenses. Describing the process of *Amamoulu* in *Nteje* community, Ikekamma (1982:67) noted,

The aspirant will first bring the *Amamoulu* yam called *Asato ji*. After this, *Amamoulu* food is cooked which takes a lot of expenses. He shall prepare a lot of *fufu*, *egusi* soup (melon soup) full of fish and other ingredients. He shall also prepare *Ukwa Amamoulu* (*Amamoulu* bread fruit) which is shared only among members at night. He shall also give those with titles money for his *Amamoulu*.

When the *Amamoulu* stage is completed, the aspirant would move into another stage called *Udo*. This is a period to perform the rite to enter *Amamoulu*. This stage would usually last for three market weeks. The intending candidate would be asked to abstain from shaking hands with women, from having sex, and from talking to women. A lad called *Nwaomanri* is only allowed to bring food for him. His food could be prepared by the candidate's mother, and he would be allowed to eat at midnight. He would be fed with plenty of fish. These rules must strictly be observed, otherwise, the intending candidate would lose the right to proceed to the next Ozo stage in *Nteje* community.

The candidate, after observing this stage, would subject himself to begging. People would give him gifts ranging from money, yams, and other related gifts. After this stage, which usually lasts for three market weeks, the aspirant would perform the *Amamoulu* dance. The dancing would take place in the kindred's square (*Ama Obi*). When the aspirant is dancing, people would give him yam, money, and most often, fowls. This dancing tradition is often popular among *Awka* and *Njikoka* communities in *Anambra* State. There is another traditional dance called *Ufie*. This type of dance is

traditionally meant for title holders. It is danced with elephant tusks. Among the *Udi* community in *Enugu* State, it is called *Igede*. Among the *Udi* community, this type of dance is not danced by ordinary people; this is why it is called *Ofeke Agba*. While among the *Achi* community, it is known as *Ikpa*.

Among the *Isu-Njaba* and *Isiobishi* communities in Imo State, the preliminary stage would only allow the candidate, if qualified, to proceed to the next stage. The task here would be to examine the process of Ozo title taking in *Igbo* community. This process is divided into the following stages:

- a. *Ndishi* Stage
- b. *Nqwurumobi* Stage
- c. *Onumonu* Stage
- d. *Ozo Ukwu* Stage

### **3.5 NDISHI STAGE**

The *Ndishi* Stage is done within the village of the aspirant. In *Amugbara* village, the aspirant would consult the highest Ozo title holder to inform him of his intention. The candidate would pay the consultation fee (*Ego ikpatu aka n' onu*). *Nze* Alphonsus Oforchukwu, the highest Ozo titleholder would tell the candidate the necessary requirements for the *Ndishi* stage. A day, usually, *Eke-ukwu* day, would be fixed for the initiation ceremony. Other Ozo title holders would be informed about the intention of the intending candidate to be initiated into the *Ndishi* stage.

On the *Eke-ukwu* day, the Ozo title holders would gather in the compound of the intending aspirant. The candidate would provide the title holders with *Oji* (kola nuts), *Ji* (yams), *Okuko* (fowls), *Ewu* (goat), and *mmanya ngwo* (palm wine). There is also plenty of food to eat. The aspirant would prepare pounded yam (*Fufu*), bread fruit (*Ukwa*), *Nchaji- akpu*, *Akidi*, and other traditional food. The *Nze na* Ozo title holders could be accompanied by their wives, children and grandchildren. Also, the candidate could invite his friends to witness the *Ndishi* ceremony. This is a merriment and entertainment period. The candidate would display his wealth to show his *Umunna* (kindred members) that he is prepared for the Ozo title ceremony.

There are some sacrifices that should be made to the gods and ancestors. These sacrifices are necessary, otherwise, the candidate would not be deemed as having completed the *Ndishi* stage. The sacrifice is made by the highest Ozo title holder in the village. It is a time to honour the gods and the ancestors who protect the village members. The Ozo title aspirant would also provide *Nzu*, *Oji*, fowls, and goats for the sacrifice. These sacrifices are usually performed at night when non-initiates would not be allowed to participate in the ceremony. These ceremonies are strictly excluded from the non-members. It has its awe, wonder, and fears. However, it should be mentioned here that with the advent of Christianity, these sacrifices are being left out. Christians are permitted to pay the equivalent of the sacrifices in money. In a way, it is being inculturated into Christian ways to allow the Christians to participate fully in the *Ndishi* ceremony. There is no pagan ceremony involved in modern times in the *Amugbara* village.

The *Ndishi* stage among the *Amugbara* members is known as the initiatory stage. This is the first stage in the Ozo title taking ceremony. The aspirant is not called an Ozo title holder at this stage. The aspirant is allowed to move into the next stage, if, he intends to continue, depending on his resources. The Ozo title taking is not a project one embarks on without much resource. This is why the *Igbo* people say that *Ofeke adighi echi Ozo* (the Ozo title taking is not meant for a poor man). Among the *Anambra* communities, this first stage is called *Ibu Ozu Ozo*. The second stage is known as *Affa Ozo*. The *Affa Ozo* takes time, money, and other material expenses (Ikekamma 1982:68) to complete. The communities where the *Affa Ozo* is observed, do it to know if they are being supported by the gods to be initiated into the Ozo title taking. In other communities, it is a time to know the type of name the aspirant would take as permitted by the gods.

### 3.6 NGWURUMOBI STAGE

*Ngwurumobi* is the second stage in the Ozo title taking among the *Isiobishi* community. Assuming that the aspirant, after completing the *Ndishi* stage and intends to continue in the Ozo title taking, would meet the highest Ozo title holder in his community to announce his intention. In *Amugbara* community, the highest Ozo title holder is *Nze Alphonsus Oforchukwu*. *Nze Oforchukwu* would charge the consultation fee, and accordingly would ask the initiate to gather the entire title holders in his compound on the agreed *Eke-ukwu* market day. The *Ngwurumobi* stage is important in the Ozo title process in *Amugbara* village. First, this is the stage in the Ozo title taking in which the aspirant would be allowed to erect his *Obi* (The large living quarters of the head of the family). Second, this is an important stage in the Ozo title taking. Third, this stage in the title taking would entitle the initiate to become a member of Ozo title taking in his community.

The Ozo title holders in *Amugbara* community would prescribe the required items for the Ozo title taking. It is the prerogative right of the highest Ozo title holder to prescribe the items at the gathering. In *Amugbara* village, part of the items include the following:

- a. *Oji* (kola nuts)
- b. *Nzu* (White chalk).
- c. *Mmanyà* (palm wine)
- d. *Okuko* (fowls)
- e. *Ewu* (goats)
- f. *Ego* (money)

These items differ from community to community among the *Igbo* people. In *Amugbara* village, each of the above items could vary from individual to individual. The total amount of items in the list must be at least eight in number. This is an occasion for the aspirant to display his wealth. In the *Ukeh* and *Idemili* communities in *Anambra* State, a fowl, kola nuts, fish, goat, a cow, palm wine, money, yam, bread fruit were required (Ikekamma 1982:71). In the *Adazi-Nnukwu* community in *Anambra* State, the

Ozo titled person would gorgeously entertain the Ozo title holders and other invitees (Ogbukagu 1997:88). The entertainment is accompanied with dances. The aspirant could arrange for different age grades to perform their dances. Each age grade would be allowed to perform, which differ from town to town. In *Okpatu* community, the dancing lasts for twenty seven days. But in *Nteje* community, it could last for three days. The aspirant would dress in a costly regalia or costume. The regalia differs from individual to individual, and most often could be designed according to the name of his Ozo title taking. During the dancing entertainment, the aspirant would be allowed to dance with his *Mkpara* (staff), *Akufe*, beads in his hands and legs, and *Okpu nwagoro* (usually a red cap on his head). People present would be calling his Ozo name as well as giving him gifts of all types. This part is only considered as a preliminary part of the *Ngwurumobi* stage.

After the entertainment, the real *Ngwurumobi* ritual would begin. The Ozo title holders would gather to erect an *Obi* for the aspirant. The *Obi* is usually situated outside the aspirant's compound. At a later time, the aspirant would build and decorate the *Obi* according to his design. The decoration of the *Obi* differs from individual to individual. But, most often, the *Obi* is decorated with *Akpokpo Ewu* (animal skins), *Isi Ewu* (goat's head), *Mbe* (tortoise), *Isi Agu* (lion's head), *Ekwe* (gong), and other traditional outfits that point to what the aspirant has spent in his Ozo initiation. The *Obi* is decorated in such a way that it could instill fear in children. The ceremony itself is phenomenal.

The traditional *Obi* is important among the *Igbo* people. First, it is a place of gathering. It is regarded as the *Nze's* palace. The *Nze* receives visitors in his *Obi*. Meetings of the *Umunna* could be held in the *Obi*. It is a place where family disputes could be settled. Second, it is a place of prayer for the *Nze* in *Igbo* land. This is an important part in the life of *Nze* as a title holder. The *Nze* would pray every morning with *Nzu* (chalk), *Oji* (kola nuts), *Ose Oji* (alligator pepper), and *Mmiri* (water). The *Nze* would pray to the gods and ancestors for protection, guidance, and prosperity for the family members. He would pray that he has not tried to prevent the progress of any man in the community, but if he has done so, he would call on the gods to take vengeance. He would also pray that if any member of the community is trying to bring harm to him that the gods and ancestors would revenge on his behalf. The *Nze* would also pray for

peace, unity, love and harmony in the community. Third, the *Obi* serves as a ritual place for the community. Any sacrifice for the community is usually performed within the *Obi* of *Onye Nze*. The *Obi* of *Onye Nze* serves multiple purposes. To sum up the purpose of *Obi* in *Isu-Njaba* community in his *Awa* lecture, Otuwurunne (1997:16) writes,

Apart from the *Ishiobi* that serves ritual purposes, *Obi* as a building serves many purposes in *Isunjabá* today. It serves as a mini-court where the *nze* administers justice to disputing parties. Sometimes elders, men, and women gather to discuss issues, enact laws, rules, and policies.

The *Obi* is a sacred place. There are some actions within the *Obi* that are seriously considered as taboos among the *Igbo* people. The *Obi* should not be desecrated by anybody, no matter his/her rank in the community. People are discouraged to have any sex in the *Obi*. Fighting and quarrels are not permitted in the *Obi*. The community members are not allowed to invade the *Obi* of *Onye Nze* on the *Eke* market day. *Eke* market is sacred among the *Igbo* people. Also, *Igbu ochu* (murder) is not allowed in the *Obi*. *Imu ejima* (twins) is prohibited in the *Obi*. *Ikwu udo* (suicide) is never allowed in the *Obi*. These and other taboos are considered serious if committed in *Obi* among the *Igbo* people. These taboos are common among the *Igbo* people.

There is usually a cleansing ceremony that must be performed if the *Obi* is desecrated. These cleansing ceremonies are performed by *Onye Nchu Aja* (the chief priest). The requirements for the cleansing ceremony could vary from community to community, but must be performed among the *Igbo* communities. In *Isiobishi* communities, it includes a sum of money, *Okuko* (fowls), *Oji* (kola nuts), and *Nzu* (chalk). In most cases, *Ebele* (ram) could be used for the cleansing ceremony. This is performed to appease the gods and ancestors who have been offended by the offence committed in the *Obi* of *Onye Nze*. *Nze Bartholomew Oforchukwu* noted that the cleansing of the *Obi* could not be ignored; otherwise, the anger of the gods and ancestors would bring calamity to the community. The urgency of the cleansing ceremony is needed, if the *Obi* is subject to sacrilege in the community.

### 3.7 THE *ONUMONU* STAGE

Nze Bartholomew Oforchukwu said that the *Onumonu* stage is the next in Ozo title taking in the *Isuobishi* community. Also, Nze Alphonsus Oforchukwu said that *Onumonu* stage is the highest Ozo title in *Isiobishi* community. After completing the *Ngwurumobi*, the would-be Ozo titleholder would inform the highest title holder in his community about his intention to move on to the *Onumonu* stage. The candidate must be rich to embark on the *Onumonu* phenomenon. The requirements are quite different from the previous stages in Ozo title taking. The requirements also differ from community to community. Nze Alphonsus Oforchukwu, the leader of Ozo title holders in *Amugbara* village, said that one particular characteristic in the *Onumonu* stage is that the total amount of requirements must be twelve in number.

The Ozo title holders would gather in the *Obi* of the candidate on the agreed *Eke-Ukwu* market (day). He would present them with *Oji* (kola nut), *Nzu* (white chalk), *Edo*, and *Ose Oji* (alligator pepper) and *Mmanya* (palm wine). After the *Oji* is blessed and eaten, the candidate would announce his intention to move on to the *onumonu* stage in Ozo title taking. The Ozo title holders would ask him some questions. One of the questions asked is, “Is *Onumonu* title in the candidate’s family”? After getting an answer from him, the highest Ozo title holder would give him the required lists for the *onumonu* title. The list differs slightly from community to community. In *Amugbara* village, the following list of items is required:

- a. *Oji* (kola nuts)
- b. *Nzu* (white chalk)
- c. *Edo*
- d. *Okuko* (fowls)
- e. *Ji* (yam)
- f. *Ewu* (goat)
- g. *Udu mmanya* (kegs of wine)
- h. *Ukwa agworo agwo*(bread fruits)
- i. *Fufu* (pounded yam)
- j. *Ego* (a huge sum of money)

The list of items is not definitive. The total amount of each of the aforementioned items in the list must be twelve in number. The money is a huge amount because it should be shared among the Ozo title holders. The would-be Ozo title holder would take the list, but only to inform the Ozo title holders when he is ready. In *Amugbara* community, the *Onumonu* stage is done bit by bit. It is not a ceremony that one does all at a meeting because of the resources involved.

When the candidate is ready, he would inform the Ozo title holders to convene in his *Obi*. The would-be Ozo title holder would prepare a heavy meal for the Ozo title holders, the invitees, and other related visitors. The ceremony differs from community to community, and from individual to individual. It is a time to show the *umunna* (community members) and friends that he has the wealth to feed the crowds. He would arrange for traditional dances. He would dress in his costly regalia with his staff, beads in his hands and on his legs, and with a red cap on his head. People would be calling his Ozo title name. He would be given gifts such as *Ego* (money). It is an entertaining moment for the community.

The most important aspect of the Ozo initiation is the rituals that are involved among the *Igbo* people. In the *Amugbara* community, these rituals underline the importance of the ceremony. The aspirant would present *Okuko Osa* (white fowl) and *Okpete or Nzu* (white chalk) respectively. The white fowl would be used to wash his eyes. *Nze Bartholomew Oforchukwu* said that the washing of the eyes is important. According to *Nze Oforchukwu*, it indicates that the would-be Ozo title holder would be bold enough not to be afraid of anything that comes to him in life. This ritual allows the aspirant to walk both within his community and outside with courage, boldness, and audacity. He would be seen as a symbol of bravery before his people.

Another important ritual that is performed among the *Amugbara* community is the ritual of cleansing the tongue. The aspirant's tongue or mouth would be washed with *Nzu* (white chalk). Some communities in *Isu-Njaba* use *Okpete* to wash the tongue of the aspirant. The washing of the mouth or tongue underlines the need for the Ozo title holder to speak the truth at all times. He must not take any bribe when settling any disputes among his community members. He must be a custodian of truth and justice. Supporting this, *Abanuka* (2002:87) says,

Closely connected with this purification by water or *Nzu* is the ritual of cleansing of the tongue (*Isa Ire*). Part of the requirement of the new life that the candidate must live after initiation is telling the truth. By the ritual of cleaning the tongue the candidate is made to understand that he must speak the truth always. Speaking the truth at all times is tantamount to speaking the language of the gods.

Also, another important part of the ritual of cleansing the tongue is the presentation of the *Ofo*. The origin, uses, and functions of the *Ofo* phenomenon will be discussed later in this section. Among the *Igbo* people, every *Ozo* titled person must have an *Ofo*. The presentation of the *Ofo* is part of the cleansing tongue ceremony. *Ofo* is made from a piece of wood called *Ogirishi*. Among the *Igbo* people, *Ogirishi* is a sacred tree. The *Ofo* is a symbol of truth and justice. In *Amugbara* community, *Ofo* is presented to the would-be *Ozo* titled person to remind him of his position among his people. He represents truth and must say the truth at all times. In any deliberation, settlement, and/or consideration with his subjects, the *Ozo* titled person must do so before his *Ofo*. The *Ofo* in the *Igbo* traditional religion is a symbol of truth and justice. The position of the *Igbo* people on *Ofo* is never compromised. Any *Ozo* titled person who violates the rules of the *Ofo* is stripped of his *Ozo* title. The punishment given depends on the gravity of the offence. In most cases, the *Ozo* titled person might be reprimanded as a deterrent to other titled persons in the community. In other cases, the title of the person in question might be revoked from the family entirely.

### **3.8 THE OZO UKWU STAGE**

The *Ozo Ukwu* should be differentiated from the *Ozo Nta* in *Igbo* traditional society. In some communities, the *Ozo Nta* is the preliminary stage of *Ozo* title taking. But, the *Ozo Ukwu* is the climax or peak in *Ozo* title taking in *Isiobishi* town. It is the last of *Ozo* title taking which is marked by different peculiar ceremonies. After passing the *Onumonu* stage, the intending *Ozo* titled person would approach the highest *ozo* titled person in his community to announce his intention. Nze Bartholomew Oforchukwu said that the *Ozo Ukwu* ceremony involves a lot of ceremony. According to H.R.H Eze Robert Ogbenna, the celebration involves other *Ozo* titled men in other communities in

the town. The ceremony would entitle the intending Ozo titled person to get shares from other communities. This is why it is important for the aspirant to complete the *Ozo Ukwu* stage in Ozo title taking in the *Isuobishi* community. At this juncture, it should be noted that most of these ceremonies have been influenced by the presence of Christian Religion.

In some communities, the *Ozo Ukwu* is hereditary. It is not found in all families in the village. It is taken by the *Diokpara* (first son) of the *Ofo* holder in any kindred among the *Igbo* community. The *Diokpara* (first son) represents each kindred before the wider community. When the intending Ozo titled person is ready with the *Ozo Ukwu* initiation, the required list would be given to him. According to *Igbo* tradition, the list of items include the following:

- a. *Oji* (kola nuts)
- b. *Ose Oji* (alligator pepper)
- c. *Nzu* (white chalks)
- d. *Edo*
- e. *Ewu* (goats)
- f. *Ji* (yams)
- g. *Mmanya ngwo* (kegs of palm wine)
- h. *Ukwa agworo agwo* (bread fruits)
- i. *Ego* (Huge sum of money)

On the agreed *Eke Ukwu* market day, the Ozo titled men from the different villages would gather in the *Obi* of the would-be Ozo titled person. The ceremony, as indicated, involves the wider Ozo titled men from other communities. This means that the entertainment would involve a lot of money. The total amount of each of the aforementioned lists should be sixteen in number. The number should not be compromised. In each gathering, the initiate would prepare food, *Ihe aqworu aqwo* (usually bread fruits or oil beans) and drinks. He could invite other members of the family and friends to witness the ceremony.

In some communities in *Igbo* land, the intending Ozo *Ukwu* candidate must own slaves (*Ohu*). This is part of the initiation requirement for the ceremony. It is conceived that these slaves (*Ohu*) would help him on his farms. This also underlines the fact that

he could maintain a large family. In other communities such as *Isu-Njaba*, the aspirant would provide slaves (*Ohu*) to all the *Ozo Ukwu* holders. As Otuwurunne (1997:18) observed, "One of its specific features is the giving of *Ohu Nwoke* (male slave) and woman slave (*Ohu Nwanyia*) to all *Ozo Ukwu* holders. After this he must own some slaves himself as a sign that he has some labor force to do his work for him." The *Ozo Ukwu* title is limited to a few families in the *Isiobishi* community. The practice of *Ozo Ukwu* titleholders owning slaves (*Ohu*) is against the tenets of Christianity, and was extremely condemned by Christianity in *Igbo* society.

There is a practice of *Igbo Ichi* (tattooing) in the process of *Ozo* title taking. The practice of *Igbo Ichi* is common among the *Igbo* communities. In some communities, men are traditionally obliged to undertake the tattooing process. In this situation, the *Igbo Ichi* (tattooing) is to mark a transition into manhood. But in the *Ozo* title taking, it has a different meaning. After the *Ozo Ukwu* ceremony, the aspirant would be subjected to *Igbo Ichi* (tattooing). The *Igbo Ichi* mark is different, and could be differentiated from ordinary tattooing in *Igbo* society. For Otuwurunne (1997:19), *Igbo Ichi* proves that an individual is both morally and physically worthy of the *Ozo* title. But for Abanuka (2004:88), *Igbo Ichi* is a test given to the *Ozo* candidate to determine whether he could put up with the rigorous demands of the new life he would embrace. It is believed that the people of *Umudioka* are experts in *Igbo Ichi*. They have traveled to all parts of *Igbo* land for this purpose.

There are rules for *Igbo Ichi*. These rules must be observed by all the candidates for the *Igbo Ichi*. First, the candidate must not move his body; otherwise, he would be disqualified. Second, he must not show any sign of pain. He must bear the pains; otherwise, he would bring shame for the family. Third, the initiate is confined to a room for the wound to heal. After completing the *Igbo Ichi*, there would be feasting to mark the success of the initiation. In some areas in *Igbo* land, the candidate could go to market known as *Izu Ahia Ichi*. The custom of *Izu ahia Ozo* is done in some communities in *Ihiala*, *Anambra* State. The purpose of the *Izu Ahia Izo* is to show the newly initiated *Ozo* titled person to the people. It is a big ceremony. The candidate could be accompanied by his wives, extended family members, and friends. He would dress in his full *Ozo* costumes. As he goes to the market, he would be accompanied with

music. People would come out to observe him. People could give him gifts depending on their people's disposition.

In some areas in *Igbo* land, the *Igbo Ichi* is followed by a seclusion ceremony. The seclusion ceremony could last a longer period of time. First, this is to allow the wounds of the *Igbo ichi* to heal. Second, there are certain sacrifices that would be made to appease the gods and ancestors. These sacrifices could not be compromised; otherwise, the gods would be annoyed with the newly initiated Ozo titled person. The seclusion period could also afford the candidate the opportunity to learn the language of the gods and ancestors. As a titled person, he could only fashion his new life to the one familiar to the gods and ancestors. This is why it is important for the titled person to model his life after the gods of his *Umunna*.

In some areas, there is the ceremony of *igu aha* (naming ceremony). This affords the candidate to take a name of his choice. These names chosen must reflect the character of the titled person or the title he is taking. In *Isu-Njaba* community, names such as *Okwara* could be taken. While in *Umuduruji* Kindred of Amugbara community, names like *Duruji* could be taken. Nze Bartholomew Oforchukwu observed that when Nze Ibewuikwe was initiated into Ozo title, he took the name *Duruji*, a name that the kindred children are today known for. Supporting this view, Abanuka (2004:88) noted, "Usually, the names chosen include the prefixes such as *Okwara/Okpara, Duru, Dim, Nze, or Ichie*, depending on the type of Ozo title one takes." In *Amugbara* community like other *Igbo* communities, the first wife of the titled man would be answering *Lolo*. The respect is accorded to the first wife regardless whether she has children or not. She should be referred to as *Lolo* of the newly initiated Ozo titled person. At the end of the Ozo title initiation, the Nze is presented with *Ofo*. The next task here is to examine the origin, functions and significance of *Ofo* in *Igbo* traditional society.

### 3.9 THE SYMBOL OF OFO

*Ofo* is known in most communities in *Igbo* land. It is made from *Ogirishi* tree. For Abanuka (2004:87), *Ofo* which is made from a piece of wood from the *Ogirisi* tree (*Newbouldia Laevis*) is a symbol of truth. For Ojike (1947), *Ofo* is a sacred symbol of truth, justice, law, and authority among the *Igbo*. For authors like Njaka (1974), the symbolism of *Ofo* is important for the *Igbo* people. *Ofo* is primarily a staff of office which symbolizes justices, righteousness, and truth (Ejizu 2002:24).

The origin of *Ofo* is uncertain among the *Igbo* traditional society. It is traced to *Chukwu*. It is believed that *Chukwu* gave *Ofo* to the *Igbo* people to administer for justice. This is why the *Ofo* is considered as a link between the living, dead, gods, and the ancestors. The *Ofo* is used only by men, women, on the other hand, are prevented to use it.

There is a ritual that accompanies the *Ofo* phenomenon. It is not used until it is consecrated. The consecration of the *Ofo* is carried out by the eldest titleholder in the town. In some *Igbo* communities, the ritual blessing is done by the chief priest. In *Amugbara* village, the *Ofo* is consecrated with *Nzu*, *Oji*, *Ose Oji*, *Edo*, *Ogirishi* leaf, and other related objects. The title holders would be present for the consecration of *Ofo*. *Ofo* is of different shapes. Some *Ofos* are short, while others are long. Some *Ofos* are curved, while others are straight.



***Photo 3.1: The Ofo Symbol***

### **3.10 TYPES OF OFO**

In *Igbo* society, there are different types of *Ofo*. No matter the types of *Ofo* one possesses, all the *Ofos* perform similar functions. For Ejizu (2002:34-35), the different types of *Ofo* in *Igbo* society include:

#### **3.10.1 Personal Ofo**

The personal *Ofo* is common among the *Igbo* people. Every *Igbo* male could acquire it. It could also be acquired by *Ohu* (slaves) in *Igbo* traditional society. The personal *Ofo* is made from *Ogurishi* tree which resists decay. For Ejizu (2002:34), the personal *Ofo* consists of a normal-sized branchlet from the *Ofo* tree. There is no special design in this *Ofo*.

#### **3.10.2 Lineage Ofo**

The lineage *Ofo* is another type of *Ofo* among the *Igbo* people. It could be differentiated from the personal *Ofo* because it represents the entire family or kindred. It is a symbol of unity for the kindred. The head of the kindred possesses the lineage *Ofo*. The lineage *Ofo* represents the kindred gods and ancestors. The head of the kindred could offer sacrifices to the ancestors with the lineage *Ofo*. In Amugbara village, the lineage *Ofo* is inherited by the eldest son of the kindred community.

#### **3.10.3 Titular Ofo**

The titular *Ofo* is the title one takes out of wealth or for social purpose. This type of *Ofo* is common among the *Igbo* people that take the *Ozo* title. In *Isuobishi*, the highest *Ozo* title taking is the *Nze*. The name of the *Ofo* is associated with the name of the *Ozo* title taken. For Ejizu (2002:35), the initiate keeps the titular *Ofo* which often times tallies with the lineage staff of office. Some of the examples of titular *Ofo* are *Ahajioku*, *Ani*, etc.

### **3.10.4 Professional Ofo**

There are some professionals in *Igbo* society that entitles them to possess *Ofo*. The *Ofo* in question symbolizes their profession. They use the *Ofo* to pray or offer sacrifices to the gods and ancestors. The traditional medicine men, diviners, rain-makers, black-smiths, wood-carvers, and teeth-fillers keep *Ofo* symbols which go by the names of their respective professions (Ejizu 2002:35).

### **3.10.5 Institutional Ofo**

The *Igbo* society recognizes the institutional *Ofo*. This is as old as the *Igbo* society. There are some deities that perform certain functions in *Igbo* society. These deities have a peculiar *Ofo* that symbolizes its functions for the *Igbo* people. Thus, we have *Ofo Igwe*, *Ofo Ulasì*, *Ofo Anì*, *Ofo Edo*, *Ofo Arusi* and *Ofo Njaba*.

## **3.11 THE RITUAL USES OF OFO**

We have discussed the different types of *Ofos* in *Igbo* traditional society. The task in this section is to examine the ritual uses of *Ofo* among the *Igbo* people. The *Ofo* is a symbol of unity, truth, and justice. The *Ofo* is ritually used in different ceremonies in *Igbo* society. The ritual uses of *Ofo* in *Igbo* society include the following:

### **3.11.1 For Praying**

The *Igbo* people are by nature a praying community. Prayers are important in the lives of the *Igbo* people. It is said that the *Igbo* people eat, sing, dance, and talk religiously. This is also seen in the ritual use of *Ofo* among the *Igbo* people. The head or the eldest person in the family, kindred, and/or village possesses the *Ofo* on behalf of the community.

Every morning, the head of the family would pray for the living as well as make a request for protection from the gods and ancestors. For Ikekamma (1982:77), the *Ofo* is used to make requests to Chukwu in front of the shrine of whichever particular god is worshipped at the time. For Otuwurunne (1987:23), the *Ofo* is a means of prayer to the

gods. For Ejizu (2002:61), the *Ofo* symbol is a sacred stick of prayer among the traditional *Igbo*. In *Amugbara* community, the eldest person would use *Oji* (kola nut), *Ose Oji* (alligator pepper), *Nzu* (white chalk), and other related rituals to pray. He prays for good health, protection, prosperity, and good harvest for the family, and kindred members. In each prayer, he would strike his *Ofo* on the ground. At the end of his prayers, he would spray the *Ofo* with the chewed kola nuts, alligator pepper, and *Nzu*. *Ofo* therefore serves as a medium to commune with the gods and ancestors asking for their help.

### **3.11.2 For Swearing**

Oath taking is common among the *Igbo* people. Sometimes, there could be a situation in which one is accused of a wrong doing, and in order to prove his/her innocence, he/she is asked to take an oath. If he/she decides to take an oath, the *Ofo* holders in the village would assemble their *Ofos* for the oath taking purpose. There is usually a prayer or rituals performed by the chief priest or the highest *Ozo* titled person in the community. After the rituals performed, the accused person would swear before the *Ofo*. Usually, after a year of taking the oath, if he/she survives, he/she is declared innocent. But if he/she dies before the one year period, he/she is held accountable for the said crime. It is important to note that what the Bible is for the Christians, is what the *Ofo* is for the *Igbo* tradition in oath taking.

### **3.11.3 For Cleansing Ceremony**

The *Igbo* people believe that there are certain actions considered as taboos in *Igbo* society. The *Igbo* people abhor incest, murder, adultery, and other related offences against heaven and earth. If these offences are violated, one is expected to perform a purification ceremony. The *Ofo* plays a prominent role in the purification ceremony. The chief priest would use his *Ofo* to purify the earth that has been offended. In *Amugbara* community, this ceremony is called *Ikwu Ani (Ala)*. *Ikwu Ani* is important because the gods and ancestors are appeased through the cleansing ceremony. For

Ikekamma (1982:78), the *Ofo* is used by the chief priest to remove the effects of abominations after the proper sacrifice has been offered.

#### **3.11.4 For Sacrifices**

Sacrifices are most often offered to certain deities and ancestors in *Igbo* society. The *Igbo* people appeal to the gods and ancestors in time of disasters, need, and scarcity. The *Ofo* is used to make sacrifices to appease the gods and ancestors. The chief priest would kill a goat or ram as part of the sacrifice. Also, *Oji* (kola nut), *Nzu* (white chalk), *Ose Oji* (alligator pepper) and other related ritual objects are used to perform the sacrifice. For Ejizu (2002:61), if the sacrificial victim is killed, the blood is spilled on the *Ofo* and on the cult images of the deity. In *Amugbara* community, the sacrificial goat or lamb is shared among those present during the sacrifice.

#### **3.11.5 For Naming Ceremony**

In the traditional *Igbo* society, the naming ceremony is a big celebration. After eight market days after the baby is born, a naming ceremony is held. During the naming ceremony, *Ofo* is used as part of the ceremony. The chief priest or the *Ofo* holder in the family has the prerogative right to perform the naming ceremony before the ancestral shrines. He would hold the *Ofo* in his hand as he blesses the child. After performing the traditional rituals, he would give the child a name.

#### **3.11.6 For Decision making**

The traditional *Igbo* people believe in *Igwe bu ike* (number is strength). No man could take a unilateral decision for the family members. Decisions are jointly taken by the members of the family, kindred and community. After important decisions are made by the *Umunna* (family members), the *Ofo* is used to seal the decision. It is imperative that the decisions sealed with the *Ofo* would be respected by the family members. Ejizu (2002:64) observed that *Ofo* is used to seal all important decisions of family, kindred,

and lineage members which are aimed at fostering the peace and harmony of the community.

### **3.11.7 For settling Disputes**

The *Igbo* people recognize that there might be quarrels between brothers and sisters in the community. These quarrels are not allowed to continue in the community. These disputes if not settled, could disrupt the flow of unity, peace, and harmony within the community members. This is why efforts are made by the family members to settle their differences. The *Ofo* is an integral part of settling disputes and quarrels that arise among the community members. The *Ofo* is a symbol of truth, and no member of the community would be expected to utter falsehoods before the *Ofo*, otherwise, he/she would be punished by the ancestors and the gods which the *Ofo* represent. Ejizu (2002:64) noted that no one may utter a falsehood before the *Ofo* without being visited by some terrible calamity.

### **3.11.8 For Sealing Covenants**

The covenant sealing is common among some traditional societies. In the *Igbo* traditional society, covenant sealing could take place between individuals or groups. There are situations when individuals could be suspicious of one another, covenant could be sealed to allay fears of harming one another. In this situation, the lineage *Ofo* is used to seal covenants. There are other ritual elements involved in the sealing covenant. For example, *Nzu* (white chalk), *Oji* (kola nuts), *Ose Oji* (alligator pepper), and *Edo* could be used. There are some rituals or incantations that are said before the individuals or groups. The individuals could be made to touch the lineage *Ofo* while repeating words after the chief priest.

### 3.12 THE PRESENTATION OF *Ofo* TO *Onye Nze* (TITLED PERSON)

The researcher has been able to discuss at length the different types of *Ofo* and its ritual uses among the *Igbo* people. After the titled person has completed all the stages of *Ozo* title taking, he is presented with an *Ofo*. The *Ofo* which is given to him symbolizes his authority among his people. There are rituals, incantations, and prayers involved in the presentation of *Ofo*. The blessing of the *Ofo* would be done by the chief priest. But, in some areas like *Amugbara* community, the highest *Ozo* title holder could perform the ritual blessings and presentation of *Ofo* to the *Onye Nze* (titled person).

The presentation of the *Ofo* is a big ceremony. The initiate could invite some of his family members and friends to witness the presentation of *Ofo*. Also, all the *Ofo* holders within the vicinity would be present for the ceremony. He would feed the entire people with food. There would also be dancing and music.

After the merriment, the new initiate would be presented with the *Ofo*. The chief priest or the highest *Ozo* title holder would admonish him as the *Ofo* is being presented. The admonitions would be based on the ritual uses of *Ofo* as was discussed on the preceding sections. The *Ofo* possessor would be reminded of his new position among his people. He would be asked to be fair, honest, truthful, and just in his deliberations with the *Ofo*. The admonitions given to the *Ozo* possessor could be summed up in an interview Ikekamma (1982:76) had in his study, "Always say the truth, never judge against the truth, always tell the truth and be honest." In the *Amugbara* community, there are other prohibitions given to the newly titled person. These prohibitions are in line with what the community abhors. The *Ofo* possessor would not sleep with the wives of his brothers in the same village. He would not take the land or any other things that are not his among his people. He would not cover any abominations committed in the community. After the ritual presentation of the *Ofo*, the possessor would hang his new *Ofo* on his *Obi*. He has become a new person. Everybody would respect him as he discharges his functions with the *Ofo* as *Onye Nze* in his community.

### 3.13 THE DUTIES AND PRIVILEGES OF OZO TITLE HOLDERS

The Ozo title taking as discussed is a big venture among the *Igbo* speaking people. It is not undertaken by simple minded people. Before one is allowed to take any of the titles, he must be investigated to see if he is worthy of the title. If allowed, the title holders must have been assured that he was wealthy enough to complete the stages of Ozo title taking in *Igbo* traditional society. Apart from what he spent, there are duties and privileges accorded to the members. These duties and privileges include the following:

- a. The right to share the title fee of the new members
- b. The right to possess the *Ofo*
- c. The right to build an *Obi* in his compound
- d. The right to wear the *Okpu Nwagoro* (red cap)
- e. The right to possess the *Akufe*
- f. The right to wear the beads in his hands and ankles
- g. The right to be accorded respect and honor among his people
- h. The right not to be desecrated and searched by anybody
- i. The right not to be fined on the *Eke Ukwu* market day
- j. The right not to be kidnapped by anybody
- k. He becomes part of the decision-making body in his community
- l. He becomes the community custodian of missing articles
- m. He must say the truth at all times
- n. He is exempted from communal manual labor among his people
- o. He is entitled to special traditional burial ceremony
- p. He must not lie with the wife of his neighbours
- q. He must not climb trees

These duties and privileges are not definite. They could differ from community to community in *Igbo* traditional society.

### 3.14 THE BURIAL CEREMONY OF *ONYE NZE* (TITLED PERSON)

The *Igbo* traditional society is noted for celebrations. They celebrate life, marriage and death. When one is born into *Igbo* society, he/she is welcomed with celebrations. When he/she marries, there are also celebrations. Finally, when he/she dies, an elaborate celebration is accorded to him/her. A child who dies prematurely is not accorded an elaborate ceremony. But the burial of *Onye Nze* (titled person) takes a different dimension. For Abanuka (2004:90), the death of the *Ozo* titled person is treated as an extraordinary event. The discussion here will be limited to the burial of a titled person in *Igbo* traditional society.

When a traditional titled person dies, fear grips everybody within and beyond his community. There would be discussions about his passing on to the beyond. Children would be cautioned where they would limit their journeys. The formal announcement of the passing on of a titled person would be concealed from people. There would be arrangements to get as many heads as possible for the burial ceremony of the titled person. He would normally be buried with two slaves. These slaves, it is believed, would serve him in the land of the dead. This is probably why the passing of any titled person is fearful among the *Igbo* people.

After the necessary preparations for the burial of the titled person have been made, a formal announcement for his passing on would be made. By this time, the required number of heads would have been gotten. The chief priest or the *Onye isi Ozo* (the highest titleholder) would be formally informed of the death of the titled person. The titleholders would assemble in his *Obi* to discuss his burial arrangements. The requirements for his burial would be dependent on his titles. If he held the highest title in the community, it demands elaborate celebrations.

The highest titleholder and other titleholders would gather in the *Obi* of the dead titled person. His first son would present kola nuts to the titleholders. After the presentation of the kola nut, the highest titleholder would enter into the room where the *Onye Nze* was lying. In the *Amugbara* community, the highest titleholder would be handed a white fowl. He would use the fowl to go round the dead person, which would herald some other burial ceremonies. Within this time, there would be no crying. If

anybody cries, it is considered as a taboo. The language used is that the *Onye Nze* has entered into his *Ufo* (backyard). The family could lose the privilege of the dead man's titles if people cry. This tradition is still observed in *Amugbara* community of Imo State as this study is being carried out.

After performing certain rituals, the *Onye isi Ozo* would allow the corpse to be washed. One of the *Nwadi- ala* (family member) would be asked to wash the deceased Ozo titled person. He is dressed in his full Ozo regalia. A red cap would be put on his head. His wives and children would shave their heads. The wives were prohibited from going to markets for about two to three calendar months.

There are different types of rituals that are required before the burial. One of the required ritual ceremonies is called *isa anya* (washing of the eye). This ritual is performed with a white fowl. The fowl would be killed and the blood would be spilled to the eyes of the dead Ozo person. *Nze Bartholomew Oforchukwu* observed that this ritual is important and would never be omitted for two reasons. First, the *Isa Anya* ritual would prepare the titled person for his journey to the land of the dead where the dead ancestors would be waiting to receive him. Second, it would prepare him to avoid any impending dangers as he journeys to the land of the dead.

In addition, a separate ritual is performed to cut the tread ankles of the dead Ozo titled person. In *Amugbara* community, the cutting of the tread ankles ceremony is performed by the highest Ozo title member in the community. The dead Ozo titled person is not considered as being dead until this ritual is performed. When the tread ankles are cut, it indicates a separation from the dead titled person from other living title members. This is why it is important that this ritual is performed. This ritual is performed on *Eke Ukwu* market day (usually after four days of his departure).

The burial of a titled person is quite different from the burial of ordinary persons who died in the community. The titled man is buried in his backyard called *Ufo*. The grave would be dug. In *Amugbara* community, there are certain rituals that would be performed after the grave had been dug. A goat is usually killed for the ritual. The goat would be shared by the titled men in the community. There would be songs sung from his *Obi* to the *Ufo* where he would be buried. As the titled men sang, the titled name could be mentioned. These songs are important. First, it is sung asking the dead

ancestors to welcome the dead titled person in their midst. There are also four, eight, twelve, and sixteen gun shots respectively to honour the departure of the dead titled person. The gun shot ceremony is still observed among the *Igbo* people.

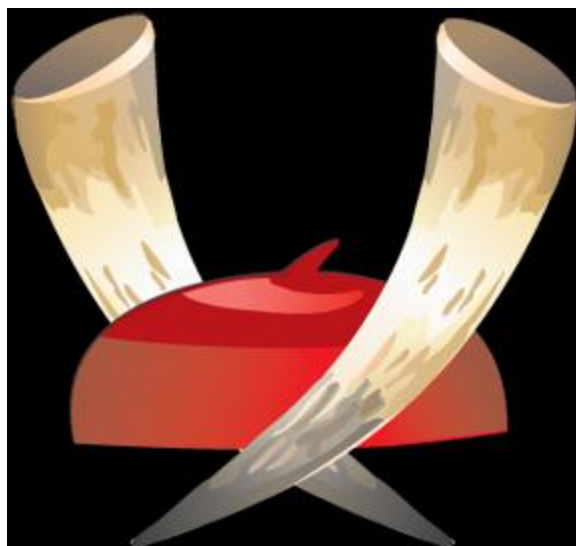
The burial of a dead titled person usually takes place in the evening. He is not buried in the day time like an ordinary person without titles. The day is usually on *Eke Ukwu* market day. The titled men in the community would assemble in the *Obi* of the dead titled person. The remaining ritual ceremonies would be performed to await burial in the evening. There would be merriment, dancing and masquerades of different types would be performed. Cows, goats and fowls are slaughtered to mark the burial rites of the titled person. The number of the goats killed depends on the type of titled the dead *Ozo* titled person acquired. Most often, what the title cost when it was taken could be repeated during burial rite ceremony.

When evening approached, there would be *Uri Egbe* (burial songs). The *Nze* people would sing songs that indicate that the dead titled person has gone to *Ufo*. The *Nze* man is buried at night (*Ime Abali*). In *Amugbara* community, the dead titled person is buried in a sitting position. *Nze Bartholomew* argued that the particular time of the day and position for burial of *Onye Nze* underline the significance of *Ozo* title taking in *Igbo* society. First, night is a time for sleep and night burial time would usher him to sleep. Second, the burial sitting position signifies his watchful capacity. The dead titled person would be watching over the family members from his place in the land of the dead. The full burial rite accorded to the dead titled person entitled him a place among the dead ancestors. He would be regarded as an ancestor.

After the burial, other ceremonies could continue depending on the type of title of the dead titled person. Groups of people would be meeting to accord the dead titled person his rights. The first wife of the dead titled person would be crying each morning on the grave for about two market calendar months. There is a second burial ceremony after one year of departure of the titled person. This second burial is not compromised otherwise he is not accorded a place among the ancestors. The deceased titled person would visit the family with a different calamity until his second burial ceremony is accorded to him.



*Photo 3.2: Oche Onye (Nze's Stool)*



***Photo 3.3: Okpu Nwaogoro and Mpi Agu (Red Cap and Elephant's Horn)***

### **3.15 THE NATURE OF CHRISTIANITY IN *IGBO* CATHOLIC CHURCH**

The researcher intends to analyze the nature of Christianity in *Igbo* communities in this section. The purpose is to give a true picture of how the message has been communicated to the *Igbo* Catholics. This would also help the Catholic Church to understand the need to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ in *Igbo* socio-cultural context (Nwachukwu 2000:1).

The *Igbo* communities have fully received the Christian message enthusiastically without regrets because they were religious by nature. When the early Christian Missionaries came into *Igbo* communities, they did not study the nature of *Igbo* worldviews. Christian Churches with Western cultural models were planted in *Igbo* communities. Also, Christian practices with Western cultural biases were imposed on the *Igbo* Christians (Nwachukwu 2000:2). Unfortunately, some of the *Igbo* cultural values were never accepted by the early Christian Missionaries. This way of thinking greatly impacted the early *Igbo* Christians and culture. First, the *Igbo* social, political, and cultural institutions were regarded and treated as inferior to the Western values. Secondly, *Igbo* traditions were replaced by Western ones. Third, *Igbo* Christians were subjected to think and behave like Western people. Fourth, the early *Igbo* Christians did

not fully embrace the Christian message. Fifth, the Christian Message in some *Igbo* communities was resisted when alien culture was imported to replace the local culture.

Unfortunately, the Church in *Igbo* communities has not recovered from the cultural imposition. The Christians are still struggling in their faith. There is a lot of lip service to the Gospel message of Jesus Christ among the *Igbo* Christians. The early Christian Missionaries did not build the church on a solid rock, i.e., on the *Igbo* culture. This has led some *Igbo* Christians to profess Christianity in the day, but, at night, they would consult diviners and fortunetellers whom they believe have answers to their cultural and social problems. This does not reflect what the Founder, Jesus Christ had in mind when founded the Church.

The Church in *Igbo* communities lacks cultural identity (Nwachukwu 2000:5). This lack of social and cultural identity has contributed in making the *Igbo* Christians behave like chameleons. An *Igbo* Christian wants to be cured when he/she is sick. This is the reason why *Igbo* Christians turn their back against Christianity when they are in need, such as a failure in business, death of a loved one, and when their marriage is not yet blessed with children. This lack of meaning in their Christian faith is a result of the orientation they received from the early Christian Missionaries. From the beginning of the missionary endeavour across *Igbo* communities, the missionaries concentrated on quantity over quality of Christians. Unfortunately, this mentality still prevails in most *Igbo* Catholic communities. This has, of course, caused a lot of conflicts among the *Igbo* Christians across the region.

### 3.16 CONFLICTS BETWEEN *IGBO* TRADITIONAL RELIGION AND CHRISTIANITY

The *Igbo* traditional religion came in contact with Christianity in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This contact was dramatic in different dimensions. First, it challenged some of the tenets of the *Igbo* traditional religion. Second, the contact made a dramatic conversion of the *Igbo* people into Christianity. The task here is to examine the similarities and differences of *Igbo* traditional religion and Christianity. This investigation will help one to see the areas in which the *Igbo* traditional religion conflicted with Christian teachings.

A review of the *Igbo* worldview revealed that the *Igbo* people are by nature religious. They eat religiously. They walk religiously. They talk religiously. Religion is an integral part of being *Igbo*. The people appease the gods and ancestors through regular sacrifices. Most often, these sacrifices are made with the killing of goats, rams, and fowls, and drinks. Other ritual objects such as *Oji* (kola nuts), *Nzu* (white chalk), and *Ose Oji* (alligator pepper) are used for the sacrifices. The chewed kola nuts are smeared on the *Ofo* and the idols. It is conceived that the gods and ancestors partake in these animal sacrifices. When Christianity came to the *Igbo* society, the early missionaries considered the *Igbo* traditional religion as paganism. The traditional people are called idol worshippers.

The *Igbo* worldview also revealed the *Igbo* people as killing and throwing away twins into *Ajofia* (evil forests). In the *Igbo* worldview, the delivery of *Ejima* (twins) is considered as an abomination. The mother of twins is believed to have sinned against the earth goddess. This is the *raison d'être* why twins are thrown into the evil forests. Christianity, on the other hand, is against the killing of twins. The Ten Commandments prohibited murder (Exodus 20:6). Christian Missionaries considered the *Igbo* traditional religion as barbaric. The early missionaries preached against the killing of twins. The mothers of twins were the first early converts to Christianity.

The *Igbo* traditional society institutionalized *Ohu* (slaves) as part of its culture. The *Ohu* (slaves) people were dehumanized. They were to serve their masters with limited rights. St. Paul also spoke about Onesimus (Philemon 1:8-22), a slave who ran away from his master. Paul requested that Philemon would accept him back not as a slave, but as a brother in Christ (Philemon 1:16). Christianity has been against slavery.

This is why when Christianity came to *Igbo* society, it preached against the *Osu* caste system as practised among the people. Christianity offered freedom to the outcasts. They were among the first converts in *Igbo* society.

The *Igbo* traditional religion is noted for its erected shrines. These shrines were places where sacrifices and offerings were made. The shrines were the abode of the gods and ancestors. The chief priests slaughtered goats, rams, and chickens to the gods and the ancestors. The blood of the goats and chickens were smeared on the shrines. It is presumed that the gods and ancestors eat the sacrificial lambs. When Christianity came to the *Igbo* society, the missionaries saw the shrines as places where pagan sacrifices are made. They preached against the sacrifices made to the shrine. In places of these shrines, Churches were erected. Some of these shrines were exported to Europe where some of them serve as tourist centres.

The *Igbo* traditional religion has some pragmatic views about life. The *Igbo* traditional religion is not all that bad as conceived by the early missionaries. The *Igbo* religion believes in one God called *Chukwu*. *Chukwu* is the creator of heaven and earth. This belief is also affirmed by Christianity. The *Igbo* traditional religion respects life as sacred. Even though human sacrifices were offered to the gods, it is done out of reverence. Besides this, life is viewed as sacred which nobody is allowed to take. The living code of conduct is pragmatic. The *Igbo* traditional religion preaches for honesty, truthfulness, and faithfulness. The *Ofo* is a symbol of truth, unity and justice. The *Nze* titled person is expected to administer fairness, justice and equity. The *Igbo* titled person must say the truth in season and out of season. These are good virtues which help people around the world to live harmoniously with one another.

The *Igbo* traditional contact with Christianity has created some pastoral problems. The pastoral problem will be posed and examined at length in the next chapter. This will form the crux of this research study. Christianity tends to produce a New Man with a new Faith, but its presentation has failed to give him the necessary tools to help him live a true Christian life as a true *Igbo* man. The task of this research study is to provide Christianity with the necessary tools to help the *Igbo* man to live a good Christian life. These tools will be found in the Second Vatican Council, which has encouraged inculturation to make the life of an *Igbo* man pragmatic.

However, the tension created by both Christianity and *Igbo* Traditional Religion needs to be harmonized. It is in view of this that H.R.H Eze B.C.Osuala<sup>3</sup>, the *Okwaraezeobi* of *Isu-Njaba* introduced the celebration of New Yam Festival, *Igbu Awa* with Mass. Yam occupies an important place among the *Isu-Njaba* people. New Yam Festival in *Isu-Njaba* has been modernized. His intention was to separate his leadership from pagan practices. As a Catholic, he thought that it would be good to change the way New Yam Festival, *Iri Ji* is being celebrated in *Isu-Njaba*. According to HRH, Eze B.C. Osuala, there were series of meetings conveyed to carry every son and daughter of *Isu-Njaba* along on the need to modernize New Yam Festival, *Iri Ji* in *Isu-Njaba*. The new way of celebrating *Igbu Awa* or *Iri Ji* is widely accepted by all Christians.

Today the new way of *Igbu Awa* or *Iri Ji* is quickly spreading beyond *Isu-Njaba* community. HRH Eze B.C. Osuala and his cabinet began the New Yam Festival with the celebration of the Eucharist. He encouraged his cabinet and other Christians to join in the celebration of Mass. The intention is to use the occasion to thank God for his blessings, protection, and guidance throughout the year. The *Isu-Njaba* sons and daughters are happy with the introduction of Mass before the New Yam Festival is celebrated. The aim is to encourage inculturating *Igbu Awa* into Christianity. *Igbu Awa* in *Isu-Njaba* has moral, religious, development, and social undertones. Today, the *Isu-Njaba* sons have been sponsoring the *Igbu Awa* celebration after seeing the benefits it brings into the community. Sometimes, a lecture on the *Igbo* culture is initiated to educate the people on the importance of culture. It is also a time people gather to settle disputes among the *Isu-Njaba* people. Some other development projects are also initiated during the *Iri Ji* period. What is important in *Iri Ji* today in *Isu-Njaba* is that it has removed *Igbu Awa* from its pagan practices.

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<sup>3</sup> Eze B.C. Osuala holds the highest *Ozo* title taking in *Isu-Njaba* community.

## Photo Album



***Photo Album 4.1: The Coronation of Nze Alphonsus Oforchukwu by H.R.H. Eze Edwin Orisakwe of Isuobishi Town in Isu Local Government Area of Imo State, Nigeria.***



***Photo Album 4.2: Nze Alphonsus and Lolo Dorothy Oforchukwu during Nze Alphonsus Oforchukwu's coronation in Isuobishi of Isu Local Government Area of Imo State, Nigeria.***



***Photo Album 4.3: Nze Alphonsus Oforchukwu and Nze Livinus Achonwa, his childhood friend during Nze Alphonsus Oforchukwu's coronation in Isu Local Government Area of Imo State, Nigeria.***



***Photo Album 4.4: Nze Alphonsu & Lolo Dorothy Oforchukwu with other Nzes during the coronation of Nze Alphonsus Oforchukwu in Isu Local Government Area of Imo State, Nigeria.***



***Photo Album 4.5: Nze Bartholomew Oforchukwu held the highest Ozo title in Amugbara Village. Nze Bartholomew was the father of Nze Alponsus Oforchukwu in Isu Local Government Area of Imo State, Nigeria.***

### 3.17 SUMMARY

Chapter 3 explored the concept of *Ozo* title taking in *Igbo* community. *Ozo* title taking is a social institution conferred on *Igbo* sons based on merit. The origin of *Ozo* title taking among the *Igbos* is unknown. The procedure for taking an *Ozo* title is a complex one. The initiation ceremony is taken in stages. The *Ozo Ukwu* is the climax of *Ozo* in most communities across *Igbo* society. *Obi* and *Ofo* are usually associated with *Ozo* title taking. An *Nze* is given *Ofo* to symbolize his new position in the community. The *Ofo* is used variously for praying, swearing and sacrifices.

## **CHAPTER 4:**

# **THE BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL EVALUATION OF OZO TITLE TAKING AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR CURRENT LEADERSHIP ISSUES IN *IGBO* CATHOLIC CHURCH**

### **4.1 LEADERSHIP IN *IGBO* SOCIETY**

#### **4.1.1 *Introduction***

The preceding discussion focused on the *Igbo* Ozo title taking. The *Igbo* title taking, which is part of *Igbo* worldview, is important for scholarship if one is to have a better understanding of the compass of *Igbo* thinking and identity. In chapter four, the researcher's attention will be directed to *Igbo* leadership. Also, the researcher is going to examine leadership in the Bible. This discussion will help us to appreciate the role the Ozo titled holders play in the *Igbo* communities. However, before delving into the *Igbo* leadership, one should first of all, investigate in a nut shell, the theory of human behaviour and leadership principles. One should also align these theories into *Igbo* concept of leadership.

#### **4.1.2 *Theories of Human Behaviour and Leadership Qualities***

Hersey and Blanchard (1988) defined leadership as the process of influencing the activities of an individual or a group in efforts toward goal achievement in a given situation. Morgan and England (1999) observed that leadership theory and practice have been influenced most strongly by an understanding of human behaviour. For example, scientific management emphasized the job. In this situation, the leader's role focused on how to determine the best means to accomplish any given task, the needs of the organization, but not of its individual members. While following the human relations approach, Hersey and Blanchard (1988) argued that the leader's task is to facilitate cooperation among employees, while at the same time, providing for their personal growth and development. Also, individual needs, not necessarily centered on the needs of the organization, are the principal concern. However, it is important to note

that contemporary thinking recognizes the importance of both task and the people. Leadership, therefore, is concerned both with achieving a specific goal and with developing human potential and strengthening the work group as a whole.

Burns (1978) laid down the foundation of leadership theories. In his work, Burns attempted to link the roles of leadership and followership. According to Burns, leaders are individuals, who tap into the motives of employees, in order to better reach the goals of both the leaders and employees. He distinguished between two types of leadership: transactional and transformational. According to Burns, transactional leadership tends to seek to motivate employees by appealing to their own self-interest. In contrast, transformational leadership is founded on the belief that both leaders and employees can raise each other to higher levels of morality and motivation. Burns rejected amoral leadership, and this was why Hitler, Stalin, and Mussolini did not qualify for moral leadership.

House (1974) helped in the development of leadership theory around the world. In his book entitled: *Path-Goal Theory Leadership*, he outlined the paths that lead to successful leadership. House simplified the paths leaders should take to encourage followers to achieve their set goals. According to House, there are three important things leaders must do to achieve these goals. They include:

1. To clarify the path, so that subordinates know which way to go
2. To remove the roadblocks, preventing them from getting there
3. To increase the rewards along the route.

House (1974) therefore, strongly maintained that leaders who show the way and help employees along a path are more effective leaders.

Marx Weber (1920) devoted his time to develop a charismatic leadership style. He defined charismatic leadership as a rule over men, whether predominantly external or predominantly internal, to which the governed submit, because of their belief in the extraordinary quality of leadership. For him, charismatic leaders have a vision, which they effectively communicate to their employees, who tend to change their conditions. Charismatic leaders are associated with change. For example, Mahatma Gandhi pulled followers to his side, because of his selfless service to changing the obnoxious rules that existed in their society.

Leaders are needed in society to coordinate the organization. The role of leadership (Morgan and England 1999) at all levels of an organization is indispensable. Leaders need to show their talents and expertise in role management. The most important quality a leader must possess is his ability to coordinate, direct and motivate others (Morgan and England 1999). Leadership is therefore concerned with achieving some specific goal and with developing human potential and maintaining and strengthening the work group (Morgan and England 1999).

A recent comprehensive study on leadership shows that certain features differentiate leaders from followers, and effective from ineffective leaders (Morgan and England 1999). An effective leadership is one that inspires, empowers, and is participatory. Ralph Stogdil (1974) argued that a leader is characterized by a strong drive for responsibility, task completion, vigor and persistence in pursuit of goals. Stogdil concluded that leadership consists of an interaction among members of a group in which the leader emerges by demonstrating his or her capacity for carrying a specific task through to completion.

Leadership style differs from people to people. For example, we have an authoritarian leadership style, or leadership by directive. This leadership style works well in some circumstances. Bennett (2001) argued that leadership by directive is particularly useful where creative thinking is not of paramount importance. This kind of leadership is particularly effective in the military. A major weakness of leadership by directive is that it is unproductive, and therefore should be avoided in any society.

Another form of leadership style is a participative leadership style. This style is also known as team leadership, and currently is extremely popular. A participative leadership style is a system in which leaders give maximum latitude to their subordinates. Bennett (2001) argued that participative leadership involves group participation and decision-making by consensus. Ouchi (1981) propounded a theory based on the Japanese approach of leadership. This approach has made the Japanese followers feel like being part of the system, which in the process leads to leadership performance. For example, theory Z, based on consensus decision-making, is a principle that allows all Japanese employees to contribute in the decision-making concerning the management process. According to Morgan and England (1999), for

every important decision, everyone who will feel its impact is involved in making it. The aim of this decision process is to foster mutual sharing and commitment to organizational objectives. Bennett (2001) argued that leadership by participation is important in effective management. This process involves group participation and decision-making by consensus. Bennett (2001) maintained that in management by participation, employees are encouraged to provide input and help with problem solving. Osborne and Gaebler (1992) captured the importance of team management in their book, *Reinventing Government*. They emphasized the role of empowering community members in role management. According to Osborne and Gaebler (1992), communities are flexible and innovative since they are not bound by extensive rules and regulations, as are larger service bureaucracies. Osborne and Gaebler (1992) also argue for the need to empower the followers in any organization.

The human-relations movement (Morgan and England 1999) emphasized the role of informal social structure and how it affects the behaviour and motivation of workers. Workers need a feeling of belonging in their work. According to Morgan and England (1999), meeting the human and social needs of workers presumably would create a more satisfied workforce. McGregor (1960), in his famous theory Y, believes that if employees are indifferent, lazy, intransigent, uncreative, uncooperative, and unwilling to take responsibility, management's methods or organization and control are at fault. Morgan and England (1999) maintained that under theory Y, an organization could most effectively reach its own economic objectives if it meets the needs and goals of its members.

#### **4.1.3 Leadership in Pre-Colonial Igbo Society**

The *Igbo* debate on *Igbo Enwe Eze (Republicanism)* is polarized among scholars. Ogbalu argued that the *Igbo* political organization is republican in every aspect of the word. Nwachukwu (2002:1) maintained that *Igbo* political republicanism dates as far back as the *Igbo* themselves. The neighbouring ethnic groups of *Hausa/Fulani* and *Yoruba* have centralized governments under kings and chiefs (Agbo 1995:94). The pre-colonial political system of the *Igbo* was segmentary. This means that the *Igbo* people had no centralized government.

The *Igbo* people are divided into kindreds. Each kindred is made up of a group of *Umunna* (kindred members). Community life is central in the *Igbo* worldview. Onwu (2002:12) observed that the traditional *Igbo* had a deep sense of community. The life in community is captured by the *Igbo* concept of *Umunna*. John Mbiti (1969:108) was correct when he observed that, “I am because we are and since we are, therefore I am.” In as much as an individual life is appreciated, it must be lived within the *Igbo* community.

The community (*Umunna*) is stronger than any individual in the community. Any decision must be taken within the *Umunna* (community) context. Agbo (1995:94) listed the members that could participate in the decision making in the community. They include:

1. The *Ama-ala* (Council of elders)
2. The Village Assembly (*Umunna*)
3. The Ozo title holders (*Ndi Nze na Ozo*)
4. The age grades (*Ndi-ebiri*)
5. The Juju priests (*Ndi nchuaaja*)
6. The diviners (*Ndi na-agba afa*)

Any of these people has a say in any matter that affects the *Umunna* (community). Onwu (2002:12-13) noted that the *Igbo* have the tradition of gathering together to discuss matters of interest in order to arrive at a compromise. The *Umunna* decision is usually arrived at by general agreement and consensus. According to Onwu, this is called *Igba izu* (consultation). This is the basis of *Igbo* republicanism which Ekwuru called the *Igbo* consensus philosophy, but referred to as Unanimity by Nwala (1985:168). At the end of the deliberation, everybody is happy because everybody was given the opportunity to express his views. The decision arrived at must be binding by the entire community.

The *Igbo* republicanism is founded on the *Igbo* democracy. Democracy is the government of the *Umunna*. Power rests on the *umunna*. There is always a constant consultation before arriving at any decision; otherwise, any statement issued would be questioned by the *Umunna*. But when everybody is accorded the honour to speak, the *Igbo* people are bold to say, “*Obu ihe anyi kpara*” (it is what we discussed). These same

people that deliberate on issues also act as the executive and judiciary. It is the responsibility of the *Ama-ala* to make sure that the decisions reached by the assembly are implemented. This is the *raison d'être* to involve everybody in the decision making process.

The popular opinion is that the *Igbo* people have *no Eze* (leader). Ogbalu is a strong supporter of this view. Ogbalu maintained that there has never been either in myth, legend, or in history anybody known as the king of the *Igbos*, for the *Igbos* say *Igbo adighi echi eze*. The concept of *Igbo Enwe Eze* should be understood in the sense that the *Igbo* people want to be independent. Every *Igbo* man therefore wants to have his own farms, business, and house. The only person they accord respect is God. They would look at your eyes and tell you; after all you do not fend for me. Or *Ibu Chukwu m* (are you my God)? If the *Igbo* people do not have kings, these are primarily the reasons they give because they do not want any king who would be imposing his views on them. It is not everybody that shares this view with Ogbalu. We have strong dissenting voices that maintain that the *Igbo* people have kings.

But, when one looks at the *Igbo* traditional set up, it is wrong to say that the *Igbo* have no *Eze* (Madubuike). According to Madubuike, the *Igbo* do have kings, but their concept of kingship is quite unique. The pre-colonial political system of the *Igbo* people is segmentary. The *Igbo* nation is comprised of thousands of small independent democratic village republics, each with its own government (Agbo 1995:94). The *Umunna* acted as the legislative, executive, and judicial. The only difference is that the *Igbo* kings did not enjoy the political and religious power that was part of royal prerogatives (Madubuike). There were pre-colonial kings in *Igbo* land. This was mainly in Nri, in Northern *Igbo* territory (Madubuike).

The *Ozo* title holders in the pre-colonial *Igbo* society performed important functions. They could perform judicial, executive, and legislative functions. *Ozo* title holders have the highest political status in *Igbo* society (Ogbalu 1973:33). They settled cases among the warring individuals or community members. They maintained peace and order in families, kindred and villages across the *Igbo* society. The titled men, the chief priests and the elders took decisions that affected the lives of the *Igbo* people (Achebe 1994:148). Before the advent of the Europeans, the *Igbo* people were

republican oriented. No decision was taken by one man because such a decision would never be accepted by all the *Igbo* people.

In section two, the researcher has been able to explore leadership in the Pre-Colonial period. Now, he is going to examine the current leadership in *Igbo* society. This will help the researcher to evaluate the roles the titled holders play both in the pre-Colonial time and presently among the *Igbo* people.

#### **4.1.4 Modern Leadership in Igbo Society**

The current *Igbo* leadership has significantly changed since the Nigerian independence, and this is characterized by the absence of a central leadership (Nwankwo 1985:15). This has some consequences for the *Igbo* people. First, this has allowed some people to present themselves as the *Igbo* leaders. Second, this lack of any cohesive leadership has left the *Igbos* with self seeking leaders. Third, this has resulted in individuals who pursue progress without minding the societal rules. It is therefore the entire nation that suffers from the ill behaviour of the few within the *Igbo* communities.

However, the *Igbo* have had vibrant leaders since Nigerian independence. The *Igbo* could be proud to have had leaders such as Nnamdi Azikiwe, Francis Akanu Ibiam, Louis Mbanefo, Alvan Ikoku and Nwafor Orizu. They also have leaders such as Odimegwu Ojukwu, Alex Ekwueme, Ken Nnamani, and Anyim Pius Anyim. Today, *Igbo* is also happy to have the charismatic leadership of Orji Uzo Kalu of *Abia* State. However, in spite of these leaders, the *Igbo* people are at crossroads when it comes to leadership. The biggest problem that the *Igbo* people face is their inability to accept anybody as their leader. Before *Igbo* could recognize you as their leader, they would first look at your credentials. Unfortunately, people forget that credentials do not necessarily make a leader.

The *Igbo* today have forgotten that the Pre-Colonial *Igbo* were religious by nature. Religion influenced the *Igbo* way of thinking, acting and behaving. Unfortunately, greed, opportunism, anger, and hatred are what control the current leaders. Most often, an *Igbo* man is known as a sell out, not minding the consequences it might bring to the nation. This is against what they are known for – *Onye Aghala Nwanne ya*.

The problem with today's leadership in the *Igbo* community is that some people have sold their conscience in pursuit of wealth. Rules of the game are no longer followed. People have forgotten that a good name is better than wealth – *Ezi aha ka uba mma*. A child who has earned his money through a wrong way has no respect of his elders. These people feel that since they have made money, they are therefore free to insult their elders. It is true that the Pre-Colonial *Igbo* people respected ability, not necessarily age, but this is not a reason to insult elders. This kind of mentality has destroyed the *Igbo* unity.

Even today, the *Igbo* have the tradition of gathering together to talk about issues that affect them as a people. Consultation is part of the *Igbo* way of life. The community recognizes the individual input. The *Umunna* is represented by people who come from different family units. The *Igbo* structure is one in which authority resides with *Umunna*. Any *Igbo* leader must respect the *Igbo* structure if he were to succeed as a leader. The *Igbo* man is proud to say that this is what “we” discussed – *O bu ihe anyi kwuru*. Autocratic leadership is absent among the *Igbo* people. *Igbo* democracy checks any possible excesses arising from seniority, status and achievement (Onwu 2000).

Since the end of the Nigerian-Biafran war, the *Ohanaeze* organization has been instituted to speak for *Ndi Igbo*. *Ndi Igbo* has realized the need to speak with one voice in the Nigerian society. The *Igbo* people have been grossly marginalized. The policy of *Igbo* exclusion and discrimination was vehemently pursued by the Mohammed/Obasanjo administration in the 1970s (Achebe 2005:62). The *Ohanaeze* was borne out of necessity. The leader the *Igbo* needs is one who would identify with them. A leader of a people is one who stands by, and identifies with the people in their greatest moments of need without casting a lustful eye on the special personal benefits generated by that position (Nwankwo 1885:16-17).

Since the end of the war, no *Igbo* man/woman has emerged as a leader. While the *Igbos* have people of vision and integrity, no one has had the opportunity, since the civil war, to unite and motivate them into positive collective action (Nwankwo 1985:17). Today, the *Igbo* have created the mushroom chiefs as leaders in most *Igbo* communities. From having no kings in their recent past the *Igbo* swung round to set an all time record of four hundred “kings” in Imo and four hundred in Anambra (Achebe

2005:61). The colonialists created the warrant chiefs to assist them in their administration. These chiefs served the interests of those who installed them (Nwajjiuba 2001:25). The colonialists used the indirect rule to remove and destroy the legitimacy of the *Igbo* rulers.

The *Igbo* nation needs a rebirth in its thinking, behaviour, and attitude. We need a true and dedicated leader, not money bag leaders. The *Igbo* people need a pragmatic leader, not an opportunist. The *Igbo* people need a sincere leader, not the privileged class. It is true that the *Igbo* people need consensus before arriving at any decision. This does not negate the fact that the *Igbo* should have a central figure whose duty is to lead.

#### **4.1.5 Leadership in the Bible**

The Bible is the best book on leadership. It teaches the principles of leadership better than any other book available today. The biblical paradigm reveals a theology of leadership which focuses on a pattern of service. Effective leaders lead people in a particular direction. In the biblical discussion of leadership, the researcher is going to explore both the Old and New Testaments.

#### **4.1.6 Old Testament**

Abraham had a divine call to leadership (Genesis 12:1-12). The call of Abraham represents the earliest account of leadership in the Bible. The leadership of Abraham began with an act of faith. God called Abraham out of a pagan territory. He asked him to leave his fatherland for the Promised Land, a land that flows with milk and honey (Exodus 33:3). Abraham obeyed God, a situation that other nations would be blessed through his singular act of obedience. The *Igbo* people, which is the focus of this scholarship exploration also benefited from the call and obedience of Abraham. Remember that in the introductory section, the researcher noted the relationship between the *Igbo* people and the Jewish people. The *Igbo* people, just like the Jewish nation, practice the circumcision rituals. This practise has marked the *Igbo* people as people who have similar traditions to the Jewish people.

Abraham's call involves risk but has rewards. Abraham stands as a pivotal symbol of leadership that is faithful. Thus, Abraham was an effective leader who listened to the voice of God.

Moses, on the other hand, was called to lead the people of Israel out of Egypt. Moses' mission was liberation. Moses was born into a family from the tribe of Levi (Exodus 2:1-10). But Moses had a speech impediment (Exodus 4:10). He felt that he did not qualify to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. Moses cited five objections to God, expressing his reluctance to accept the mission of leading the Israelites out of Egypt. For example, Moses said, "Who am I that I should go?" (Exodus 3:11), what shall I say to them? (Exodus 3: 12), what if they do not listen?" (Exodus 4: 1), "I am slow of speech" (Exodus 4: 10). Because of this, Moses rejected God's call, and wanted Him to send another person (Exodus 4: 13). But, God did not relinquish his call. God saw in Moses the quality of leadership, which nobody had seen in Moses. For this, God simply told Moses, "I will be with you." (Exodus 4: 12).

However, God felt that Moses had the leadership quality, and insisted on his being chosen to be the leader of the people of God. Moses had an exceptional leadership quality, the ability to sacrifice for others. He was sensitive to the problems of his people. This quality is phenomenal in leadership. The most outstanding element of Moses' leadership is his identification with the people of Israel. Thus, Moses' leadership includes mediating internal and personal conflicts, organization, supplying food and water and providing the needs of his people.

However, Moses did not find his leadership easy. He was frustrated with the people he was leading. The people were corrupt and unyielding. They fell into idolatry, which was contrary to what God demanded from them. Moses received the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai. This made Moses' leadership an *ethical* and *theological* mandate of the Jewish community.

David was an extraordinary leader. One big quality of a leader is his ability to identify with his people. He identified the pressing problem of the Israelites and was bent to resolve it. At that time, Goliath was a problem to the welfare of his people. David volunteered and killed Goliath, their biggest problem. From the moment Goliath died, David was recognized as a leader.

David believed in a shared responsibility. He was not stingy or jealous, but strongly believed in the success of others as leaders. He included everybody in the day to day decisions made (1 Chronicles 13:1-2). He recognized the different gifts of his followers, and empowered them accordingly. The story of David's leadership is told and retold as a paradigm for all those who yearn for public responsibility and social transformation. However, with leadership comes public and private accountability, and justice is a community concern rather than merely an individual concern.

#### **4.1.7 New Testament**

In the preceding section, the researcher discussed leadership in the Old Testament. The task here now is to explore leadership in the New Testament. And I shall begin by exploring Jesus as a model leader of all time and all ages.

Jesus is the greatest leader that ever lived. The leadership of Jesus is seen by theologians as the incarnation of God's reign. Jesus has a vision. His leadership vision is well articulated in Luke 4:18-19. According to Jesus: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, for he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor, to heal the broken hearted, to proclaim release to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those that are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord (Luke 4:18-19, KJV).

The Church finds its identity in Jesus Christ who came to serve, not to be served, *ministrare non ministrari*. He invites us to see our ministry as service, not just to lord it over the people. This attitude of service is expressed in Matthew 20:24-27. According to Matthew 20:24-27 (cf. Mark 10: 42-45, and Luke 22: 24-27),

You know that among the gentiles the rulers lord it over them, and great men make their authority felt. Among you this is not to happen. No, anyone who wants to become great among you must be your servant, and anyone who wants to be first among you must be your slave, just as the Son of man came not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Matthew 20, 24-27, KJV).

This Biblical passage distinguishes the role of the Church from the government. Although both government and the Church officials have their authority from God, their services should be different. Christ appoints pastors of his Church to serve, while the government officials are there to rule. Christ observed that greatness is found in service. If I, who am your Master and Lord, have washed your feet, much more ought you to perform this service to one another (John 13:14, KJV).

The Catechism of the Catholic Church is emphatic about the role of leadership. According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church (1994), the power of the people must be measured subsequently to the model of Christ, who, by love, made himself the least and servant of all. The church leadership is for service. Nothing else!

Matthew 9: 36 - 38 is crucial in our leadership exploration. At the sight of the crowds, Jesus' heart was moved with pity for them, because they were troubled and abandoned, like sheep without a shepherd (Matthew 9:36). This passage shows the nature of Christ. This passage has some missiological implications. First, Jesus used the image of sheep and shepherd, which the Jewish people are familiar with. Second, it depicts Jesus as a compassionate leader. The idea that discipleship involves compassion and mercy, not necessarily on the basis of rules, decrees, and laws, is an attribute of missionary work. Third, Jesus is the Good Shepherd. A good shepherd understands his/her sheep. He/she knows when their sheep are in need, he/she feeds them. The *Igbo* leadership has a lot to learn from the compassionate nature of Jesus. The leadership of the *Orlu* Diocese should reflect Matthew 9: 36. Banning the Catholic *Ozo* title holders negates the principle of love, compassion, and mercy which Jesus represents. The leadership authority God has given the diocese of *Orlu* should not be abused. Jesus came so that all would be welcomed into the Kingdom of God. Unfortunately, the Church leadership in *Orlu* is guilty of preventing the *Ozo* title holders from entering into the Kingdom of Heaven. Jesus denounced the Scribes and Pharisees, who offered a religion that added burdens, instead of lifting them from the people. The compassion which Jesus provides is for the rejected, ostracized, and brokenhearted like the *Ozo* title holders in the Diocese of *Orlu*. Like the religious leaders of Jesus' time, the leadership of the *Orlu* Diocese is keeping the *Ozo* title holders out of the Kingdom by denying them the Sacraments. The leadership of the

*Orlu* Diocese has failed to feed and protect the *Ozo* title holders. A good pastor would feed and protect the interest of his flock. But, like Ezekiel 34:1-16, God denounced the shepherds who took care of themselves, instead of taking care of the flock entrusted to them.

Matthew 9: 37-38 speaks of Christ as the Lord of the harvest. It is Jesus who plants, waters, and receives his harvest. The Good News belongs to Jesus. Those who are called to preach the Gospel message are mere messengers. What this means is that there are many who are waiting to hear the Word of God. Jesus has called pastors to preach the Good News to all creatures (Mark 16: 15). God has chosen to use the leadership of the *Orlu* Diocese to accomplish His purpose of evangelization. However, instead of evangelizing the *Ozo* title holders in *Orlu* Diocese, the leadership has chosen to prevent them from being saved. This attitude negates the principle of Vatican II, Church Documents, and the Bible in our own time.

Luke 10:1 -20 is about the Mission of the seventy-two disciples. Only Luke described the Mission of the seventy-two disciples among the evangelists. The theological importance of the seventy-two in the Missionary activity of the Church would be seen after the departure of Jesus.

The structure of Luke 10:1 – 20 falls into several divisions:

- a. Verses 1-3—Jesus' mandate and the seventy-two
- b. Verses 4-9—Jesus' methods and the seventy-two
- c. Verses 10-12—Jesus' instruction on responding to rejection
- d. Verses 13-16—Jesus' rebuke of rejecting cities
- e. Verses 17-20 – The return of the seventy-two

The sending out of the seventy-two disciples is written for us today, not just for the early Church. Jesus is the One who is sending out, to spread the Good News to all nations. There is a sense of urgency to reach out to the lost, rejected, and unwanted in the society. Jesus came for the lost sheep of Israel. There is a close relationship between Jesus and His Church. The message of salvation must be preached to the rejected *Ozo* title holders in the *Igbo* communities. The seventy-two disciples were sent to reach out to people in the world. Luke wrote primarily to the outcasts, rejected,

prostitutes, and sinners. The number seventy-two has a theological significance in our ministry. It represents the universality of the message of God. The Gospel message is for everybody in the world, both Jews and Gentiles. Also, the message of Christ is for both title holders and non-title holders in the *Orlu* Diocese.

1 Timothy 5: 17-25 should be explored as part of the leadership concept in the Church. The role elders played in the leadership of the Church is noted in 1 Timothy 5:17. Elders have a God - given responsibility for the leadership of the Church. Paul noted that elders who performed extraordinarily well would be rewarded. Their primary duty is to guide the affairs of the Church through preaching the Word. An elder leads when he preaches or teaches the Scriptures. Timothy was a leader in the Church. However, his ministry is in collaboration with a variety of Bishops, deacons, and widows (1 Timothy 5:17-21). Church elders participated in preaching and teaching. The revised Code of Canon also mentions the duties laymen could perform in the Church. Laymen whose age and talents meet the requirements prescribed by decree of the Episcopal Conference could be given the stable ministry of lector and acolyte through the prescribed liturgical rite (Can. 230, No. 1). But, where the needs of the Church require ministers that are not available, lay people, even though they are not lectors or acolytes, could supply certain of their functions, that is, exercise the ministry of the Word, preside over liturgical prayers, confer baptism and distribute Holy Communion, in accordance with the provisions of the law (Can. 230, No. 3). These functions could also be provided by the *Ozo* title holders in the Catholic Diocese of *Orlu*, if given the opportunity. Some *Ozo* title members could also exercise the duties of catechists in the diocese.

Paul said that double honour would be the reward of elders who preach the Word. Double honour here refers to respect and remuneration. This echoes what Jesus said to the seventy-two disciples when he sent them out to preach the Good News. The labourer deserves his wages (Matthew 10: 10, 1 Timothy 5:18).

Paul warns Timothy to be just in his dealings with the Word of God. Paul said, "I charge you before God and the Lord Jesus Christ and the elect angels that you observe these things without prejudice, doing nothing with favoritism" (1 Timothy 5:21, KJV). This passage is important to leaders in the Church. Paul speaks to both Timothy and us today, as we preach the Good News. 1 Timothy 5:21 is important as one explores the

Ozo title taking in the *Igbo* Catholic Church. This has biblical and theological implications. The Church leader in the *Orlu* Diocese should be careful in dealing with the Ozo title holders. The Ozo title holders are part of the people of God. They should not be discriminated against because of their belief in *Igbo* customs. They should not be denied the Sacraments on the basis of their Ozo titles.

Parents are part of leaders in the Biblical accounts. Paul was clear on this concerning the relationship between parents and children. Children, obey your parents in the Lord. Paul's discourse on leadership here is in the context of family life. There is a blessing associated with this command. The author of Ephesians quotes another passage from the Hebrew Bible (Exodus 20:12), and notes the unique promise of long life associated with it (Karris 1992:1196). This command is to be carried out in the Lord, for the simple reason that it is the right thing to do (Ephesians 6:1). While in Colossians 3:20, children should obey their parents because this is pleasing to the Lord. In the family household, parents are the leaders, and must be obeyed by their children. This would also help to maintain peace, love, and order in family life.

Paul also discussed leadership in the context of the master-slave relationship. Slaves are exhorted to obey their masters with reverence and awe (Phil 2:12). Paul gave the reason why slaves should obey their masters. According to Paul, if the slaves obey their masters, it is as if they are obeying Christ himself. Paul's discourse on the slave-master relationship would attract criticism in today's society. However, what Paul had in mind is to maintain orderliness in the family fold. Also, God is the focus here, who does not show any favouritism. What is revolutionary in this teaching is that masters have both obligations and rights with regard to their slaves (Karris 1992:1197).

The author of the letter to Hebrews explored leadership that is different from the aforementioned discussions. The author said, "Obey your leaders and submit to them (Hebrews 13:7", KJV). The leaders mentioned here are the former leaders who proclaimed God's word to the community in the past (Karris 1992:1262). Even though these leaders have passed away, their lives remained as examples of faith in the Christian community. Hebrews 13:17 carries a different application to the leadership discourse. The leaders of Hebrews 13:17 suggest that the functions of these leaders are to protect the community from harm (Karris 1992:1263).

1 Timothy 2:1-2 is important in this leadership discussion. Paul asked the followers to pray for their kings and those who are in high positions. The reasons to pray for them are clearly explained by Paul. We must pray for people in high authority to gain the benefits of peaceful living. Without prayers, the earthly leaders would go in a wrong direction that might lead to destruction.

#### **4.1.8 Theological Implications**

The theological importance of the Ozo title taking can be seen from the compass lens of the Second Vatican Council. In the context of this research study, the theology of the Vatican II is crucial for the adaptation of the *Igbo* Ozo title taking into the Christian message of Christ. With the Vatican II, a new theology emerged in the church (Oforchukwu 2010:100). The *Igbo* Church must appreciate the value of the Ozo title taking. The *Igbo* Church must adapt itself to the need of the *Igbo* Catholics. It is this type of need that encouraged John XXIII to open the windows of the Church so that people could see what is inside the church. The church brought fresh air to the church outside through the Italian word, *aggiornamento*. The Ozo title holders need the adaptation which the council fathers emphasized in the Vatican II. The Council Fathers defined the “Church” as the people of God. If the Church is the people of God, the Church’s teachings must be relevant to these people (Oforchukwu 2010:100). The Church in *Igbo* society must adhere to the principle of *aggiornamento* in order to foster the souls of the Ozo title holders.

The Ozo title holders are leaders called to serve the needs of the *Igbo* people. As seen from the biblical account, leadership is of divine origin. Moses, for example, objected to lead his people out of Egypt. This has theological implications. First, it highlights the conviction that leaders would not be able to succeed on account of their inability to lead. Rather, these leaders are willing to recognize their inadequacies to lead. Second, as a theological commentary on leadership, this demonstrates that true leaders are those who depend on the guidance of God. Jesus is seen as relying on the will of God (Matthew 26:42). Third, God is always faithful in guiding those He chooses as leaders. When Moses complained about his speech impediment, as a means to escape God’s call, God assured him of His guidance. When Moses said, “Who am I that

I should go, he is answered by, I will be with you” (Exodus 3: 11). Fourth, a true leader does not depend on himself or herself, but on God. Thus, the leader carries out his mission in the name of God. Moses, for example, led the people of Israel in God’s name. This made his leadership task a success, because of the theological undertone involved. Thus, we see the link between an Ozo title holder as a leader in the *Igbo* context, and the perspective of biblical leadership.

Finally, the great leaders of the Bible did not campaign for the position they found themselves occupying. The Biblical leaders were placed there either by God or community. Also, the Biblical leaders could be placed there by circumstance or needs. Their success is not attributed to their personal charisma. In the *Igbo* context, the Ozo title is hereditary in Igbo society. This means that the title holders are placed in the leadership position by the community. The *Igbo* Catholic Ozo title holders should succeed as *Igbo* leaders when they recognize that the position they occupy is given to them by God, to serve His people.

#### **4.1.9 Cultural Implications**

Culture is any way of life of the people. The *Igbo* culture has its religious beliefs and set of practices. In order for Christianity to respond to the needs of *Igbo* society, the Church must appreciate and respect *Igbo* culture and traditions (Oforchukwu 2010:8). The Roman Catholic Church is not antithetical to culture. We must look at the wider Roman Catholic Church as our compass guide. There are many Popes’ Encyclicals that encourage local culture into the Catholic liturgy.

Examples of cultural heritage abound in the Bible. God commanded the Jewish people to circumcise their children. Circumcision as a rite, has its foundations from the Bible (Genesis 17). As a result, this has become the cultural obligation of the Jews. There is a penalty attached to any defaulter. The penalty of non-observance was *karet*, excision from the people (Gen. 17:10-14, 21:4; Lev. 12:3). In the Gospel chronicle, Jesus was also circumcised. Jesus’ circumcision was recorded as having been performed in accordance with Torah requirement (Luke 2:21). In the Acts of the Apostles, there was a disagreement if the Gentiles should be circumcised before they were accepted into Christianity. The leaders of the Christian Church at the Council of

Jerusalem rejected circumcision as a requirement for Gentile converts (Acts 15). The cultural implication here is that any cultural practice that is good should be incorporated into the Church's liturgy.

Let us also take the birth of Christ as another example. The origin of Christmas is presented in the well-known biblical account of Luke (2:1-11). For Christians, the origin of Christmas is, and should be, the birth of Christ as presented in the Bible. Today, some Biblical scholars argue that the birth of Christ has nothing to do with what we witness every December 25<sup>th</sup>. The customs and traditions of Christmas pre-date the birth of Christ.

Scholars have argued that December 25<sup>th</sup> originated from the celebration of a pagan Roman god, Mithra. This happened during the first few centuries after Christ was born. The worship of this pagan god spread throughout Asia to Europe, where the god is called *Deus Sol Invictus*. Later, Rome converted this pagan worship to a celebration of the god Saturn and the rebirth of the sun god during the winter solstice period. The festival was characterized by gift-giving, feasting and singing. This celebration was later incorporated into Christianity to accommodate Christians. Some said that the pagan celebration was officially incorporated into the Christian holiday of Christmas in the third century.

The conversion of a pagan holiday into Christianity did not diminish the true meaning of the Birth of Christ. What was performed was inculturation, which the Vatican II emphasized. This process demonstrates that the Church deemed Roman traditions and customs acceptable enough to be absorbed into Christianity. December 25<sup>th</sup> is only a reminder of the birth of Christ, who represents peace, love, and joy.

In the same way, the *Igbo* Church is challenged to incorporate the *Igbo* culture and tradition into Christianity. Cultural diversity is not something of a passing interest to the Church. The Church's mission to evangelize originated from cultural diversity. The Ozo title taking has some cultural images that should fit into the *Igbo* Catholic liturgy. The Ethical codes and Values of Ozo institution predate Christianity (Onyebuagu). The *Igbo* Church should revive the cultural values associated with the Ozo institution in *Igbo* communities to enrich the *Igbo* Catholic liturgy.

#### **4.1.10 Missiological Implications**

The Church takes its mission from Jesus Christ, the founder of Christianity. Jesus gave the apostles the command to preach the gospel to all the earth. Jesus says, "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matt. 28:19-20, KJV). "And He said to them, Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15, KJM). The mission of the Church is, in reality, a continuation of Christ's earthly ministry (John 14:12).

For the first few years, the Church grew within the Jewish culture. It respected the Jewish culture, traditions, customs and way of life. The Jerusalem community was both the seat of apostolic authority and the scene of most intensive missionary effort. However, following series of persecutions, the apostles had to spread its tentacles to other Gentile territories. Thus, the scattering of the Jerusalem disciples following Stephen's martyrdom (First Martyr of the Church), allows the message of Christ to cross new cultures. The message of Christ was proclaimed in the new mission's culture, traditions, and customs. The account of Philip's encounter with the Ethiopian Eunuch has missiological implications for the Church in *Igbo* communities. First, the message of Christ could be preached to the *Igbo* community. Second, in this Ethiopian's embrace of faith in Jesus, the Gospel has overcome the racial, cultural and traditional barriers. The importance of the Ethiopian's encounter to the *Igbo* Church cannot be overstated. First, it challenges the *Igbo* Church leadership to accommodate the *Ozo* title taking into the *Igbo* Church liturgy. Second, the incorporation of the *Ozo* title taking into the *Igbo* Church could be a crucial test case for the acceptance of the *Nze* title holders as title holders into the people of God. Peter understands this when he says, "I truly understand that God shows no partiality, but in any nation anyone who fears Him and does what is right (Acts 10:34-35, KJV). Christ's mission also extends to the *Igbo* culture, a culture that appreciates the value of *Ozo* title taking.

#### **4.1.11 Pastoral Implications**

The term “Pastoral” is used as an adjective, to denote the lifestyle of shepherds. God has been referred to as the “Shepherd of His people.” “He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young (Isaiah 40:11”, KJV). God provides nourishment to His sheep. He takes it as his duty to feed his flock. Jesus is the “Good shepherd “(John 10:11). Jesus laid down His life for His sheep. Jesus instructed Peter to feed His sheep (John 21:1-19). It is significant that Jesus used terms that Peter understood These terms like sheep and lambs are commonly used in the Jewish communities. Thus, Jesus used agricultural terms to communicate his message of the Kingdom.

The pastoral language used by Jesus has some pastoral implications for the *Igbo* Church. First, it is important to note that Peter’s shepherd role is tied to love, and this love extends to the *Igbo* Catholics (Flanagan 1989:92). Second, the *Igbo* Church must use terms or language that the *Igbo* Catholics are familiar with. Feeding the sheep is crucial. If the sheep were not fed, they would die and be extinct. But in Christian terms, what does to “feed my sheep” mean for the *Igbo* Church? The Greek word here for feed is βόσκειν. The pastoral implications for feeding for the *Igbo* Catholics abound. First, this task requires responsibility. It simply means that we have to watch over all the sheep, and here the sheep refers to the *Igbo* Catholics. The *Igbo* Church leadership must know its duty to cater for the sheep of Christ, i.e., the *Ozo* title holders who are longing to be fed by the priests in the *Igbo* communities. Jesus gave the baton to feed to Peter, and Peter in turn, has given this same baton to feed to the present ministers. The *Igbo* priests must not ignore this pastoral role to their people. Ignoring their duty to feed the *Igbo* sheep is tantamount to ignoring the command of Jesus, to feed His sheep (John 21).

#### **4.1.12 Biblical Implications**

The Church lives on the Word of God (Oforchukwu 2010: 99). The Bible forms the basis of Christian belief (Magesa 2004:84). An understanding of the Bible is crucial to understand what God has to tell us. Unfortunately, most of the African Christians are not conversant with the Bible. Most *Igbo* Catholics have not been formally educated in the Scriptures. St. Jerome, one of the early Fathers and Doctors of the Church has a lot to say about the Bible. He was a monk and Bible scholar of the 5<sup>th</sup> century. His commentary on the Bible is classical. He believed that the study of the Bible is a necessity, not an optional luxury. St Jerome firmly insists that ignorance of the Scripture is ignorance of Christ. The major problem facing the *Igbo* Church is that the majority of the people are not trained in the Scriptures. This has posed a major problem for understanding the meaning of the Word of God. The uneducated are being indoctrinated.

Let us closely consider the Biblical naming ceremony of John the Baptist and Jesus respectively. Luke observed that on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child; and they would have named him Zechariah after his father, but his mother said, 'Not so; he shall be called John' (Luke 1:57-64). It is important to note here that the son of Zechariah and Elizabeth was given a new name on the day of his circumcision. Jesus, on the other hand, had a similar experience to John the Baptist. And at the end of eight days, when he was circumcised, he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb (Luke 2:21).

The researcher is deeply interested in the Biblical implications of the naming ceremony and how to apply it to the *Igbo* Catholics. The *Igbos*, like the Jews observe the naming ceremony. Even today, the ancient customs of the Jews are not different from the *Igbo* custom of the naming ceremony. The *Igbo* people appreciate the naming ceremony, and *Igbo* names are symbolic. In *Ozo* title taking, the new candidate is allowed to take a new name that resembles the title he takes. Usually, it is the candidate for initiation who chooses his name which describes personal circumstances (Abanuka 2004:88). Some of the names chosen include *Okwara*, *Duru*, *Duruji*, *Nze*, *Ichie*, *Okwara Eze Obi*, etc. This *Ozo* title naming ceremony could be inculturated into the *Igbo* Catholic liturgy. If this is done, the *Ozo* title taking could be seen as taking on a different

Biblical dimension. The idea is to allow the Ozo title holders to be appreciated both in the *Igbo* Traditional Religion and Catholic communities.

#### **4.1.13 Church Implications (*Lumen Gentium*)**

The *Lumen Gentium* was one of the Dogmatic Constitutions on the Church that was considered during the Vatican II. It was officially promulgated on November 21, 1964. Prior to the Second Vatican Council, little is known about the laity. The council fathers devoted chapter four of *Lumen Gentium* on the laity. This is a remarkable improvement on how the lay people were thought about. Baptism is what makes the people of God. It is the gate that opens to everybody in the church. The council fathers underscored this when they said,

Everything that has been said concerning the people of God is intended for the laity, religious, and clergy alike (LG 30).

The council fathers made it clear that every member of the church is called to pursue holiness of life. The laity was not separated from the pursuit of holiness. In chapter five of *Lumen Gentium*, the council fathers said, “Therefore, in the Church, everyone whether belonging to the hierarchy, or being cared for by it, is called to holiness” (LG 39). *Lumen Gentium* acknowledges the different classes of life, but insists that holiness is one (LG 41). Prior to the Vatican II, the lay people were viewed differently as they were meant to pursue a different type of holiness. This echoed the statement of Cardinal Joseph Suenens during the Vatican II. According to Cardinal Suenens (1992:95), “An important statement should be drafted to recognize the rights and obligations of lay people by virtue of their baptism.”

The approval of the Dogmatic Constitution on the church is important. First, it clearly spelt out that the Church is a sacrament, instituted by Christ as a sign and instrument that unites all men together (LG 1). Second, Jesus Christ called a race made up of Jews and Gentiles which would be one, not according to the flesh, but in the Spirit. Third, the role of Grace is emphasized in the Church. The Kingdom of Heaven is a gift given to the church by God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The ecclesial church lives in the human society. *Lumen Gentium* made it clear that the Church of Christ is realized within the Catholic Church, of which the Roman Pontiff is the leader. However,

sanctification and truth are also found outside the Catholic Church (LG 8). This is a remarkable breakthrough in the sense that prior to Vatican II, other churches or cultures were not considered as possessing the truth. For example, the early *Igbo* Missionaries relegated the *Igbo* culture, tradition, religion, and worldview as not possessing the truth. Based on this fact, the *Igbo* traditional religion was branded as paganism. But *Lumen Gentium* recognizes the *Igbo* culture as possessing the means to salvation. The *Ozo* title taking, as *Igbo* culture, should be seen as having some values to contribute to the *Igbo* Church. The *Ozo* title holders also pursue holiness of life just like anybody in the Catholic community.

#### **4.1.14 The Influence of the Church in the Modern World (*Gaudium et Spes*)**

The document on the *Gaudium et Spes* was promulgated on December 7, 1965. It is one of the longest of the council documents. It is also the last document to be produced. The *Gaudium et Spes* truly represents the mind of the council Fathers in their efforts to renew the face of the Church. The document is ready to adapt itself to the changing nature of the world. It revealed a church in the direction of progress and serious renewal, a church no longer fearful of the world with which it shared a history (Sullivan 2007:40). The intention of the council Fathers is to engage the church in a dialogue with other churches. It addressed itself to the Catholics, other Christians and humanity as a whole. This document encouraged the inculturation of *Igbo* *Ozo* title taking into Christianity.

If the Church is to make a remarkable impact on the lives of the *Igbo* Catholic *Ozo* title holders, it should listen to the Holy Spirit. Both theologians and pastors of souls can do nothing without the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is a gift to the Church. With the help of the Holy Spirit, the people of God, pastors and theologians would be able to hear, distinguish, and interpret the many voices of our age (*Gaudium et Spes* 1965 n 44). The whole people of God should be involved in the process of interpreting the many voices of our age (Sullivan 2007:41). The purpose is to enable the church to better understand the divine Word of God. The understanding of the Word would help to inculturate the *Ozo* title taking in light of the revealed truth.

The position of the council fathers on the human person was clearly defined in *Gaudium et Spes*. Prior to the Vatican II, the church had shown less interest in the human culture. The method the church uses to evangelize has not explored the beauty of other cultures. The individual churches have relied on the church in Rome. The language, liturgy, and customs of Rome were considered normative for all churches (Sullivan 2007:52). No church was allowed to maintain any tradition different from the Church of Rome. But with the Council Fathers, *Gaudium et Spes* clearly defined the need to incorporate people's cultures into the liturgy. This step has opened the avenue for other cultures to be used in the liturgy.

Jesus was born into a culture. The history of the incarnation is important in incorporating individual cultures into the liturgy of the church. Jesus did not devalue his culture, but came to fulfill it (Matthew 5:17). *Gaudium et Spes* recognizes the intertwining nature of culture and human life. The council fathers noted,

Man comes to a true and full humanity only through culture that is through the cultivation of the goods and values of nature. Wherever human life is involved, therefore, nature and culture are quite intimately connected one with the other (GS 53).

The church speaks of plurality of cultures. The *Igbo* Catholics will feel at home with their culture, customs, Ozo title taking and language in the liturgy. The council fathers speak of the need to adapt the Church to people's culture. The *Igbo* Church must purify the *Igbo* culture and Ozo title taking where necessary for the good of the *Igbo* faithful. The Gospel of Christ constantly renews the life and culture of fallen man; it combats and removes the errors and evils resulting from permanent allurements of sin. It never ceases to purify and elevate the morality of peoples (GS 58).

#### **4.1.15 The Ecumenical Implications (*Unitatis Redintegratio*)**

The decree on ecumenism was approved in the autumn of 1964. It breaks the long separation of the Church of Christ from other denominations. The council fathers sought for unity among the different denominations. The decree on ecumenism brought Catholicism out of its long period of inactivity in regard to restoration of Christian unity (Alberigo 2006:85). The document asserted that the restoration of unity among all Christians is one of the principal concerns of the Second Vatican Council (UR 1).

The council fathers believed that genuine ecumenism would be attained through dialogue. Dialogue is important. The decree on ecumenism stipulated the nature of dialogue with other denominations. It states,

In ecumenical dialogue, Catholic theologians, standing fast by the teaching of the Church yet searching together with separated brethren into the divine mysteries, should do so with love for the truth, with charity, and with humility (UR 11).

The Vatican II sets a new tone of unity among the separated brethren. This new manner is one that is based on love, respect, and sense of admiration. It destroyed the old tone that demanded a return to the Catholic faith. The old outlook according to which unity would be realized through the return of the heretics and schismatics to the Roman Church was finally left behind (Alberigo 2006:86). The council fathers emphasized the need to engage with people from other religions (*Igbo* traditional religion included). Dialogue is the language that would make ecumenism with other religions a reality. The *Igbo* Church must have a dialogue with *Igbo* Ozo experts to address the Ozo title taking. The researcher will later prescribe the necessary steps to attain inculturation with the *Igbo* Church about Ozo title taking in *Igbo* churches.

## 4.2 SUMMARY

In this section, leadership perspectives were explored. First, theories of human behaviour were described. Second, leadership principles were examined. It described the steps leaders would follow to achieve set goals in leadership. This section also described leadership in the pre-Colonial *Igbo* society. Family, *Umunna*, and title holders are important channels in leadership issues. This demonstrates that the *Igbo* people have leaders – *Igbo Nwere Eze*.

The modern tone of leadership has emerged in *Igbo* communities. There have been self-seeking leaders who paraded themselves as *Igbo* leaders. This section also examined leadership in the Bible. Jesus remains the model for leadership.

## **CHAPTER 5:**

# **THE THEOLOGICAL FRAME WORK OF VATICAN II, CHURCH MAGISTERIUM AND INCULTURATION AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR OZO TITLE TAKING AND CURRENT LEADERSHIP ISSUES IN *IGBO* CATHOLIC CHURCH**

## **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

The Church is guided by the work of the Holy Spirit. Jesus promised not to leave His Church like orphans (John 14:16, 18). The Church depends on the teaching authority of the magisterium. The intent here is to explore the role of Church magisterium, Vatican II, other Church Documents, Code of Canon Law of 1983, and its importance to the Ozo title taking and leadership in the *Igbo* Catholic communities.

### **5.1.1 *The Historical Development of Church Magisterium***

*Magisterium* is derived from Latin *magistra*, which in the Roman Catholic Church, refers to the teaching authority of the Church. The Church *Magisterium* consists of the Pope and Bishops. The Church is divinely guided by the Holy Spirit. Jesus Christ promised to protect the teaching of the Church. In the Gospel of Luke, Christ said, “He who hears you, hears me, he who rejects you, rejects me, he who rejects me, rejects Him who sent me” (Luke 10:16, KJV). The promise of Christ of course, cannot fail. This means that the Church cannot be in error whenever it teaches. The Catholic Church believes that the *Magisterium* is able to teach or interpret the truths of the faith without any error. The *Magisterium* could do it either non-infallibly or infallibly. Figure 1 explains the degree or level of infallibility, when the Church *Magisterium* teaches or interprets the truths of faith.

Teacher	Level of <i>Magisterium</i>	Degree of Certitude	Assent Required
Pope <i>ex Cathedra</i>	Extra-ordinary (and universal).	Infallible	Full assent of Faith
Bishops, in union with the Pope, defending doctrine at General Council	Extra-ordinary (and universal teaching of the Church)	Infallible	Full assent of Faith
Bishops proposing definitively, dispersed, but in unison, in union with the Pope	Ordinary and universal teaching of the Church	Infallible	Full assent of the Faith
Pope	Ordinary	Authoritative but non- infallible	Religious submission of intellect and will
Bishops	Ordinary	Authoritative but non-infallible	Religious submission of intellect and will
Theologians	<i>Magisterium cathedrae magistralis</i> (according to Thomas Aquinas)	Neither authoritative nor infallible	Legitimate Disagreements and Dialectic (according to the long tradition of <i>Questiones Disputatae</i> )

**Figure 5.1: Levels of Magisterium**

According to the Catholic teaching, figure 1 demonstrates that the teachings of the Popes are infallible when, and only when, they are speaking *ex cathedra*. The infallible teachings of the ecumenical councils consist of the solemn dogmatic, theological or moral definitions as contained in declarations, degrees, doctrines and

condemnations of councils consisting of the Pope and the Bishops from all over the world. The Bishops all over the world are in union with Bishop of Rome, the Pope. The day to day teaching of the Church throughout the world, when the Bishops are in union with each other and with the pope, and present something definitive, this is infallible (Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium*, No. 25). The authority to teach, i.e., the *Magisterium* of the Church, is purely exercised in the name of Jesus Christ, who says, “He who hears you hears me” (Matthew 10:16, KJV).

### **5.1.2 The Early Church**

In the early Church, the Church *Magisterium* was used to protect the teaching of the Church. The basic foundation of the Magisterium was the apostolic succession of Bishops and their authority as guardians of the faith. Ignatius of Antioch was one of the Fathers of the Church to elaborate on the doctrine of the *Magisterium*. Other Church Fathers such as Irenaeus, Tertullian, Cyprian, Ambrose and Augustine worked hard to explain the doctrine of *Magisterium*. *Magisterium* was primarily used to defend the faith from Gnosticism.

By the end of the second century, the doctrine of Church *Magisterium* was universally accepted by the bishops. However, Origen remained one of the critics of the use of Church *Magisterium*. As an influential theologian, Origen believed that the teaching authority of the Church should be solely based on theological expertise, rather than, apostolic succession (Robert 1976:49).

### **5.1.3 Medieval Period**

During the medieval period, there was overwhelming support for the primacy of the Pope. The Medieval Fathers believed that the Pope had the ability to speak ex cathedra on matters of faith. Pope Innocent III noted that the Pope’s right to speak ex cathedra was bestowed by God. Pope Innocent III observed that the Pope was both the spiritual leader of the Church as well as the secular ruler. Pope Boniface was also another influential figure in promoting the authority of the papacy. In his papal bull, Pope Boniface maintained that the Pope, as the spiritual leader, has the authority over the temporal world. According to Pope Boniface, all must submit themselves to the authority

of the Pope to be saved. During the Medieval Ages, there were statements of the papal power in the works of theologians.

However, attention is drawn to the fact that there was sharp resistance to the doctrine of *Magisterium* during the Medieval period. In the Decretum of Gratian, a 12<sup>th</sup> century canon lawyer believed that the Pope is only given the legal right to pass judgment in theological disputes. In view of this, the Pope's authority was seen as a judge, not, as an infallible teacher. Also, Pope John XXII (1316-1334) rejected the doctrine of the *Magisterium*. Even until the 17<sup>th</sup> century, there were other theologians who resisted the doctrine of the *Magisterium*. The doctrine of the *Magisterium* however, gained widely acceptance during the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the First Vatican Council (Congar 1982:318-322).

#### **5.1.4 Theologians**

Theologians as another vehicle of teaching authority gained prominence during the medieval period. Some authors prefer to refer to the theologians as the "Learned Experts". Origen is seen as a big proponent of this idea. Theologians have been allowed to participate in the teaching life of the Church. Distinctions, however, were made to differentiate the powers of the theologians and the Pope or bishops. St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) was prominent in making distinction between the powers of the Pope and theologians. For example, in Aquinas' writings, he spoke of the *Magisterium* of the pastoral or pontifical chair and *Magisterium* of a master's chair. There are other scholars who held differing views on the position of theologians in matters of faith. Godefroid of Fontaines (1250-1309) observed that theologians are free to maintain their own views in the face of Episcopal or even in papal decisions.

In the medieval period, theologians were seen taking an active part in the teaching life of the Church. They helped the bishops to formulate doctrinal decisions. However, in spite of the influence of theologians in helping to form doctrinal rulings, Popes were seen to assert their influence over the erring theologians. Such theologians were referred to as "Rogue theologians". The Council of Trent made an effort to re-establish the collaboration between the Council Fathers and theologians. It was during the Vatican II that the collaboration between the Council Fathers and theologians was

strengthened. Pope Paul VI believed that the theologian has an important duty to explain to the laity why the Church teaches what she does. According to Pope Paul VI, the theologian is seen as a “Middle Man” between the Church and the Faithful. Although, the Popes and to some extent, bishops, still keep a close eye on theologians and intervene when necessary (Congar 318-332).

#### **5.1.5 Council of Constance (1414-1418)**

The Council of Constance is important in the teaching life of the Catholic Church. This is the 15<sup>th</sup> ecumenical council recognized by the Catholic Church. The council was called by the instruction of the German king Sigismund to end the Western Schism. There were three men at this period claiming to be the Pope. The Council of Constance was effective in running the Church at a time of crisis. The conveners of this council believed that the councils represent the Church, and are imbued with their power directly by Christ, and are binding even for the Pope in matters of faith (Collins 34).

#### **5.1.6 First Vatican Council (1869-1870)**

Pope Pius IX was instrumental in the convocation of the First Vatican Council. Pope Pius IX called the council to deal with the contemporary problems of the rising influence of rationalism, liberalism and materialism. Another important purpose of the First Vatican Council was to define the doctrine concerning the Church of Christ. Pope Pius IX was the first to use the term *Magisterium* in the way it is understood today in the Catholic Church. The Council defined the doctrine of the papal infallibility, a concept that means that the Pope has the ability to speak without error, when acting in his capacity as pastor and teacher of all Christians. In speaking this way, he commits his supreme authority in the universal Church on a question of faith and morality (Congar 324).

#### **5.1.7 Second Vatican Council (1962-1965)**

John XXIII announced the convention of the Vatican II on January 25, 1959. He gave the reasons for convening the Second Vatican Council. The reasons he gave are twofold: a diocesan synod for the city of Rome, and a general Council for the universal

Church (Alberigo 2006:1). The Pope had only spent less than ninety days when he made the surprise announcement to renew the face of the Church. Both conservative and liberal theologians questioned the need for John XXIII's announcement for the renewal of the Church at this time. John XXIII credited the Holy Spirit as the inspiration behind the action he took. The Pontiff understood the words of Jesus who had promised the Holy Spirit in the work and decisions of the apostles. Jesus says, "But the helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything (John 14:26, KJV).

### **5.1.8 Aggiornamento**

Prior to John XXIII's idea to convene the Vatican II, the Popes of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries had been battling the forces of the modern world (Sullivan 2007:39). The Church had witnessed the Protestant Reformation and the collapse of Christian unity. The Church was not open to views from the world as it guarded its teachings. This was a time when the Church does not shift ground on the deposit of faith. This was a time when the Church teaches that salvation is attained only in the Catholic Church. Truth is the same always. Truth does not change. This attitude has brought criticisms to the Church that does not listen to views from the outside world. The Pope carefully chose the Italian word *aggiornamento* to express why he declared the Vatican II. Aggiornamento, an Italian word, means to renew and adapt. John XXIII therefore believed that the Vatican II could bring the Catholic faith up -to – date. The Pope assumed that the Church would be able to adapt itself to the needs of modernity. In the context of this research study, the intention of the Vatican II is important for the inculturation of the *Igbo Ozo* title taking into the Christian message of Christ. John XXIII opened the windows of the Church so that people could see what is inside the church. The Church brought fresh air to the Church outside through the *aggiornamento*. The *Igbo Ozo* titleholders need the adaptation which the Council Fathers emphasized in the Vatican II. The Church in *Igbo* society must adhere to the principle of *aggiornamento* in order to foster the souls of the *Ozo* titleholders.

The Second Vatican Council ended in 1965. By the time it ended, the Council Fathers had produced sixteen documents - four constitutions, nine decrees, and three

declarations. Each of these documents addressed a major issue in the Catholic faith (Sullivan 2007:38). The establishment of the Second Vatican Council is one of the most important religious events of the twentieth century (Alberigo 2006: vii). The task in this dissertation exploration is to examine the Vatican II documents and other declarations which will serve as the context for discussing the inculturation of the traditional *Igbo Ozo* title taking into Christianity. The aim, purpose, and intention will be to apply these Church documents to the inculturation of *Igbo Ozo* title taking among the *Igbo* Christians.

#### **5.1.9 *Instrumentum Laboris* (1993)**

The *Instrumentum Laboris* was announced on January 6, 1989. It was a surprise announcement which generated a lot of interest by the African Episcopate. The *Instrumentum Laboris* was published in 1993. The theme focused on: The Church in Africa and her Evangelizing Mission Towards the year 2000: “You shall be my witnesses (Acts 1:8). As the theme suggests, *Instrumentum Laboris* was specifically meant for the Church in the African Continent.

The *Instrumentum Laboris* has an introduction with two parts and a conclusion. Part 1 is a theological framework which highlights the central concern of evangelization in Africa. Part II of *Instrumentum Laboris* is divided into five headings:

- a. Proclamation
- b. Inculturation
- c. Dialogue
- d. Justice and Peace
- e. Means of Social Communications

It is important to note that everything in this working paper has come from the responses to the *Lineamenta*. The *Instrumentum Laboris* traced the origin of evangelization. Jesus is the first evangelizer. The central theme of Jesus is the Kingdom of God. Jesus obeyed His Father by taking human flesh. He eventually died on the Cross to reconcile humanity to God. This is the greatest sacrifice Jesus made for us. Jesus commanded the apostles to continue the work of spreading the Good News of

salvation to all the earth (Mark 16:15). Jesus is always present in the Church through the work of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:20).

The second theme that was considered in *Instrumentum Laboris* was inculturation. Inculturation should be seen in the context of incarnation. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us (John 1:14). Christianity becomes itself enriched when through inculturation, it enters into dialogue with people and their culture. Inculturation helps to purify the cultural elements that are not in keeping with the exigencies of Christianity. Inculturation is a necessity for the Churches in Africa. Inculturation is biblically oriented (Isaiah 60:3, 5-6). Inculturation from a biblical context means that, every people is giving back to God as his inheritance. Inculturation is also theologically founded. Jesus did not come to abolish the law, but, to fulfill it (Matthew 5:17).

Inculturation could easily be adapted in the liturgy. The *Instrumentum Laboris* indicated areas where inculturation could thrive in the liturgy. This includes:

- a. A rediscovery of the importance of the Word of God
- b. Usage of the vernacular
- c. Use of the African art in liturgical clothing, in decorating places of worship, and in the sacred vessels
- d. Use of traditional forms to express certain elements of faith: beating of drums, clapping of hands, dancing and body language.

Dialogue is the third theme that was discussed in the 1993 *Instrumentum Laboris*. Dialogue is important for the African Church, which comes into contact with other religions. Jesus used dialogue to reveal his divinity and the mysteries of the Kingdom (John 3:1-21). Dialogue is an important aspect of the Church's mission of evangelization. According to *Instrumentum Laboris*, an authentic dialogue becomes witness, and true evangelization is accomplished by respecting and listening to one another.

The *Instrumentum Laboris* also explored Justice and Peace, as well as Means of Social communication. In the context of this thesis, exploration, evangelization, inculturation and dialogue as expounded in *Instrumentum Laboris* are important. The African Church has been challenged to develop its working plan to incorporate the

issues raised in the *Instrumentum Laboris* into Christianity. But, in a more serious note, the *Igbo* Church has the most challenges. Inculturation is a new awareness in the *Igbo* Catholic Church, which has Christ at its centre. This new requirement demands a profound new awareness in mentality and conviction.

#### **5.1.10 The African Synod in Rome (1994)**

The African Church is seen as a vibrant and growing Church. The African Church has depended so much on the Mother Church in Rome for many years. With the call for an African Synod, it is deemed that the African Church is capable of being responsible for itself. Unfortunately, a Synod that was meant for the African Church was held in Rome. This is still a sign that the African Church is being carried along like a baby. However, one should not see the African Synod held in Rome as a total failure. Rome was considered as a venue, and this was thought of as the choice of the majority of the African bishops. Before this Synod took place, there were some African liturgies that had been inculturated into Christianity. For example, we have the Zairean Liturgy, the Ethiopian Rite, and the Egyptian Rite approved for use.

The theme that was discussed focused generally on Evangelization in the African perspective. The missionary tasks of the Church were articulated under five headings:

- a. Proclamation of the Good News
- b. Inculturation
- c. Dialogue
- d. Justice and Peace
- e. The Means of Social Communication

These themes were important for the Church in Africa. These themes also formed the structure for the African Synod. The bishops present for the Synod asked eighty one questions. Two questions asked in the African Synod were of important for this study. The two questions are as following:

- a. Do you consider inculturation as urgent and necessary, *hic et nunc*, for the Church in Africa?
- b. According to Vatican II, what are the objectives and importance of ecumenical dialogue with non-Catholic Churches and ecclesial communities?

Inculturation and dialogue as mentioned by the African Synod in Rome (1994) will be explored later in the discussion. The theory of inculturation and dialogue are important for this study.

#### **5.1.11 *Ecclesia in Africa* (1995)**

*Ecclesia in Africa* followed immediately after the African Synod in Rome. The African clergy and theologians have expressed the desire to have an African Council or African Synod to discuss issues that affect evangelization in Africa. This request was welcomed, thus, the convocation of *Ecclesia in Africa*.

*Ecclesia in Africa* discussed not only issues that are relevant, but, issues that affect the African continent. The Church in Africa was described as a missionary Church. The African Church is a Church of mission which, itself, becomes missionary: You shall be my witness to the ends of the earth (Acts 1: 8). *Ecclesia in Africa* considered the following themes:

- a. An historic moment of Grace (introduction)
- b. Brief history of the continent's evangelization (the Church in Africa)
- c. Evangelization and Inculturation
- d. Present day challenges
- e. Witness and holiness
- f. Kingdom of justice and peace

In *Ecclesia in Africa*, even though there are many themes that were discussed, one could see that there was an emphasis on evangelization and inculturation in African culture. John Paul II underscored the role and implications of inculturation in African evangelization. Every human being needs culture. According to the mind of John Paul II, inculturation is the insertion of the Gospel message of Jesus Christ into cultures. John Paul II thus laid down the criteria of inculturation in *Ecclesia in Africa*.

#### **5.1.12 First Synod of the Catholic Diocese of Orlu (2000)**

The synod delegates in the *Orlu* diocese was inaugurated on 2<sup>nd</sup> of November, 1999. But the Synod itself was held on November 26, 2000. This is the first and only Synod held in the *Orlu* Diocese at the time this dissertation project was being carried out. The theme of this Synod focused on Service and Renewal in the Church (Synod 2000:4). The Catholic Diocese of *Orlu* sees herself as a servant, which is the thrust of this Synod, a service to God and to one another in the Church.

The Synod consisted of seven chapters, with both an introduction and conclusion. The topic of this Synod included the following themes:

- a. Introduction (Service and renewal in the Church)
- b. Service and Renewal in general
- c. Proclamation
- d. Inculturation
- e. Justice and Peace
- f. Dialogue
- g. Social Communication
- h. Future Sustenance of the Church
- i. Conclusion

The goal of the Synod in the Diocese of *Orlu* was to fashion out a tool to serve the Catholic faithful more effectively. The clergy and religious in the diocese are servants, people who are called by God, to serve God and neighbor in the Church (Synod 2000:13). The Synod was aimed at feeding the people of God, as instructed by Jesus (John 21:15-18).

The Catholic leadership of the *Orlu* Diocese made decisions that affected the lives of the people of God. It devoted a chapter on inculturation. The Synod agrees that inculturation is the conversion of a culture by the Gospel and also the re-expression of the Gospel by the evangelized culture (Synod 2000: 28). It also acknowledges the role of dialogue in evangelizing the people of the diocese. The Synod condemned the *Ozo* institution in the Diocese of *Orlu*. According to the Synod, the *Ozo* title taking could not be Christianized (Synod 2000:29). Thus, the *Ozo* title holders are asked to denounce their titles, or face excommunication from the Diocese of *Orlu* (Synod 2000:29). From

the time that the Catholic leadership in *Orlu* made this decision, the Ozo title holders have been excommunicated. They are denied the Sacraments including Christian burial, which is not a Sacrament. Pastors are in a dilemma in discharging the diocese's decree. The result of this decree is continual resistance, conflicts, and agitation in the diocese of *Orlu*. The irony is that *Orlu* Diocese is the only Diocese where title holders are excommunicated in Christian communities. The other Archdioceses and Dioceses across *Igbo* communities appreciate the contributions that the Ozo title holders make in their Catholic families. However, the Catholic Diocese of *Orlu* should know that Vatican II, Catholic Documents, *Ecclesia* in Africa, Synod for Africa in Rome, and the Bible are not against the Ozo title taking in the *Igbo* communities.

#### **5.1.13 Theological Implications of Church Magisterium and Vatican II to Igbo Church**

The aforementioned Church *Magisterium* and Vatican II are important as one explores the Ozo title taking and leadership in *Igbo* Catholic communities. Augustine (City of God VIII.1) defined theology as reasoning or discussion concerning the Deity. Hooker (Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity, 3:8) defined theology as the science of things Divine. In inculturation theory, theology is articulated as theology of faith in a culture seeking understanding (Synod 2000:28). The Church *Magisterium* and Vatican II are crucial in discussing the Ozo title and leadership in the *Igbo* context. The Vatican II represents a starting point and model for the *Igbo* Church (Oforchukwu 2010: 101).

The African Synod held in Rome raised hope for the *Igbo* Churches. The implications of this synod were appreciated. The African Synod acted as a catalyst to move the Church in *Igbo* society towards a mature and responsible part of the Catholic Church. The synod succeeded in empowering the *Igbo* Catholic leadership to do more when the Synod was over. A door of opportunity opened for the Church in *Igbo* land. The Synod encouraged both dialogue and inculturation, including the inculturation of the Ozo title taking in *Igbo* Catholic Church. The *Igbo* theologians could utilize this opportunity to widen the scope of inculturation which the African Synod afforded. Philip Knights (1999) believed that the fruits of the 1994 African Synod were twofold. First, a series of proposals were made to the Pope. Second, a public message was addressed

to any African who was interested. This is a powerful message to the *Igbo* theologians to come up with guidelines that would guide the *Igbo* Church in matters of faith, evangelization, dialogue and inculturation.

With the Vatican II, a new theology emerged in the *Igbo* Catholic Church (Oforchukwu 2010: 101). According to theology in Vatican II context, the *Igbo* Church must pay attention to the needs of *Igbo* Catholics. It must adapt, adjust, and inculturate itself to the needs of the Church in the *Igbo* communities. One such area of inculturation must focus itself on the *Ozo* institution in the *Igbo* Catholic Church. It is in view of this need, that John XXIII opened the doors to let in fresh air for the Church in *Igbo* society. The Council Fathers defined the Church as the people of God. The *Igbo* Catholics are part of the people of God. If the *Igbo* Catholics are part of these people of God, it is wise that the *Igbo* teachings must be relevant to the *Igbo* Catholics (Oforchukwu 2010:101).

Theology must express itself in inculturation. This is why it is crucial for the Church leadership to inculturate the *Ozo* institution across the *Igbo* communities. The Catholic Diocese of *Orlu* must listen to the signs of the time, in adjusting herself to the tune of Vatican II. In *Igbo* Catholic Church, it is only the *Orlu* Diocese that has excommunicated the *Ozo* title holders through its 2000 Synod. Asking the *Ozo* title holders to renounce their titles does not resolve the Church's problems. Jesus should be seen as the model of inculturation. He was borne into the Jewish culture. He purified the Jewish culture, where necessary. He asked Peter to feed his sheep (John 21:15-18). The *Igbo* Catholic Church of the *Orlu* Diocese should undertake this job of feeding the people of God in its Diocese. Inculturation is the foundation of theology (Oforchukwu 2010: 102). Unfortunately, the *Igbo* Catholic Church of the Diocese of *Orlu* banned the *Ozo* tile holders which is not in keeping with the spirit of Vatican II. This means that the *Igbo* Catholic Church of the *Orlu* Diocese has a lot of work to do to restore the status of the *Ozo* title holders. It must recognize that its duty is to feed the sheep entrusted to it. Jesus condemned the shepherds that had scattered his flock. The Vatican II rejected any move to discriminate against the people of God. The *Igbo* Catholic Church of the *Orlu* Diocese must know that Christianity is a religion founded on love and mercy (Deuteronomy 4:31). Jesus is the way, the truth and life (John 14:6). Jesus came that the people of God might have life, and have it abundantly (John

10:10). Theology of inculturation in the *Igbo* Catholic Church must be based on love and mercy, which Jesus represents.

#### **5.1.14 1983 Code of Canon Law**

Jesus is the founder of Christianity. He founded His Church on a strong rock under Peter, who eventually, became the first Pope. Jesus said, “You are Peter, and upon this rock, I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it (Matthew 16:18, KJV). Today, the Church is governed and protected from error by the Holy Spirit. In Acts of the Apostles, the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch (Acts 11:26). The followers of Christ need laws to govern the Church of Christ. Jesus entrusted the Church under Peter when he said, “And I will give you the keys of the Kingdom of heaven, and whatever you shall bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven, and whatever you shall loose upon earth, it shall also be loosed in heaven (Matthew 16:19, KJV). The keys to the Kingdom of heaven given to Peter have some canonical implications for the Catholic Church in the *Igbo* communities (Oforchukwu 2010:103).

Canon law is the body of laws and regulations made or adopted by ecclesiastical authority that governs the Roman Catholic Church. Jesus gave Peter, the first Pope, the legislative power, which invariably extends to the present Pope, bishops, priests, ministers, deacons, and the people of God. Matthew 18: 20, KJV says that, “Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there I am in the midst of them”. The Church has the legislative power to make rules for the good of the people of God. The 1983 Code of Canon law was revised under John Paul II to reflect the documents and theology of Vatican II. John Paul II promulgated the revised Code of Canon Law in 1983. The 1983 Code of Canon law contains 1752 Canons, which presently guide the government of the Roman Catholic Church, including the *Igbo* Catholic Church.

### **5.1.15 The Importance of 1983 Code of Canon Law for the Igbo Catholic Church**

The revised 1983 Code of Canon Law was promulgated on January 25, 1983 by John Paul II, to meet the expectations of the whole Catholic community. The last time the Code of Canon Law was reformed was in 1959, a reform made by John XXIII. The revision of the Code was an event of the future and for the good of the Church in the long term. The importance of this revision lies on the intention, which is that of the renewal of the Christian life.

The Code is the principal legislative document of the Church that is founded on the juridical heritage of Revelation and Tradition. The Code is an indispensable document to ensure order both in individual and social life. The Code presents the doctrine in which the Church is seen as the people of God (*Lumen Gentium*, No 2) and authority as a service (LG, NO 3). Moreover, the members of the people of God participate in the threefold office of Christ: Priestly, Prophetic, and Kingly. The Code presents the duties and rights of the faithful, and particularly of the laity. The Code is therefore extremely important for the Church in *Igbo* communities.

The revised Code of Canon Law is important for the Catholic Church in *Igbo* society because it is in fact, important for our life as Christians. Canon 204, No 1 says that Christ's faithful are those who, since they are incorporated into Christ through baptism, are constituted the people of God. Canon 205 stipulated that those baptized are in full communion with the Catholic Church here on earth who are joined with Christ in his visible body, through the bonds of profession of faith, the sacraments and ecclesiastical governance. Baptism accords the people of God with the obligations and rights of all Christ's faithful. These rights also extend to the *Igbo* Catholic Ozo title holders in the Diocese of *Orlu*. The *Igbo* Catholic Ozo title holders in *Orlu* Diocese have some rights which have been denied as enshrined in the revised Code of Canon Law (1983). The parish priest is to take care that the Blessed Eucharist is the centre of the parish assembly of the faithful (Can. 528, No. 2). According to Canon 528, the parish priest must strive to ensure that the faithful are nourished by the devout celebration of the Sacraments, and in particular, that they frequently approach the Sacraments of the Blessed Eucharist and Penance.

Unfortunately, the Diocese of *Orlu* has ignored the prescriptions of the revised Code of Canon Law, which guides the activities of the Catholic Church in the *Orlu* Diocese. The Diocese has refused to abide by the rules of the Code of Canon Law, Vatican II, and Church *Magisterium*. This has been a painful moment for the Catholic Ozo title holders in the Diocese of *Orlu*. They have initiated dialogue with the new bishop, Most Rev. Augustine Ukwuoma to review the decision which was taken in the First Synod of the Catholic Diocese of *Orlu*. The Catholic Ozo title holders in the Diocese have the right to be assisted by the Pastors from the spiritual riches of the Church, especially by the Word of God and the Sacraments (Canon 213). All Christ's faithful have the right to immunity from any kind of coercion in choosing a state in life (Can. 219). The Ozo title is practised in almost all the communities in *Igbo* society. It is only in the Diocese of *Orlu* that the Catholic Ozo title holders are banned and excommunicated from the Sacraments, which are their rights, given to them through baptism.

The people of God, or the faithful in the Diocese of *Orlu* do not only enjoy these rights and privileges, they are also bound by some obligations. The revised Code of Canon Law is clear regarding these obligations. The Catholic Ozo title holders have the obligation to provide for the needs of the Church, so that the Church has available to it those things which are necessary for divine worship, for apostolic and charitable work and for the worthy support of its ministers. These obligations have been religiously kept by the Catholic Ozo members in the Diocese of *Orlu*. Most of the Church projects, both at the parish levels and Diocesan level are sponsored by these rejected, ostracized and excommunicated Ozo title members. The records are there to prove this at the parish levels and diocesan level. It is too painful for the Ozo members that after performing their own duties as Catholics, they are denied the Sacraments when they need them. They are even being abused by some pastors in their frequent homilies, especially those who do not appreciate the role of the Ozo title for one reason or the other. Today, there are tensions, conflicts, agitations, and quarrels in the Diocese of *Orlu* because of its stance on the Ozo title, which is contrary to the Church Documents, Vatican II and Church laws in the Archdioceses and Dioceses in *Igbo* communities outside the *Orlu* Diocese. The leadership of the *Igbo* Catholic Church must do something to prevent and

avert any ugly situation in the Diocese. The Ozo institution is not 100% perfect. It is like any other human and social institution in the society that is not 100% perfect. If it were so, Jesus Christ would have no business dying for humanity. The researcher loves the Church, and would do anything within his power to preserve it. It is a means of human salvation.

### **5.1.16 Inculturation and its implications**

Inculturation is not a new ideology in the Church. It is a process which has been at work in the Church from the beginning (Synods of Bishops 2009). In *Ecclesia* in Africa, John Paul II (2000) defined inculturation as a movement towards full evangelization. According to John Paul II (2000), inculturation touches on people's cultural, economic, and political levels of lives. It is a dynamic encounter between the culture of a certain place and the culture which comes from the Gospel. The goal of inculturation is to make Christianity a religion that is acceptable to all ages and all times (Magesa 2004:10). It is about helping the Church to be truly local by making the Gospel applicable to different cultures (Oforchukwu 2010:126). The Vatican II provided specific guidelines with respect to inculturation.

The position of the Council Fathers on the human person was clearly defined in *Gaudium et Spes*. Prior to the Vatican II, the Church showed less interest in the human culture. The method the Church uses to evangelize has not explored the beauty of other cultures. The individual Churches have relied on the Church in Rome. The language, liturgy, and customs of Rome were considered normative for all Churches (Sullivan 2007:52). No Church was allowed to maintain any tradition different from the Church of Rome. But with the Council Fathers, *Gaudium et Spes* clearly defined the need to incorporate people's cultures into the liturgy. This step has opened the door for other cultures to be used in the liturgy.

Jesus was born into a culture. The history of the incarnation is important in incorporating individual cultures into the liturgy of the Church. Jesus did not devalue his culture, but came to fulfill it (Matthew 5:17). *Gaudium et Spes* recognizes the intertwining nature of culture and human life. The council fathers noted,

Man comes to a true and full humanity only through culture that is through

the cultivation of the goods and values of nature. Wherever human life is involved, therefore, nature and culture are quite intimately connected one with the other (GS 53).

The Church speaks of plurality of cultures. The people will also feel at home with their own culture and language in the liturgy. The Council fathers speak of the need to adapt the Church to people's culture. The Church must purify the culture where necessary for the good of the faithful. The Gospel of Christ constantly renews the life and culture of fallen man; it combats and removes the errors and evils resulting from the permanent allurements of sin. It never ceases to purify and elevate the morality of peoples (GS 58).

The Church in *Igbo* land must see itself as a family of God's people. In *Ecclesia* in Africa, John Paul II reiterated the nature of Church as a family. The Synod Fathers acknowledged it as an expression of the Church's nature, particularly appropriate for the *Igbo* Church. John Paul II challenged the *Igbo* theologians to fashion out the theology of the Church as a family with all the riches contained in this concept (*Ecclesia* in Africa, 1995).

John Paul II challenged the *Igbo* leadership to imbibe dialogue as a means to reach out to other cultures. Openness to dialogue is the Christian's attitude inside the community as well as with other believers (John Paul, 1995). It is enriching for the *Igbo* leadership to practise dialogue with the *Igbo* culture. Dialogue between the *Igbo* Church leadership and the Ozo title holders is crucial. Promoting a dialogue with the *Igbo* Ozo title holders is important. For example, *Igbo* Christian Ozo title holders must adjust their worldviews which are influenced by *Igbo* culture. The Ozo title holders perform some duties that are needed in the Catholic Church. By promoting dialogue, both *Igbo* Catholic Church and Ozo title holders would appreciate the common values which they share. By so doing, the Church leadership could inculturate Ozo title taking into their value system in such a way that it would allow the title holders to practise their religion faithfully.

## 5.2 SUMMARY

Chapter five explored the theological framework of Vatican II, Church *Magisterium*, and inculturation and its implications for Ozo title taking and leadership in the *Igbo* Catholic Church. The history of Church *Magisterium* and Vatican II were examined. Other Church documents were also considered. The first *Orlu* Diocesan Synod was explored. The *Orlu* Synod was crucial, since the Synod made decisions that banned the Ozo title holders in the *Igbo* Catholic communities. Since the First Synod in the *Orlu* Diocese, the Ozo title members have been treated like lepers in the Church. They are avoided in the Church. They are not fed with the Eucharist. Also, they are not allowed to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Also, inculturation was discussed. It would help to integrate the Ozo institution into Christianity in *Igbo* Catholic communities. Dialogue and inculturation are important tools to improve the relationship between the Church leadership and Ozo members in *Igbo* communities.

# CHAPTER 6:

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY ON OZO TITLE TAKING AND LEADERSHIP IN *IGBO* CATHOLIC CHURCH

### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

This section presented the research design used in this dissertation. The intent of chapter six is to present how data was collected on the Ozo title taking and its implications for current leadership issues in *Igbo* Catholic communities.

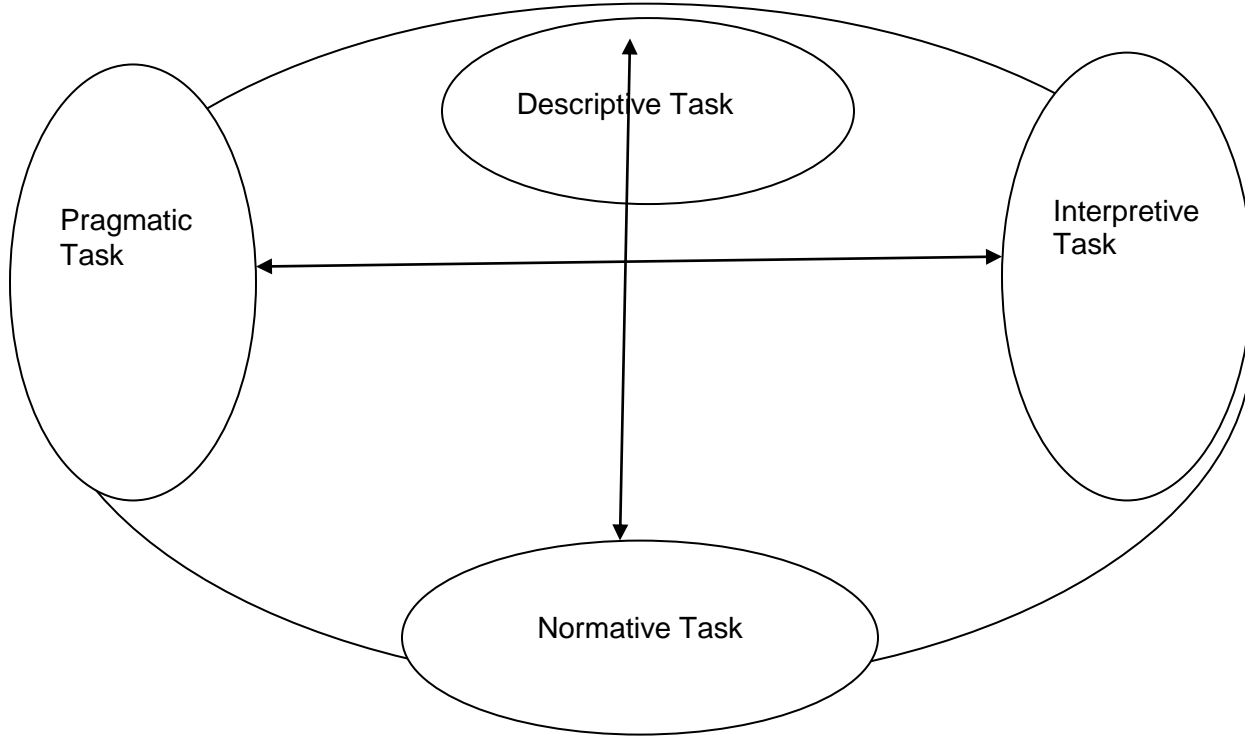
#### 6.1.1 *Richard Osmer's Research Methodology for Practical Theology*

In this study, the researcher utilized the Osmer's (2008) model of practical theology to conduct this study. This model helped to gather data for the study. Osmer (2008) proposed a model of practical theological interpretation with four tasks which included the following:

- The descriptive-empirical task asks, "What is going on"?
- The interpretive task asks, "Why is it going on"?
- The normative task asks, "What ought to be going on"?
- The pragmatic task asks, "How might we respond"?

Task	Descriptive	Interpretive	Normative	Strategic
Question	What is going on?	Why is it going on?	What ought to be going on?	How might we respond?
Function	Priestly Listening	Sagely Wisdom	Prophetic discernment	Servant Leadership

**Figure 6.1: The four tasks of Practical Theology according to Osmer (2008).**



**Figure 6.2: Relationships between the four tasks according to Osmer (2008).**

Figure 2 shows the relationships between the four tasks. The researcher employed these four tasks mentioned by Osmer in this study. In conducting this study, the researcher believes that Ozo title taking and leadership exploration should be hermeneutical in nature. This study also used Gadamer's (1975) five-stage principle of hermeneutical experience which included the following:

- a. Pre-understanding
- b. Being brought up short
- c. Dialogical interplay
- d. Application

The descriptive-empirical approach is crucial for this study. Practical theology begins with contexts or situations that require interpretation. This approach helped the researcher to interpret the Vatican II Documents, Church *Magisterium* Documents, and other Church Documents that helped to answer the question, what is going on in the

Catholic Church in *Igbo* society. Osmer's (2008) approach is appealing to this study because of the opportunity it provides to ask the four questions: What is going on?, Why is it going on?, What ought to be going on?, and How might we respond?

### **6.1.2 Data Collection Plan**

In research study, data collection is crucial. Mouton (2001:57) distinguished two types of data gathering. However, this depends on the type of research that is being undertaken. Data could be garnered through literary or empirical research. This research study used the combined components of both literary and empirical methods. Osmer (2008) mentioned how data could be collected in practical theology. This research study followed the process of collecting data prescribed by Osmer (2008).

The site and place for any study is important (Oforchukwu 2010:12). The site for this study is *Igbo* communities. Identification of those to participate in the study is crucial for the research (Newman et. al 1997:68 - 69). The participants of the study comprised of clergy, *Nze* and *Ozo* titled holders, and non-titled holders. The researcher took into consideration the social-economic level of the participants.

### **6.1.3 Gaining Access to the Study**

Gaining access to the study is important. The researcher asked for permission from the Human Subjects review board. The Ministry of Education in Imo state, Nigeria was notified about this study. The researcher stated the purpose of the study, the objectives, and how crucial it is to conduct this study in *Igbo* communities. The participants' permission was sought prior to the study. They knew that participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw from participation at any time of the study without any consequence. All the participants were informed that no information about them would be made known without their permission.

### **6.1.4 Interviewing**

Mouton (2001:100) identified four types of instruments for gathering information. Newman et al. (1997:44) observed that interviews are one of the instruments used to

garner data. Osmer (2008) also listed interviews as one of the methods of empirical research. In this study, the researcher used interviews as one of the methods to gather data. Gay enumerated the advantages of using interviews for collecting data. Gay (1992:231) described the advantages as including the following:

- (a) It produces in-depth data.
- (b) The interview is flexible.
- (c) The interview may result in more accurate and honest responses.
- (d) The interviewer could follow up on incomplete or unclear responses.
- (e) Reasons for particular responses could be determined.

Interviews also have their setbacks, shortcomings, downsides, and disadvantages in any research. First, it is expensive and time consuming. Second, it involves smaller samples. Finally, the responses given by a subject may be biased and affected by her or his reaction to the interviewer (Gay 1992:231).

The researcher also employed focus group discussions to collect data. Gupta (2001:164) said that focus groups are becoming increasingly popular as a tool for gauging public opinion regarding policy issues. The focus group members could number between eight and twelve. These members are assembled for in-depth discussions on a certain topic. For this study, the number of the focus group members would be ten. The topic to be discussed would be about the Ozo title taking and its relevance to current leadership issues in *Igbo* Catholic communities. The purpose is to shed light on how to inculturate the Ozo title taking into Christianity. The advantage of using focus group discussion is that there is no set methodology and the questions are open-ended (Gupta 2001:164). Describing the focus group discussion, Bagin, Ferguson, and Marx (1985:117) observed,

While some organizations use focus groups to stay in touch, others rely on these important feedback groups to provide indications of concerns that might be tested later in more scientific surveys. In many cases, the focus group discussion begins by asking participants how they feel about an issue or program. Then the discussion moves to an exploration of how members of the group think others feel.

### **6.1.5 Data Analysis Plan**

To determine how data was analyzed is crucial in a qualitative research study (Brainard 1996:25). Newman et al. (1997:46-49) enumerated the different methods of analyzing data. Creswell (1998:190) observed that analyzing data has several components. To analyze the data collected in this study, the following components were utilized:

- (a) Preparing the data for analysis
- (b) Conducting different analyses
- (c) Moving deeper and deeper into understanding the data
- (d) Representing the data
- (e) Making an interpretation of the larger meaning of the data (Creswell 1998:190).

Following this method helped the researcher to do a meaningful interpretation of the data collected for the study. This method helped to differentiate meaningful and irrelevant information from the data.

The descriptive method was used in analyzing qualitative information (Osmer 2008). What the respondents said about the Ozo title taking and how it could be inculturated into Christianity was interpreted and described (Creswell 1998:194) in a narrative form. Brainard (1996:21) encouraged reporting the respondents' comments verbatim. In view of this, the researcher reported the facts on Ozo title taking as he received the information from the respondents. It is important to generate the lessons learned from the study. This is the *raison d'être* the researcher used the assertion method to analyze the data (Creswell 1998:63).

The research questions for the study included the following:

- RQ1: What is Ozo title taking?
- RQ2: What are the purposes of Ozo title taking?
- RQ3: Who could be admitted into Ozo title taking?
- RQ4: What are the functions of Ozo titled holders?
- RQ5: Do the *Igbo* have leaders?
- RQ6: What does the Church say about Ozo title?
- RQ7: What does the Church say about inculturation?
- RQ8: What does the Church say about Ozo title holders?

RQ9: What pastoral problems do *Igbo* Christians face with regard to Ozo title taking?

RQ10: Does the Ozo title taking conflict with Christian Practices?

RQ11: How should the Church address these problems?

RQ12: What would be the guidelines for Ozo title taking among the *Igbo* Christians?

RQ 13: What are the missionary teachings that down-grade Ozo title holding in the Church?

Since this is both literary and empirical research, and following Osmer's practical theological methodology (2008), the researcher used journals, books, theses, dissertations, study bibliographies, search online bookshops, literature reviews, encyclopedias, theological dictionaries, Bible commentaries, Church documents, Vatican Council II documents, interviews and focus group discussions to resolve the research problem. This research design and methodology allowed the participants to express their feelings, views and opinions on the Ozo title taking and its implications to current leadership issues among the *Igbo* Catholic communities.

## **6.2 SUMMARY**

Chapter six described the methodology of the research study. As a practical theological dissertation, Osmer's model was used. Osmer's model helped to ask questions that helped to answer the research questions.

Data was collected through in-depth interviews. Open-ended questions were asked to get more information from the participants on their views on Ozo title taking and leadership in *Igbo* Catholic Church.

## CHAPTER 7:

# DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS: INTERPRETATION AND THEOLOGICAL APPRAISAL OF OZO TITLE TAKING AND LEADERSHIP IN *IGBO* CATHOLIC CHURCH

## 7.1. ANALYSIS OF ORAL INTERVIEWS

### 7.1.1 *The Research Overview*

This study is exploratory and open-ended in nature. Interviews were explored in efforts to do a representative study (Osmer 2008). The researcher interviewed clergy, Ozo title holders, and non-titled holders. The idea was to have a cohesive and representative voice that would help to fashion systematic guidelines for Ozo title taking in the *Igbo* Catholic Church. This would help the *Igbo* Church in efforts to march towards a Church that would accept title holders as full members of the Christ fold. The researcher tried to be impartial and objective in representing the views expressed by the participants in the study.

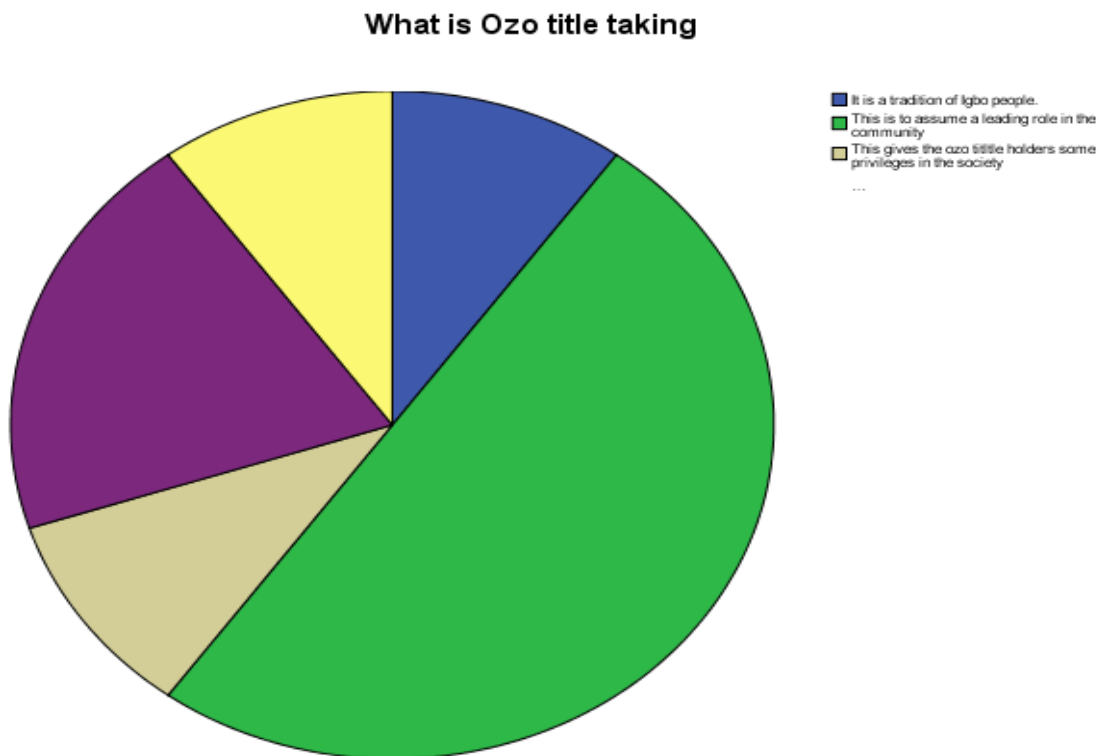
A survey was conducted to learn more about the demographic and religious profile of the *Igbo* Catholic Church and its implications for current leadership issues in the *Igbo* Catholic Church and also to assess the community needs. A self-administered questionnaire survey was designed. This report examines the qualitative data from a question designed to elicit open-ended comments and discussion. The set of questionnaires was completed by 10 title holders and non-titled holders in *Igbo* communities.

As it has been mentioned, the research tool in this study is a qualitative interview (2008). A qualitative interview is different from everyday conversation in the following ways. First, it is a research tool and a good interviewer must prepare questions in advance, and later analyze and report results. The interviewer guides the questions that

focus on the study. Good interview skills require practice and reflection. Finally, beyond the acquisition of interview skills, interviewing is a philosophy of learning. The interviewer becomes a student and then tries to get people to describe their experiences in their own terms. The results of this study could be used to impose obligations on those who have opposite views on the issue of Ozo title taking. In this study, the following interview questions were considered :

## 7.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND FINDINGS

### *Research Question 1: What is Ozo Title Taking in Igbo Communities?*



***Pie-Chart 7.1: What is Ozo Title Taking in Igbo Communities?***

- It is a tradition of Igbo people
- This is to assume a leading role in the community
- This gives the Ozo title holders some privileges in the community
- It accords respects to Ozo title holders
- It is a social institution

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid It is a tradition of <i>Igbo</i> people.	1	10.0	10.0	10.0
This is to assume a leading role in the community	5	50.0	50.0	60.0
This gives the Ozo tittle holders some privileges in the society	1	10.0	10.0	70.0
It accords respects to the Ozo titled holders	2	20.0	20.0	90.0
It is a social institution	1	10.0	10.0	100.0
Total	10	100.0	100.0	

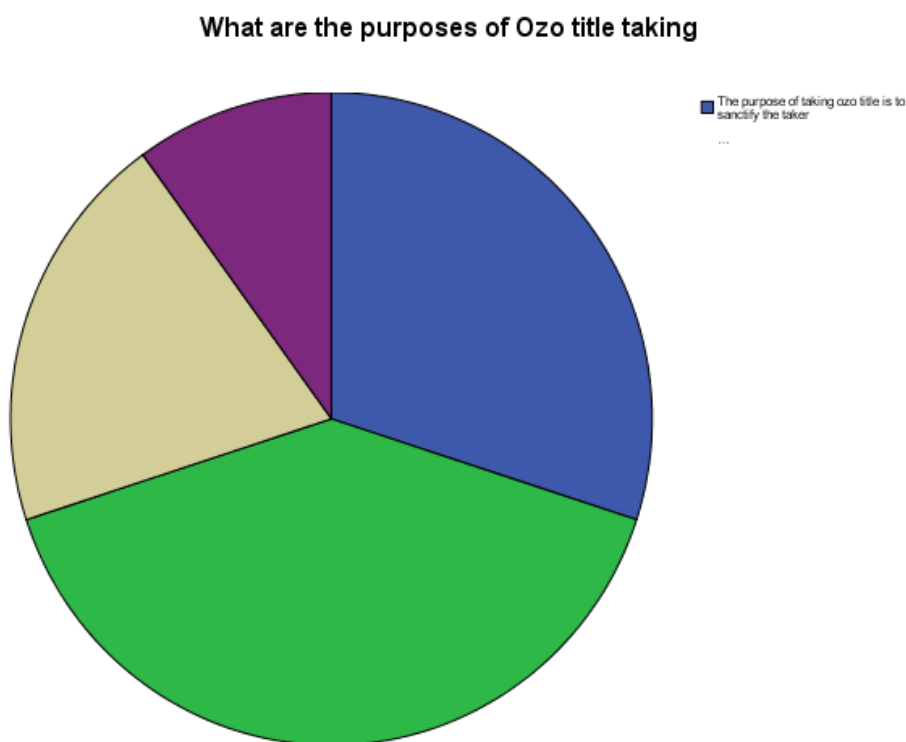
**Figure 7.1: What is Ozo Title Taking in Igbo Communities?**

Title taking is part of *Igbo* culture (Ogbalu :38). In *Igbo* society, men alone are initiated into the Ozo title. The origin of the Ozo title is unknown among the *Igbo* people. The institution of Ozo title is as old as the *Igbo* nation. From the above pie - chart it can be found out that 10% of the participants defined Ozo title taking as a tradition of *Igbo* people. In *Igbo* communities, tradition is important for the people. Ozo title taking is a custom that is handed down to *Igbo* people from one generation to the next generation. There is no written record in *Igbo* tradition about the Ozo title taking.

In *Igbo* society, the titled men performed leadership roles among the people. The Ozo titled holders performed leadership roles (Agbo 1995: 96). According to the survey, it can be seen that the majority of the respondents agreed with this fact that Ozo title holders have a leading role in the community, and it is an important factor, and it

shows the vital role of Ozo title taking in the community. From the charts, 20% of the respondents said that It accords respect to the Ozo title holders. Ozo title taking is a way of recognizing *Igbo* sons for their contributions in the *Igbo* communities. From the interview conducted, only 10% of the respondents said that Ozo title taking is a social institution. From these views, it can be deduced that title taking is part of the *Igbo* culture and this explains the survival of the Ozo title taking to the present day across the *Igbo* communities (Ogbalu).

**Research Questions 2: What are the purposes of Ozo title taking?**



**Pie-Chart 7.2: What are the purposes of Ozo title taking?**

- The purpose of Ozo title taking is to sanctify the taker
- They represent communities in settling cases or disputes
- To make sacred the tradition of *Igbos*, in respecting people in the community
- To safeguard the *Igbo* culture

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid The purpose of taking Ozo title is to sanctify the taker	3	30.0	30.0	30.0
They represent communities in settling cases or disputes	4	40.0	40.0	70.0
To make sacred the tradition of <i>Igbos</i> , in respecting people in the community	2	20.0	20.0	90.0
To safeguard the <i>Igbo</i> culture	1	10.0	10.0	100.0
Total	10	100.0	100.0	

**Figure 7.2: What are the purposes of Ozo title taking?**

Ozo title taking is an important institution in *Igbo* communities (Ogbalu:32). It is a component of *Igbo* culture. Ozo title taking is approached with awe and admiration in *Igbo* land. The procedures for Ozo title taking must be adhered to, to avoid divine anger and punishment. In some of *Igbo* communities, the Ozo title is taken to display wealth and affluence. This question discussed the purpose of Ozo title taking in *Igbo* communities. From the pie charts, it can be found that 30% of the participants said that the purpose of taking Ozo title is to sanctify the taker. Ozo title is sacred. The taker of Ozo title is expected to be holy in *Igbo* land. In *Igbo* communities, the candidate to the Ozo title is thus sanctified after the initiation ceremony is completed. He could now commune with the gods and ancestors. He could understand the language of the ancestors and gods. He could offer sacrifices to the gods on behalf of the community.

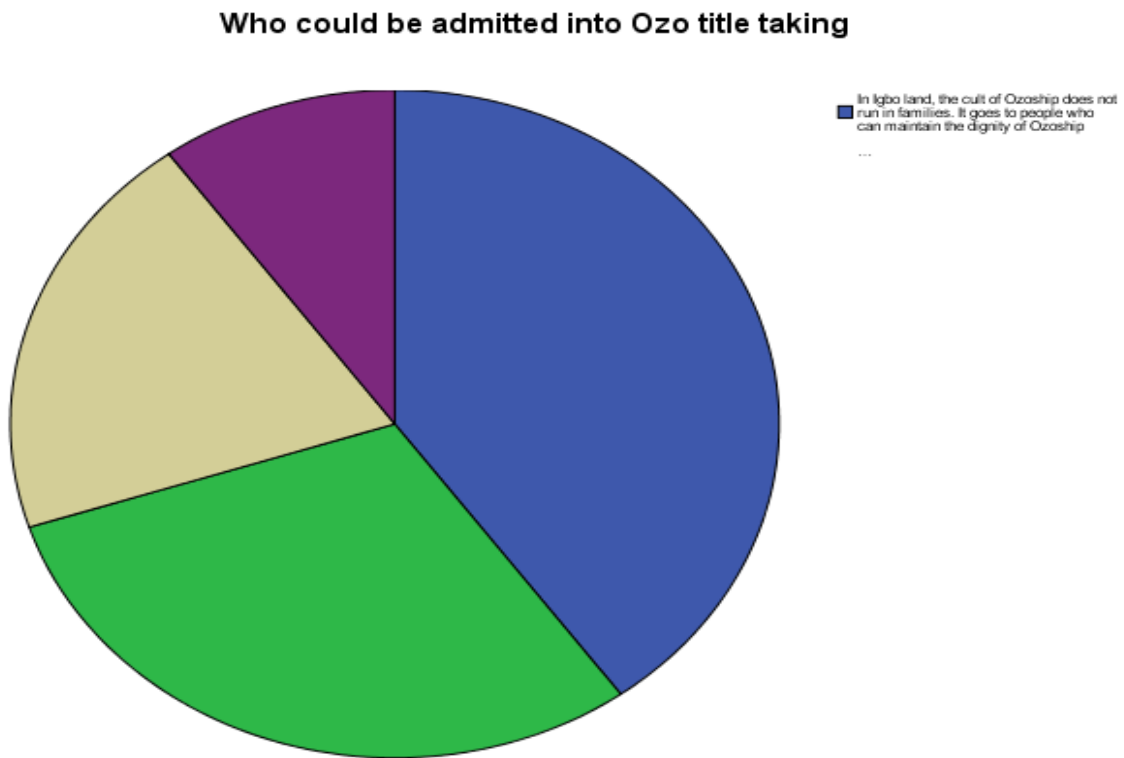
In *Igbo* communities, Ozo men are regarded with deliberate respect. Title taking is an integral component of the social life of *Igbo* people (Ogbukagu 1997: 63). Stratification, characterising the norms of the Ozo title taking, carries a lot of dignity, respect and recognition in the community. This situation accounts for the desire of many *Igbo* people having the urge to be members of the Ozo title system across *Igbo* land (Ogbukagu 1997: 63). In the interivews conducted, the participants agreed that the Ozo title is conferred on people to appreciate and recognize industrious and hard working sons of *Igbo* people. From the charts, 20% agreed that Ozo titles are conferred on people to show them respect in the community.

Quarrels between individuals of different families in the ward or kindred are settled before the Ozo titled holders (Agbo 1995: 96). It can be seen from the charts, that the majority of the respondents agreed that the main purpose of Ozo title holders is to settle cases or disputes in the *Igbo* communities. In *Igbo* communities, disputes might arise between members of the same families, *Umunna*, and village. According to the interview, in *Igbo* land, the Ozo members are part of the *Eze's* cabinet. The kings consult them before making decisions that affect the people. They help to administer justice as well as settling cases and disputes in the *Igbo* community. The overall purpose of Ozo title taking is to provide leadership, and to maintain peace and order in *Igbo* communities.

Titled holders are regarded as custodians of *Igbo* traditions and customs. In *Things Fall Apart*, Achebe (1994) depicted Okonkwo, a titled man, as fighting the White man to protect the *Igbo* culture. From the charts, 10% agreed that the purpose of taking the Ozo title is to safeguard the *Igbo* culture.

Prior to Christianity, the *Igbo* men married more than one wife. Ozo title taking entitles titled men to marry more than one wife in *Igbo* communities. The Ozo taker has become a prominent man in the community by marrying many wives. His farms are expected to be large, which could only be cultivated by many wives. The purpose of taking Ozo title is to avail the taker the opportunity to marry many wives, to help in his farms, in the communities.

### Research Question 3: Who Could be admitted into Ozo title taking?



**Pie-Chart 7.3: Who Could be admitted into Ozo title taking?**

- It goes to people who can maintain the dignity of Ozoship
- Some people may not be allowed to take titles in their communities
- Slaves are not allowed to take Ozo title in their communities
- Good people could be admitted into Ozo title taking

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid In <i>Igbo</i> land, the cult of <i>Ozoship</i> does not run in families. It goes to people who can maintain the dignity of <i>Ozoship</i>	4	40.0	40.0	40.0
Some people may not be allowed to take titles in their communities	3	30.0	30.0	70.0
Slaves are not allowed to take <i>Ozo</i> titles in the communities	2	20.0	20.0	90.0
Good people could be admitted into <i>Ozo</i> title taking	1	10.0	10.0	100.0
Total	10	100.0	100.0	

**Figure 7.3: Who Could be admitted into *Ozo* title taking?**

Achebe (1985) wrote at a time the *Igbo* culture clashed with the Western culture. Okonkwo and other titled holders in *Things Fall Apart* (1985:149-179) fought the Western culture to retain the *Igbo* cultural values. Title holders were men of flawless character. It is obvious that in *Igbo* society, people of dubious character were not admitted into the *Ozo* title fold. The new entrants must prove themselves character wise before they are initiated as members. In the interview conducted, George Adinuba

agreed that wealth is not a factor in conferring the *Ozo* title on people in *Igbo* communities. According to Adinuba, it is given on merit. It is not given to everybody in the society. It is based on the type of person one is in *Igbo* society.

Equally, Fr. Benson Okpara believed that *Ozo* title is not conferred on everybody in *Igbo* culture. According to Fr. Okpara, the *Ozo* title is only given to people who have not committed any crimes in the community.

The above pie chart reveals this fact, that the majority of the respondents in response to the question “Who could be admitted into *Ozo* title taking”, said that In *Igbo* society, the cult of *Ozoship* does not run in families. It goes to people who can maintain the dignity of *Ozoship*. For example, an *Ozo* titled holder is not expected to eat in public. If he does, it is regarded as a disgrace to the *Ozo* cult or institution. The issue of eating in public is taken seriously among the *Ozo* members. In the interview conducted, Nze Alphonsus Oforchukwu agreed that any title holder who eats in public or even in a hotel, is regarded as an irresponsible man. In *Igbo* culture, eating in a hotel is not common among the *Igbo* people. Any responsible *Ozo* title holder would always have his food prepared by his family. A titled man does not eat just any type of food. An *Ozo* man is very selective in what he eats. If any title holder has not eaten fufu (pounded yam), he would not regard himself as eating any food. The participants in the study also shared the same view on the type of food an *Ozo* man could eat. This view was clearly expressed by Nze Alphonsus Oforchukwu. According to Nze Oforchukwu,

The major food among our people is pounded yam. An *Ozo* man could not just eat food any how. He is respected in the society, and therefore, must respect himself. If it is found out that a certain *Ozo* man is eating in a hotel everyday, he is regarded as an irresponsible man in our clan. However, if after investigation, it is found out he eats in a hotel, he could be punished. It is not that eating in a hotel is bad, but, it is just part of our *Igbo* culture that does not allow titled men to eat in public.

George Adinuba also agreed that a titled man does not eat outside his family, otherwise, he would be regarded as defiling the *Ozo* institution. He said that in *Ihiala* community, *Anambra* State, there are certain things an *Ozo* man could not do.

According to Adinuba, a titled man could not eat from the dish of another woman. This has a value that helps to keep the family together and united.

There are other things that a titled person is not expected to do in the *Igbo* communities. An Ozo man is forbidden ever to lie, but, always to speak the truth and never retreat from his words or cheat or misbehave (Ogbalu: 37). Also, an Ozo man should not take a bribe, commit adultery, or climb trees. These are some of the issues that the Ozo institution frowns at, even till today, in *Igbo* communities.

In *Igbo* communities, there are certain classes of people that are not allowed to take the Ozo title. Women, for example, are not allowed to take the title. It is a male oriented institution. However, 30% of the participants said that slaves (*Ohu*) are not allowed to take Ozo titles in certain communities in *Igbo* land. Also, only 10 % of the respondents said that good people could be admitted into ozo title taking. Ozo title taking is not just conferred on any person. New entrants are scrutinized before they are permitted to take the title. The Ozo title could only be conferred on people with upright character and integrity in the community.

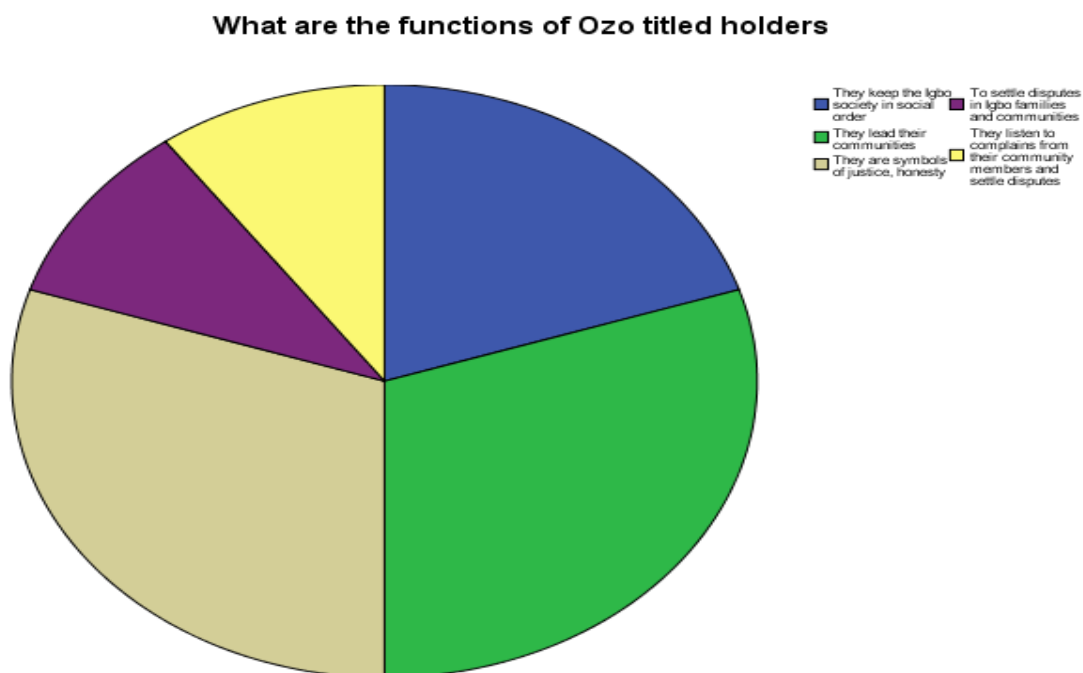
In an interview conducted, Fr. Augustine Emeh observed that there are certain types of people that are allowed to take the Ozo title in *Igbo* communities. According to Fr. Emeh, those who are allowed to take the Ozo title are those who have identified themselves with the community members. Fr. Emeh insisted that new entrants to Ozo title must be brave people, those who have a love for truth, and those who are honest, and firm. They should speak like men, not like women in the community.

In *Igbo* society, a male child is appreciated. He plays an important role in the family, village, and community. Part of his expected duty is to inherit the property of the father, when the father dies to join the ancestors. He offers sacrifices for the family. He also inherits the titles of his father. In the interview, Kenneth Ezekwem noted that Ozo title is hereditary in *Igbo* land. According to Ezekwem, the first son of the Ozo title holder would inherit the title when his father passes on. This custom is still strong among the *Igbo* people. The first son takes care of the father's property, including the Ozo title taking.

Jesus says that He is the truth (John 14:6). Nze Oforchukwu says that this saying has a deep theological implication for *Igbo* people. Truth is important in *Igbo*

communities. An Ozo person is a man of truth. He is a symbol of truth. He must speak the truth irrespective of who is involved. In the interviews conducted, Nze Oforchukwu noted that the purpose of taking the Ozo title is to speak the truth in the community. According to Nze Oforchukwu, the title of an Nze could be revoked for lying. In the *Igbo* community, taking the Ozo title is tantamount for speaking the truth in the community. An Nze person does not lie (*Onye Nze adighi atu-asi*).

**Research Question 4: What are the Functions of Ozo title holders?**



**Pie-Chart 7.4: What are the Functions of Ozo title holders?**

- They keep the *Igbo* society in social order
- They lead their communities
- They are symbols of justice and honesty
- To settle disputes in *Igbo* families and communities
- They listen to complaints from their community members

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid They keep the <i>Igbo</i> society in social order	2	20.0	20.0	20.0
They lead their communities	3	30.0	30.0	50.0
They are symbols of justice, honesty	3	30.0	30.0	80.0
To settle disputes in <i>Igbo</i> families and communities	1	10.0	10.0	90.0
They listen to complains from their community members and settle disputes	1	10.0	10.0	100.0
Total	10	100.0	100.0	

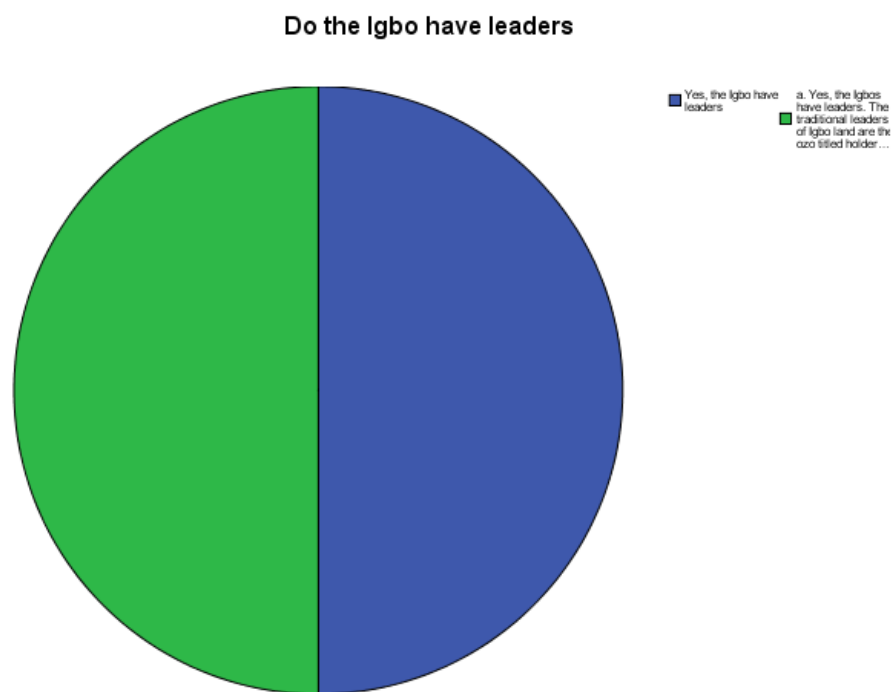
**Figure 7.4: What are the Functions of Ozo title holders?**

The next question discussed the functions of Ozo titled holders. It can be seen that the majority of the respondents think that the main function of Ozo titled holders is to lead their communities. Another important function of Ozo titled holders is to be a symbol for their society, and as it can be seen here, Ozo titled holders are a symbol of honesty, love, peace, love, integrity, and truth in their community. The Ozo title cult is founded on high moral values in *Igbo* society. The Ozo Code of Conduct and Ethics is akin to the Christian Ten Commandments (Exodus 20: 2-17, Deutronemony 5:6-21).

The Bible says that if your brother offends you, call his/her attention. But, if he/she fails to listen, then call the Church to arbitrate (Matthew 18: 15-20). In *Igbo* communities, the Ozo titled holders settle disputes akin to what the Bible says. The

titled men are known for adjudicating disputes between erring brothers in the community. In the above chart, 10% of the participants agreed that titled men settle disputes in the community. Also, another 10% of the respondents agreed that titled men listen to complaints from their community members and settle disputes among the people. During the interview session, Kenneth Ezekwem noted that it is part of the duty of the titled holders to divide and settle land property among brothers in the community. Land is always an issue in *Igbo* communities. Without the presence of elders and Ozo titled men in the community, there is bound to be chaos. This is the reason why 20% of the participants agreed that the Ozo titled holders keep the *Igbo* communities in social order. Nze Cornelius Agwunobi also agreed with other participants by saying that the Ozo titled holders act as referees in land disputes between neighbours and kings. According to Nze Agwunobi, in some communities in *Igbo* land, the highest Ozo titled man is regarded as the king in their communities. In many subjects, the decisions of the Ozo title holders are final (Ogbalu:33).

### Research Question 5: Do the Igbo have Leaders?



**Pie-Chart 7.5: Do the Igbo have Leaders?**

- Yes, the *Igbos* have leaders
- Yes, the *Igbos* have leaders. The traditional leaders of *Igbo* land are the Ozo titled holders

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid Yes, the <i>Igbo</i> have leaders	5	50.0	50.0
a. Yes, the <i>Igbos</i> have leaders. The traditional leaders of <i>Igbo</i> land are the Ozo titled holders. Especially, those who hold the title of <i>Onumonu</i>	5	50.0	50.0
Total	10	100.0	100.0

**Figure 7.5: Do the *Igbo* have Leaders?**

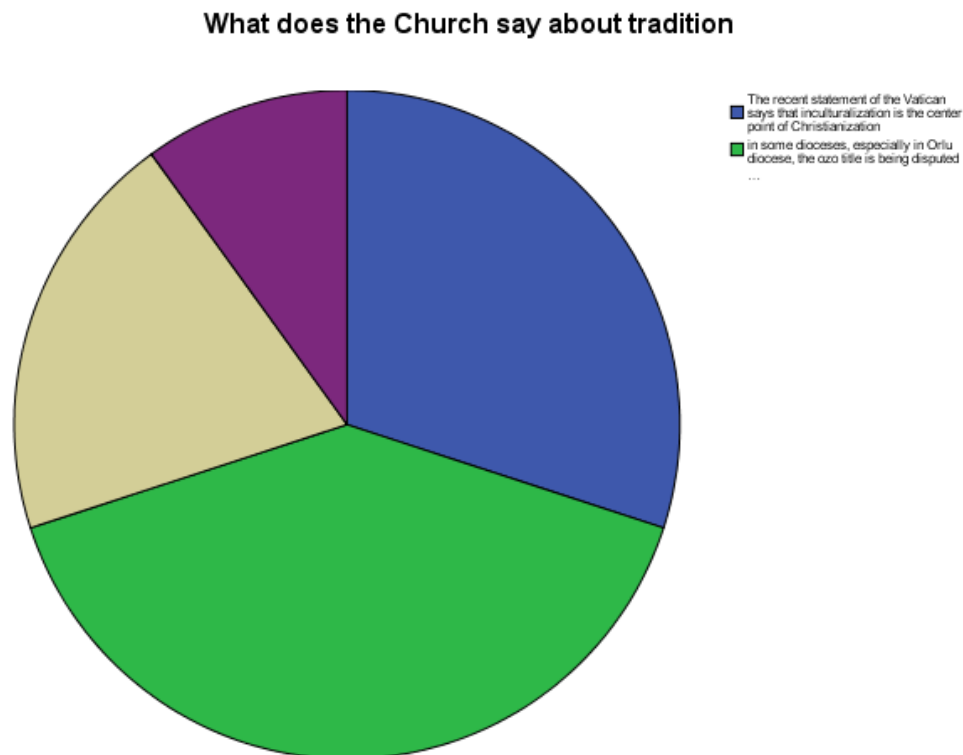
This question shows that the majority of the respondents, 50%, think that the *Igbo* have leaders. The respondents agreed that the purpose of Ozo title taking in *Igbo* communities is to provide the people with leaders, leaders that care, protect, and provide for the community. Also, the participants argued that the Ozo title holders are part of the community members. They are selected from the community to speak for the people. They are the spokesmen of the people. They help to redress injustice. They are not afraid to oppose anybody considered as going contrary to the laws of the land (*Odinala* or *Iwu Ala*).

The majority of the participants maintained that a titled holder is known for his impeccable character. As a leader of the community, he speaks with one tongue, and not with two. In any judgment, a titled holder does not look at the status quo in saying the truth. Nze Alphonsus Oforchukwu agreed that an Ozo title holder represents justice and his yes is always final, no matter what the consequences are. He condemns evil

while upholding the truth at all times. Truth has a lot to do with the “Red Cap” which they wear that symbolizes truth.

Equally, George Adinuba observed that the prospective Ozo members are initiated into the fold. According to Adinuba, during the initiation ceremony, the prospective Ozo title holder should go to the *Oluaoha* with a “Red Cap”. The *Oluaoha* should bring blood and smear it on his eyes. This is to inculcate fear in him, so that he will always speak the truth. From the chart, 50% of the respondents, agreed that the Ozo title holders are leaders in *Igbo* communities.

### **Research Question 6: What does the Church say about tradition?**



**Pie-Chart 7.6: What does the Church say about tradition?**

- Vat. II said that inculturation is the center of Christinization
- In some dioceses, especially in *Orlu* diocese, Ozo title is being disputed
- Tradition is a way the people behave
- It is the way the people act

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid The recent statement of the Vatican says that inculturalization is the center point of Christianization	3	30.0	30.0	30.0
In some dioceses, especially in <i>Orlu</i> diocese, the <i>Ozo</i> title is being disputed	4	40.0	40.0	70.0
Tradition is a way the people behave	2	20.0	20.0	90.0
It is the way the people act	1	10.0	10.0	100.0
Total	10	100.0	100.0	

**Figure 7.6: What does the Church say about tradition?**

Culture is the sum total of people's way of life – a way of farming, manner of speech, way of dressing, way of worshipping, and other related practices (Onyebuagu). Cultural norms are important in the society. Norms specify reward for appropriate behaviour and punishment for improper behaviour in the society (Onyebuagu). *Ozo* title taking is an important aspect of *Igbo* culture. The *Igbo* ancestors established the *Ozo* institution as a way of promoting *Igbo* culture.

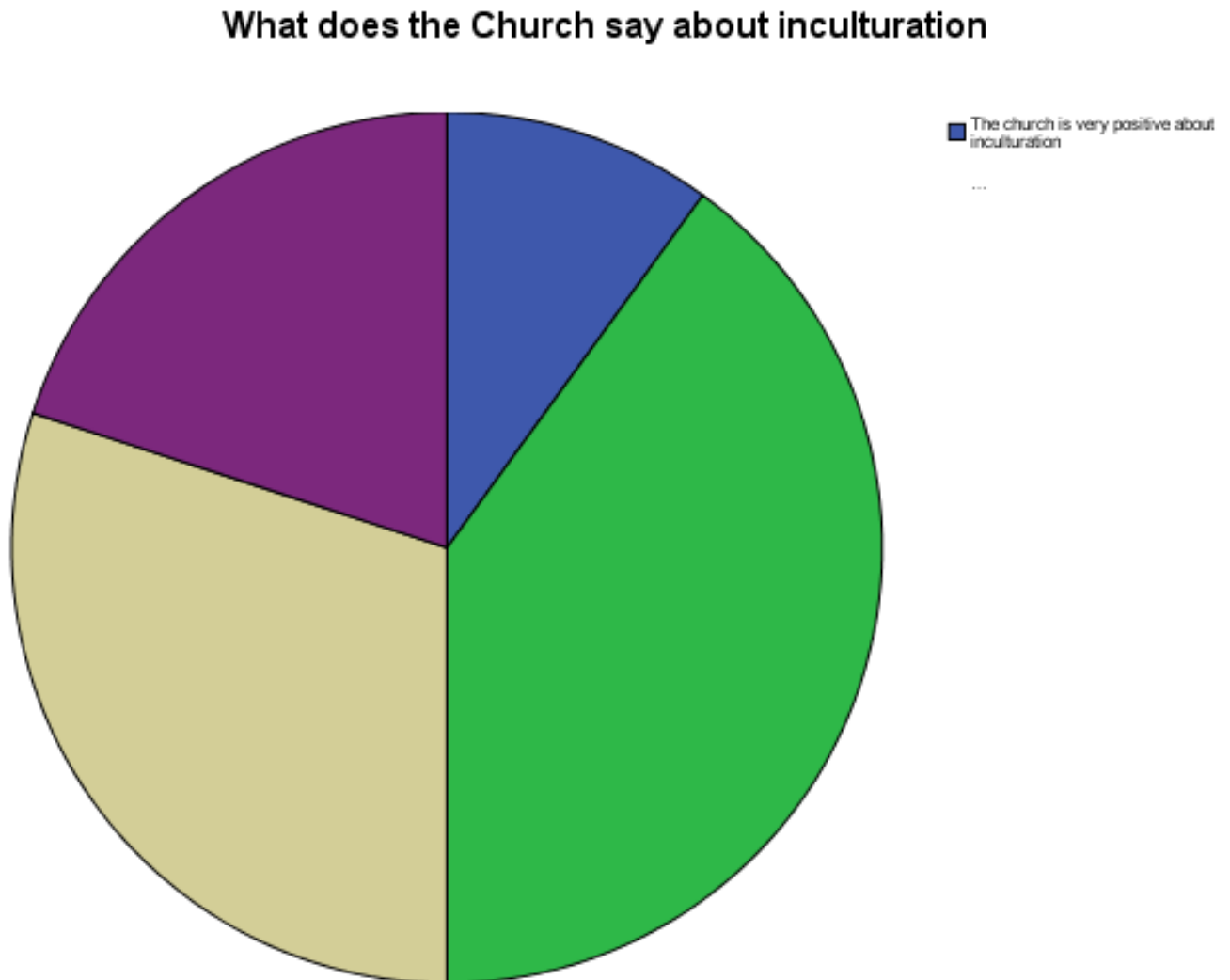
Another important question relates to the opinion of respondents regarding what Church says about tradition . Opinions and views are divided on what the Church in *Igbo* communities thinks about the *Ozo* titled holders in *Igbo* society. From the above chart, it can be implied that the majority of the respondents, 40%, said that “in some

dioceses, especially in *Orlu* Diocese, the Ozo title is being “disputed”. In the *Orlu* Diocese, the Church hierarchy held a Synod in November 22, 2000 that condemned Ozo title taking. The Synod said that the Catholic Church must not accept the *Nze* and Ozo title (Synod 2000: 28). According to the Synod, the Ozo institution cannot be Christianized. However, this is antithetical to the views of Cardinal Arinze, and other Bishops, and the Archbishops of the *Igbo* hegemony. In other Dioceses and Archdioceses in *Igbo* communities, the Ozo titled holders are accorded with respect and honour. They are accepted as Christians. They receive the Sacraments. But in the *Orlu* Diocese, the Synod asked those who had taken the Ozo title to renounce it, or be excommunicated from the Church Sacraments and excluded from the Christian funeral (Synod 2000:29). According to the participants, the *Orlu* Church hierarchy forgets that a funeral is not a Sacrament, and therefore, should not intimidate the Faithful with Christian burials.

However, 20% of the respondents said that “Tradition is a way the people behave”. The Church, according to the respondents, did not ban or condemn tradition. Tradition is good, and should be encouraged. The Church has recognized the *Igbo* tradition. When Cardinal Francis was the Archbishop of *Onitsha*, the Ozo title taking was Christianized.

The chart shows that 10% agreed that tradition is the way the people act. In *Igbo* land, the people act in a way that is different from their neighbours (*Hausa*, *Yoruba*, and *Efiks*) and other Africans. An *Igbo* man could be identified by his dialect or language, food, costumes and attire. An *Igbo* man can also be known through his culture. The cultural dance of the *Igbo* people is different from their neighbours. *Igbo* people are known through their occupation. They are mainly traders. They are also farmers. Their most important crop is yam. The New Yam festival is celebrated in all *Igbo* communities. These views confirm what the respondents said about the tradition of the *Igbos*, i.e., the way the people behave or act.

**Research Question 7: What does the Church say about Inculturation?**



**Pie-Chart 7.7: What does the Church say about Inculturation?**

- The Church is very positive about inculturation
- The Igbo New Yam Festival encourages inculturation of Ozo title taking in Igbo land
- It helps the Church to adapt to tradition and culture
- It is to help the Christians to live a life of the Church and culture

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid The Church is very positive about inculturation	1	10.0	10.0	10.0
The <i>Igbo</i> new yam festival encourages inculturation of the Ozo title taking. It is well celebrated in <i>Igbo</i> land.	4	40.0	40.0	50.0
It helps the Church to adapt to tradition and culture	3	30.0	30.0	80.0
It is to help the Christians to live a life of the Church and tradition	2	20.0	20.0	100.0
Total	10	100.0	100.0	

**Figure 7.7: What does the Church say about Inculturation?**

Inculturation is the intimate transformation of authentic cultural values through their integration in Christianity and the insertion of Christianity in the various human cultures (Pope John Paul II: 1990). According to the Pontiff, inculturation is a slow journey. But through inculturation, the Church makes the Gospel message incarnate in different cultures. The Church makes use of what is good from the people's culture for their own good.

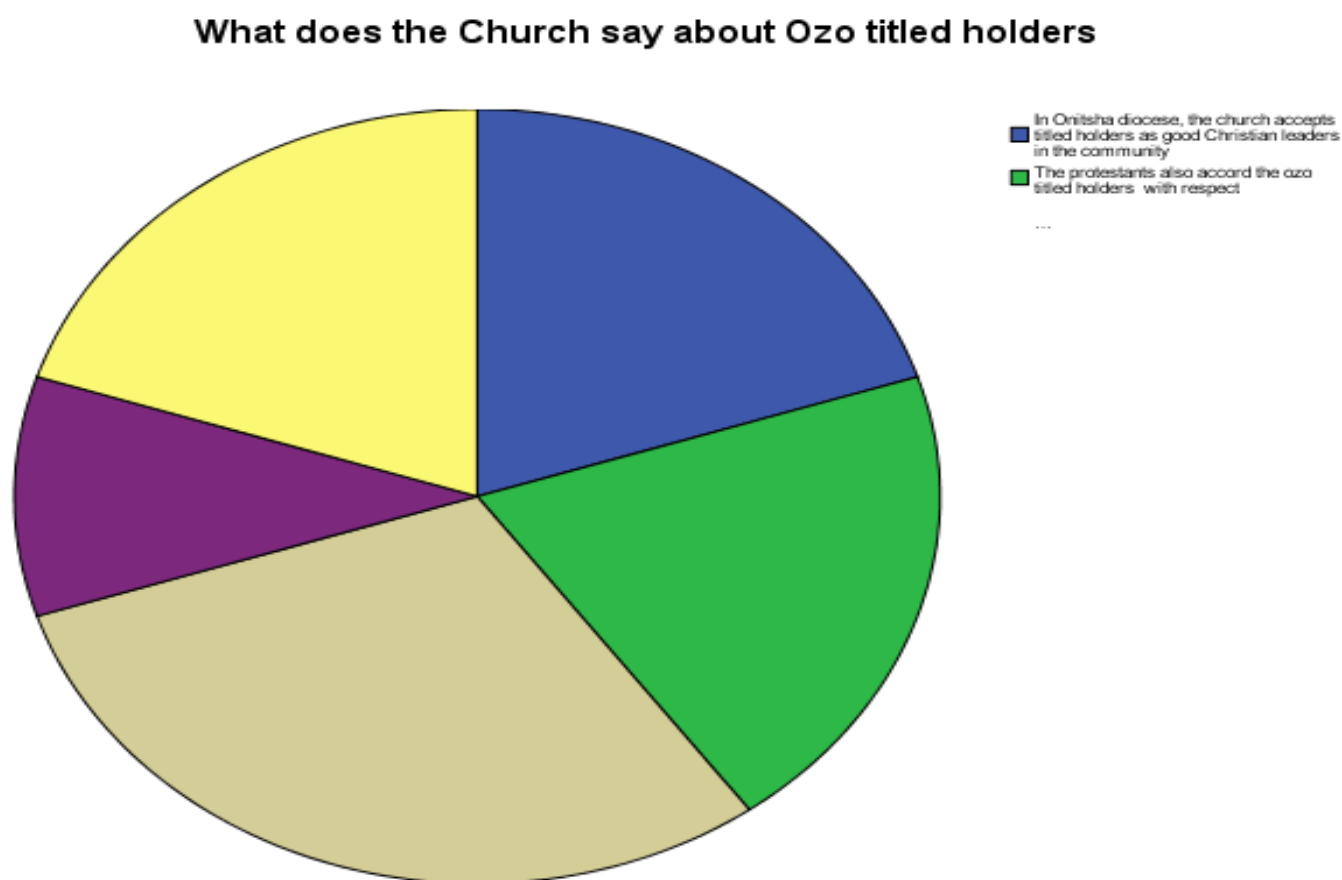
Inculturation is crucial if the Church intends to be relevant to the *Igbo* Christians (Oforchukwu 2010:26). It is about what people feel comfortable with at a given moment in human history (Magesa 2004:40). Inculturation is about helping the Church to be truly local by making Christianity applicable to different cultures and lifestyles (Oforchukwu 2010: 126). The Vatican II provided specific guidelines to guide inculturation in the Catholic Church. The *Igbo* Church would gain greatly if the Ozo title taking is inculturated into the Church. If this is done, the titled holders would be able to live their lives as truly Christians and *Igbos* without regrets.

The Church is very positive about inculturation. The problem with evangelization in *Igbo* society was the inability of the Christian Missionaries to study the *Igbo* culture. In view of this, the early Missionaries in *Igbo* land were quick to condemn the *Igbo* culture and traditions. From the above chart, it can be observed that the majority of the participants in response to the question “What does the Church say about inculturation?” said that the *Igbo* new yam festival encourages inculturation of the Ozo title taking. Nze Cornelius Agwunobi cited the New Yam Festival in *Isu-Njaba* as an example, where the Ozo title holders begin with the Eucharistic celebration. The new class of Ozo titled men have removed pagan practices while celebrating the New Yam Festivals. About 40% of the respondents maintained that the New Yam Festival encourages inculturation of Ozo title taking. Many of the participants believed that the New Yam Festival is given a prominent place in *Igbo* community. During the New Yam celebration, many people come home for the celebration. According to Nze Agwunobi, the New Yam Festival is well celebrated in *Igbo* communities.

Inculturation is important in the Church. In the chart, 30% of the participants think that it helps the church to adapt to tradition and culture. Nze Alphonsus Oforchukwu argued that inculturation helps the Church to adapt to the teaching of Christ. According to Nze Oforchukwu, inculturation is crucial because it makes Christians worship God more faithfully as *Igbos*. H.R.H Eze Robert Ogbenna was more emphatic in his views about inculturation. According to H.R.H Eze Ogbenna, inculturation helps people to worship in their own culture and traditions. It is in view of this that another 20% of the respondents agreed that inculturation helps Christians to live a life of the Church and the *Igbo* culture. Through inculturation, the people’s culture is converted into the

Gospel. The Gospel purifies the culture to accommodate Christians who want to serve God and at the same time want to retain what is good in their culture. In this case, there is no dichotomy between the Gospel and culture.

**Research Question 8: What does the Church say about Ozo titled holders?**



**Pie-Chart 7.8: What does the Church say about Ozo title holders?**

- In *Onitsha* Archdiocese, the Church accepts the title holders as good Christian leaders in the community
- Protestants also accord the Ozo title holders with respect
- In *Orlu* diocese, the Ozo title holders are not allowed to receive the Sacraments
- To live a good life
- To protect the *Igbo* culture

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid In <i>Onitsha</i> Archdiocese, the Church accepts titled holders as good Christian leaders in the community	2	20.0	20.0	20.0
Protestants also accord the Ozo titled holders with respect	2	20.0	20.0	40.0
In <i>Orlu</i> Diocese, the Ozo titled holders are not allowed to receive the sacraments	3	30.0	30.0	70.0
To live a good life	1	10.0	10.0	80.0
To protect the <i>Igbo</i> culture	2	20.0	20.0	100.0
Total	10	100.0	100.0	

**Figure 7.8: What does the Church say about Ozo title holders?**

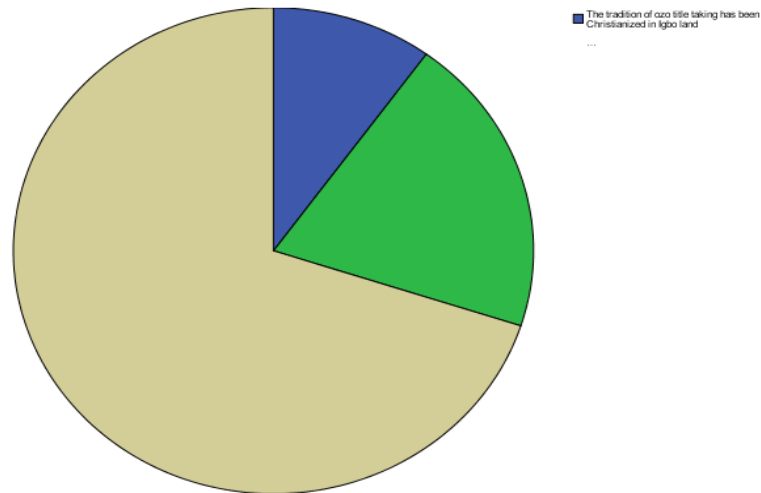
The ten respondents who participated in this study were drawn from different communities and dioceses across *Igbo* society. George Adinuba, who represented Nnewi Diocese, did not envision that the Church would have any problem with the Ozo titled men. For Rev. Fr. Augustine Emeh, who speaks for the Church in the *Enugu* Diocese, the Church has no problem with the Ozo titled members. He believed that the titled holders have helped to develop the Church in *Igbo* land. The Majority of the Ozo titled men are decent, cultured and enlightened people who have devoted their lives for

the development of Church and culture in *Igbo* land. In Archdiocese of *Onitsha*, Nze Corlenius Agwunobi believed that the titled holders are well received. This is why in the chart, 20% of the participants agreed that in *Onitsha* Archdiocese, the Church accepts titled men as good Christian leaders in their communities. Furthermore, 20% of the participants observed that the Protestant members also accord the Ozo titled holders with respect. Additionally, 10% of the respondents noted that the titled men live good Christian lives. The chart also indicated that 20% of the Ozo titled men help to protect the *Igbo* culture.

In *Igbo* society, it is only in the Diocese of *Orlu* that the Church has problems with the Ozo titled men. It is only in the *Orlu* Diocese that the Church has ostracized the Ozo title holders from the Church. It is in view of this that 30% of the respondents maintained that the Church has not allowed the title holders to receive the Sacraments in the Diocese of *Orlu*. However, both Rev. Frs. Benson Okpara and Leonard Onwumere, who hail from the Diocese of *Orlu*, believed that there is nothing wrong with Ozo title taking. According to them, the Church in the *Orlu* Diocese should not have taken the steps she took to ban and condemn the title holders in the area. It is the duty of the Church to fashion out the *modus operandi* for Ozo title taking in the Diocese.

**Research Question 9: What Pastoral Problems do Igbo Christians face with regard with to Ozo title taking?**

What pastoral problems do Igbo Christians face with regard to Ozo title taking



**Pie-Chart 7.9: What Pastoral Problems do Igbo Christians face with regard with to Ozo title taking?**

- The tradition of Ozo title taking has been Christianized in Igbo land
- The ceremony begins with Mass in the Parish before any activity is done
- I do not see any pastoral problem with Ozo title taking in Igbo Church

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid The tradition of Ozo title taking has been Christianized in <i>Igbo</i> land	1	10.0	10.0	10.0
The ceremony begins with Mass in the parish, before any activities are done	2	20.0	20.0	30.0
I do not see any pastoral problems with Ozo title taking in <i>Igbo</i> Church	7	70.0	70.0	100.0
Total	10	100.0	100.0	

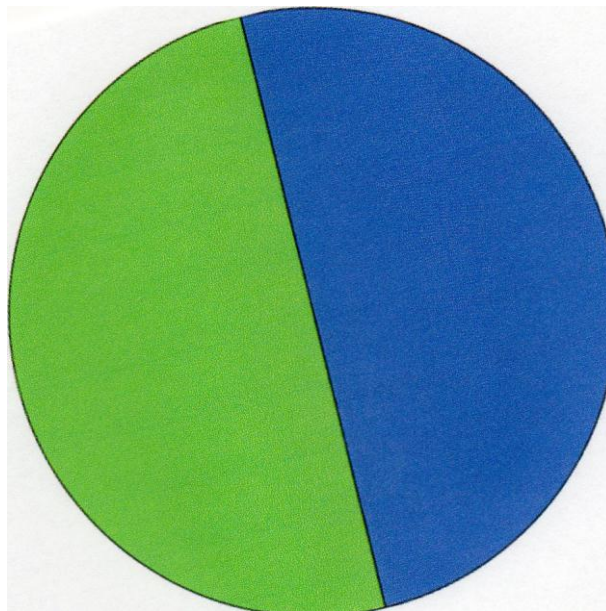
**Figure 7.9: What Pastoral Problems do Igbo Christians face with regard with to Ozo title taking?**

From the views of the respondents, especially with the cordial relationship the Ozo title holders enjoy with the Church in dioceses like *Abakilike, Enugu, Ahiara, Nnewi, Nsukka, Umuahia*, and the Archdioceses of *Onitsha* and *Owerri*, the participants agreed that there are no pastoral problems that exist between the Church and Ozo title taking. From the chart, 70% of the participants stated that they do not see any pastoral problems with Ozo title taking in the *Igbo* Church. *Nze Cornelius Agwunobi* agreed that the tradition of Ozo title taking has been Christianized in *Igbo* land. According to *Nze Agwunobi*, the ceremony begins with the celebration of the Eucharist in the Parish, before any other activities are done. From the chart, 20% agreed that before any activities begin during the New Yam Festival; the Ozo titled men begin with the

celebration of the Mass. Also, from the chart, another 10% agreed that Ozo title taking has been Christianized in the dioceses where Ozo title taking is accepted.

However, during the interview sessions, the majority of the respondents pointed to the Diocese of *Orlu*, where the Church hierarchy has not fully embraced the Ozo titled men, a place where there are potential pastoral problems. H.R.H Eze Robert Ogbenna observed that the perceived pastoral problems in the Orlu diocese were as a result of the condemnation of Ozo title taking as paganism. According to H.R.H Eze Ogbenna, the Ozo title holders in the *Orlu* Diocese were denied from receiving the Sacraments. They could not receive the Holy Communion which they hold very valuable. Also, they are denied from receiving sick call as well as a decent Christian burial by any Catholic Priest.

***Research Question 10: Does the Ozo title taking conflict with Christian Practices?***



***Pie-Chart 7.10: Does the Ozo title taking conflict with Christian Practices?***

- No, it does not conflict with Christian practices
- Yes, it conflicts with Christian practices

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid No. It does not conflict with Christian practices	50	50.0	100.0	100.0
Yes. It conflicts with Christian practices.	50			
Total		50	100	100

**Figure 7.10: Does the Ozo title taking conflict with Christian Practices?**

Again, based on the idea and perception of how the Ozo titled men enjoy a good relationship with the Church in dioceses that have accepted the Ozo titled men, from the charts, it can be seen that Ozo title taking does not have any problem with Christian practices. From the charts, 50% of the respondents all agreed that Ozo title taking does not conflict with Christian practices. Equally, based on the fact that in the Diocese of *Orlu*, where the Ozo title holders are discriminated against, another 50% of the participants believed that the Ozo title taking conflicts with Christian practices.

However, the researcher would like to present the views that were raised and expressed during the interview sessions. The respondents agreed that the early missionaries that evangelized the Africans tagged African cultures as animism. The inability of these Christian Missionaries to appreciate or study the African cultures made the situation worse. For them, anything African is regarded as bad or evil. The challenge these missionaries faced was to decide whether to baptize the Africans or not, because it was debated if the Africans really had souls. The debate to baptize or not to baptize an African informs us how they regarded the African cultures. Since then, the African cultures have been seen as conflicting with the Christian values. It is even more

unfortunate when our own men and women missionaries also regard the African cultures as something not refined. The participants noted that we must understand that there is no culture that is a hundred percent perfect in the society. According to Fr. Leo Ekeanyinwu, all cultures in one time or the other, trans-marry and in the process, a transformation is made. Pope Paul VI devoted his Encyclical Letter to Africa. In *Africae Terrarum*, Paul VI (1967) made frantic efforts to correct the misrepresentation of the African cultures as animism. However, the participants in the study also argued that the African cultures are not a hundred percent error-free. They strongly believed that the areas of cultural conflicts with the Christian Gospel could be transformed, as every culture needs to undergo transformation from time to time. Nze Alphonsus Oforchukwu argued that the *Igbo* culture is good, but maintained that there are some cultural values that would need more purification. According to Nze Oforchukwu:

Ozo title is a mere title taking. There is nothing wrong with title taking among our people. However, the practice could be faulty, but that does not make the title evil. Ozo title is like the Christian Knighthood. Knighthood is good, but it does not rule out that all the members are doing all the good things required by members.

Similarly, George Adinuba invoked the same feelings and sentiments of Nze Oforchukwu. He believed that Ozo title is good and efforts should be made to encourage it. He said:

Ozo title taking is a culture, not fetish in *Igbo* land. It has some norms that guide it. It is conferred on people in public. It is not a hidden practice and therefore, should not conflict with Church.

Rev. Fr. Benson Okpara also argued that Ozo title taking like any other cultural values in *Igbo* land could conflict with Catholic practices. According to him, this was the way our forefathers knew it. Speaking to areas of conflict, Fr. Okpara said:

Like any other practices, Ozo title could not be in consonant with the Christian practices. For example, in *Igbo* land, there are certain classes of people that are not allowed to take the Ozo title. The *Osụ* or *Ume* people are not conferred an Ozo title. These set of people are

seriously being discriminated from taking the Ozo title.

Nze Oforchukwu maintained that Ozo title should be encouraged among our people because of the positive values of title taking across *Igbo* land. He believed that Ozo title taking undergoes changes from generation to generation. He argued that the way Ozo title is taken today differs dramatically from the way he saw his grandfathers took it in their own time. He believed that with time, all the Christian conflicts would be removed in the year 2050. According to him:

Ozo title taking today has been refined because it is quite different from the way our fore-fathers used to do it. Our fore-fathers were pagans but we are Christians. I assure you that before the year 2050, all the Christian conflicts would be removed. We are only asking our Church leadership to be patient with us. We are Christians and we are ready to promote Christian values.

George Adinuba strongly observed that Ozo title taking in *Igbo* land should not conflict with Catholic practices because it is a mere social organization where Ozo is conferred on merit. According to Adinuba:

Ozo title is not supposed to conflict with Church practices in *Igbo* Land. It is a mere organization that functions hand in hand with the Church if done well.

Equally, Father Leonard Onwumere strongly affirmed that Ozo title taking is not supposed to conflict with Christian practices. He attributed the problem to the failure of our earliest missionaries to learn our language and culture. He stated:

Ozo title taking is not supposed to conflict with the Christian practices if Christianity has inculturated with the culture of the *Igbo* people. But Christianity came to colonize the people. Moreover, those who brought Christianity to us did not learn our language and culture. All the cultural values we have should be able to fit into Christianity.

Nze Oforchukwu also argued that an Ozo man believes in God, morality, and immortality. A titled man is guided by the Ozo code of conduct because a man is judged at the end of his life. According to him:

An Ozo man is both body and soul. He believes in life and death. At the end of one's life, he is judged according to his deeds. We believe that God is just and would not look at any persons in his judgment.

Nze Agwunobi was emphatic in arguing that the Ozo title was not sinful. He indicated that in other dioceses in *Igbo* land, the Ozo title was allowed. He ascertained that what was needed is to purify it where required. According to him:

I still maintain that Ozo title is not bad because it is allowed in other parishes and dioceses outside *Orlu*. The only thing that we need to do is to purify Ozo where it is perceived to be contrary to the Gospel values of Jesus Christ.

Mr. George Adinuba argued that if Ozo title taking were evil, Monsignor Adigwe would not have taken it in the *Ihiala* Parish. However, the *Ihiala* people were happy with him as the first priest of the *Ihiala* Parish. According to George Adinuba:

Monsignor Adigwe took Ozo title in *Ihiala*. He is called *Ife* (light) which means light? He is the first priest in *Ihiala* who opened the way to other priests. It is clear that Ozo title taking is not evil otherwise Monsignor Adigwe would not have taken it.

Similarly, Father Leo Ekeanyanwu believed that Ozo title taking is not supposed to conflict with the Christian practices. He compared Ozo title taking with Knighthood in the church. According to Father Leo Ekeanyanwu:

Ozo title taking is not paganism. It is like Knights in the Church. It is only those who do not know what the Ozo title taking is all about that oppose it.

However, Father Leo Ekeanyanwu believes that our people need to be educated on the true meaning of Ozo title taking in *Igbo* land. He strongly maintained that education could go a long way to change the attitudes, perceptions, and feelings of our people towards Ozo title taking.

Equally, Father Augustine Emeh argued that Ozo title taking should not conflict with Christian values by what it stands for. He maintained that what makes the practice fetish is the ways in which the members celebrate it. He argued:

What Ozo stands for does not conflict with Christian practice. But the ways Ozo title taking is celebrated make the practice conflict

with the Christian faith. The rite is modeled in traditional way.

Father Augustine Emeh, however, frowned at some of the ceremonies that are still performed in his own community, *Abor* in *Udi* Local government Area of *Enugu* State. He argued that when an *Ozo* title member dies, he is buried with some people who would be serving him in the other world. He condemned this type of practice by the *Ozo* members in *Enugu* Diocese. According to Father Emeh:

There are still some of the rites of *Ozo* title taking that conflict with Christian practices in *Abor* community of *Udi* in *Enugu* Diocese. When *Ozo* title men die, they are buried with some slaves. They go to distant areas to get children who would be buried with them. These are practices that are bad.

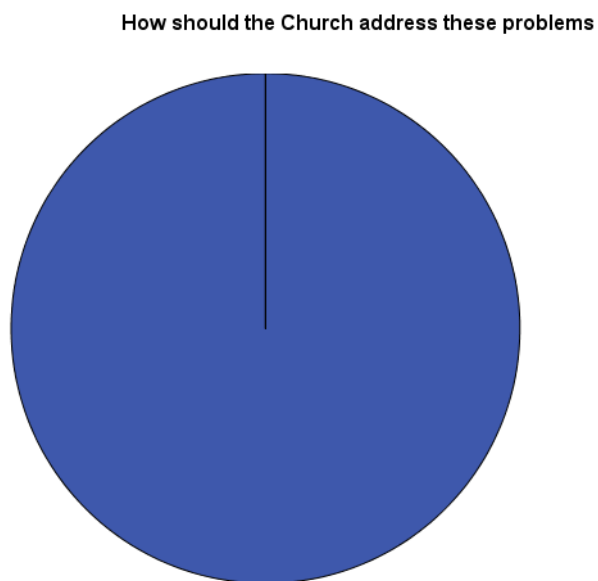
Also, Father Augustine Emeh noted that the burial ceremonies of *Ozo* title men are outstanding and expensive. In *Abor, Udi* of *Enugu* Diocese, the burial ceremony of an *Ozo* title man is very costly. As Father Emeh noted:

The burial ceremonies of *Ozo* title men are very outstanding. Their burial rites are different from an ordinary man. They are given special burial rites. They are buried as kings. Sometimes, it costs a lot of money for the burial of an *Ozo* title man in *Igbo* society.

Father Augustine Emeh also criticized the current emphasis of *Ozo* title taking in *Abor* in the *Udi* of *Enugu* diocese. He noted that the *Ozo* title today lays much emphasis on material things, a situation in which poor people could hardly be able to meet up with the expenses involved. According to Father Emeh:

Now, emphasis of *Ozo* title taking is on material things. Initiation into *Ozo* involves much money, yams, meat, wine, and other things. A poor man cannot take this type of title. It is very expensive. The titled members want material things. They go home with many yams, meat and, other material things.

**Research Question 11: How should the Church address these Problems?**



**Pie-Chart 7.11: How should the Church address these Problems?**

- The Church should address these problems through inculturation

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	The Church should address these problems through inculturation.	10	100.0	100.0	100.0

**Figure 7.11: How should the Church address these Problems?**

Based on the present relationship between the Church and Ozo title taking in *Igbo* communities, all the respondents believed that the Church should address or resolve these conflicts through authentic inculturation. Based on the premise that the Church hierarchies in the dioceses across *Igbo* land, (of course, with the exception of *Orlu* Diocese), has fully accepted the Ozo titled men, the values of the Ozo title, and the roles the title holders play in the society, the participants agreed that Ozo title taking should be encouraged. Based on this principle, the charts noted that 100% of the respondents all agreed that these problems could be addressed through inculturation.

However, the researcher would like to present the feelings and perceptions of some of the participants on what should be done across *Igbo* communities to improve the image of Ozo title taking within the Catholic Church. The respondents noted that the action and directives of Pope Gregory the Great in the 7<sup>th</sup> century is worth mentioning in our effort to discuss what should be done to address the problems of the Ozo title taking in the *Igbo* Church. The Great Pontiff cautioned Mellitus and Augustine of Canterbury as missionaries of the English people to retain the temples of the gods. In a letter personally addressed to Mellitus, the Pope asked Augustine not to destroy the temples of the gods, but rather the idols within those temples. According to Gregory the Great, the temples were to be purified with holy water, and have altars and relics of saints placed in them. The preservation and purification of these temples would allow the English people to worship God more faithfully. Why? It is because they were allowed to retain their places of worship.

The Sacred Congregation de *Propaganda Fide* (1659) similarly issued instructions to Vicars Apostolic of foreign missions. They were asked not to persuade these people to change their rites, habits, and customs unless they are openly opposed to morals and religions. The Sacred Congregation had a deep respect for the traditions of the people in the missions.

The directives of the Second Vatican Council also support how the problems of Ozo title-taking in *Igbo* land should be addressed. The participants were interested in reconciling the Ozo title-taking with the Christian values. The Diocese of *Orlu* for instance, has banned the title-holders from the reception of the Sacraments. The

present situation of title-taking in the diocese is not encouraging the title-holders to profess their faith openly in the Churches across the Diocese of *Orlu*. All the participants in the study agreed that something should be done urgently to reverse the present ban of the title-holders in the diocese. Also, they argued that the problem with the *Igbo* leadership was that theory and practice had never tallied with the directives of the Church. *Nze Oforchukwu* argued that renouncing the *Nze na Ozo* title does not solve the problem because renouncing the *Ozo* title does not mean renouncing evil.

According to *Nze Oforchukwu*:

We must be interested in what and how to refine the practice of *Ozo* title-taking in the Diocese of *Orlu*. If the practice is faulty, it means that we have to look for ways to purify the system to allow the members to worship God as *Igbos*. The idea of asking the *Ozo* members to renounce their titles would not solve the problems involved because when they renounce *Ozo*, have they also renounced evil?

Rev. Fr. Benson Okpara also argued that the problems of *Ozo* title taking could be addressed where it has gone contrary to the Christian practices. He believed that the *Ozo* title could not be destroyed. There was a need to preserve the *Ozo* title taking in *Igbo* land. According to him:

In my opinion, the problems of *Ozo* title taking could be addressed, not remove it. Culture is dynamic and therefore, culture could change. We have to change the way our people understand the *Ozo* title taking in our culture. We have to change the understanding which will help our people. We should not destroy the *Ozo* title taking. I believe that if we throw it away, others would take it. It is not evil.

H.R.H *Eze Robert Ogbenna* gave some of the ways the problems of *Ozo* title taking could be addressed across the diocese of *Orlu* to allow the members to participate actively in the building of their home parishes. He maintained that *Ozo* title taking, like any other African culture, could be changed to give it a human face. According to H.R.H *Eze Ogbenna*:

We should be talking of what to do to change the present *Ozo*

title taking in our diocese instead of asking us to renounce the tradition of our fathers. I suggest that we should use dialogue to look into the practice. The diocese should come out with guidelines on what to do and on what to avoid. It is only in this way that we should be able to address the problems of the Ozo title-taking in the diocese of *Orlu*.

Rev. Fr. Benson Okpara also gave some of the ways to help the *Igbo* Church better understand the role of Ozo title taking in our society. He strongly believed that education would help the Church to distinguish the right thing from what is wrong in Ozo title taking. He argued:

We should know better with our education. We should not allow ozo to define us, rather, we have to define ozo. We should be careful not to play God. We are not God. We should not tempt God.

Equally, Mr. George Adinuba made some frantic suggestions as part of the ways to address the problems of Ozo title taking in *Igbo* communities. He argued that there would be the need for both the church leadership and Ozo members to sit down to discern on how to address these problems. He stated:

There is need for both the Church leadership and Ozo members to sit down together to talk about Ozo title taking. This will enable them to find what they have in common as well as areas that need addressing. This will be the first step towards addressing the problems of the Ozo title taking in *Igbo* areas.

*Nze Oforchukwu* noted that religion would be assimilated if presented and preached in the people's language and culture. He argued that this would give meaning to the people who are receiving the message of Christ. According to *Nze Oforchukwu*:

The challenge for the church today is to present the Gospel of Christ in our own culture. Part of the challenge is to address where required the problems of the Ozo title-taking to suit us as Christians. This will help us to be proud that we worship God not only as Christians but also as *Igbos*.

Mr. George Adinuba also argued the need to present the Gospel message of Jesus Christ in the people's culture. This would be more meaningful to our people. He believed that culture is dynamic and appealed to the church leadership to learn from the implementation of the Vatican Council II that allowed the use of the vernacular in the Church. He stated:

Mass was once celebrated backing the people. Mass was celebrated in Latin language. The Vatican Council II has changed this. This is part of inculturation. The *Igbo* church could also learn from this and allow the inculturation of Ozo title taking into the Christian practices. In this way, the problems the Church have with Ozo title would be addressed.

Father Leonard Onwumere also argued that the Church has an obligation to address the problems that the Church has with the Ozo title taking where required. He noted that the *Igbo* Bishops must make efforts to help our people to worship God in their own culture. He believed that the best way to achieve this is to have a Seminary primarily designed for this purpose. He noted:

We must start doing things that should enable our people to worship God in their own culture. The bishops must make efforts to help our people to see Christ in their own culture. We must use one Seminary to fashion our own way of worshipping God. We are not being natural. It is time the *Igbo* bishops help our people.

H.R.H *Eze* Robert Ogbenna argued that the Church owes its members the task of preaching the Gospel of Christ to the people. He maintained that Christ came to seek and change the conditions of those who are sick. He believed that the purpose of the Church is to change the members from bad to good. According to H.R.R. *Eze* Ogbenna:

We are not saying that we are perfect. It is only God who is good and perfect. We, the members of Ozo title-holders come to church to seek the mercy and forgiveness of God. If we are stopped from coming to church, how can we change

from doing evil? We want to save our souls, and we can save them in the church.

For H.R.H Eze Robert Ogbenna, the challenge for the *Igbo* church is to find a means of reconciling the Ozo title taking with the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The reconciliation of the Ozo title with the Gospel would enable the members of the Ozo to feel at home with the Christian values. According to him:

We are really at a cross road. The *Orlu* Diocese has to find a solution to the problem just like other dioceses in *Igbo* land have done. Does it mean that our Church is different from other Dioceses in *Igbo* land that have the same customs, traditions, and faith? We appeal to them to allow us to worship God in our own culture with our brothers and sisters across the country. They could look at other dioceses on what they did to address the problems of the Ozo title taking and Christian Gospel.

Also, Rev. Fr. Benson Okpara appealed to the Church leadership to see reason regarding the need to address the problems of the Ozo title taking with the church practices. According to Fr. Okpara, the Church leaders should lead the faithful on which way to go. Fr. Okpara argued:

We need leaders both in *Igbo* land and in the Church. We have to take the lead. We should tell the people what to do. We should ask ourselves how to lead and redirect our people. We should not use our leadership position to victimize the people.

Also, Father Fabian Nwokorie argued that Ozo title taking in *Igbo* land could not be bad per se. He cautioned against over-generalization. It is a mistake to presume that all Ozo title holders are bad. Father Nwokorie argued that the way the title is taken could be purified if found wanting. He likened Ozo title taking to the ceremony of “*Iwa Akwa*” in the *Avutu Obowo* community of *Imo* State. He contended that his people see *Iwa akwa* as paganism. However, he took part in *Iwa akwa* when he was of age. As Father Fabian Nwokorie stated:

*Iwa akwa* is a ceremony to show that one is now an adult according to our culture in *Avutu, Obowo*. When my age grade

performed the ceremony of *Iwa akwa*, I also took part in it. I primarily took part to show that *Iwa akwa* is not sinful.

Father Fabian Nwokorie said that his taking part in the *Iwa akwa* ceremony in *Avutu, Obowo* has changed the perception of people. His people appreciated it because it helped to show that the *Iwa akwa* ceremony is good and should be encouraged. He said that he invited both Seminarians and nuns who graced the occasion. He also stated that the celebration began with Mass. According to Father Nwokorie:

During the time of my *Iwa akwa* in *Avutu, Obowo*, I invited priests, Seminarians and sisters. We celebrated the Eucharist in our compound. Everybody ate, drank, and made merriment after the Mass.

Father Fabian Nwokorie said that he really wanted to identify with his people as well as showing that *Iwa akwa* is a cultural value that should be promoted. He said that this was part of the ways to address the problem of *Iwa akwa* in the *Avutu, Obowo* community. It does not mean that some of his age grades might not have done it in ways that portray *Iwa akwa* as paganism. He fully participated in the ceremony. He even led his village age grade in procession. According to Father Fabian Nwokorie:

In the evening when it was time to go to the market, I led the procession, which was joined by other youths from other villages. I did not offer anything to the gods or idols. This was part of the ways to tell our people that *Iwa akwa* is not sinful. It is also part of the ways to address the problems of *Iwa akwa* and reconcile it with Christian practices.

Similarly, Father Fabian Nwokorie argued that if he could participate in *Iwa akwa* in *Avutu, Obowo* community as a Catholic priest, without profaning the Christian practices, the problems of Ozo title taking could also be addressed without offending anybody in the Christian folds. Ozo title taking in *Igbo* land is good and should be encouraged. According to Father Fabian Nwokorie:

Ozo title taking is not bad per se. If Ozo is something that is bad, it could be purified. It should not be removed. Culture is good, but there are certain things which some people do that make it bad. We must be ready to address these problems. We must not renounce

the Ozo title taking in *Igbo* land.

Father Leo Ekeanyanwu very much believes that priests have roles to play in redirecting our people to the way Ozo title taking should be celebrated among our people. He maintained that it is through the active participation of priests that would help to address the problems of the Ozo title taking in *Igbo* land. According to Father Ekeanyanwu:

Priests are supposed to take active part during Ozo title taking in *Igbo* land. The priests should be able to tell our people what is good and bad. You cannot stop Ozo title taking through intimidation. It is by actively taking part in the ceremony that our priests would be able to address these problems identified in Ozo title taking in *Igbo* land.

Father Emeh noted that we need the spirit of Ozo title holders across *Igbo* land. The people trust and value the judgments of the Ozo title holders in *Igbo* communities. According to Father Emeh:

We need the spirit of Ozo title men. They are good. We need them in the community because people trust their judgments. They make sure that people are given their right. They settle disputes in the community.

Father Augustine Emeh therefore called on the Church leadership to address the problems of the of Ozo title taking in the *Igbo* communities. Father Emeh stated:

The ideal of Ozo title taking is good. People in the community need them for their moral dimensions. The ritual part of Ozo title taking could be modified.

These views of the participants tallied with the recommendations of Church *Magisterium*, Vatican II, Synod of Bishops, and *Instrumentum Laboris* on inculturation for the *Igbo* Church. The *Instrumentum Laboris* (1993) noted that inculturation facilitates the integration of cultural values, like Ozo title taking, into the Gospel. In pastoral terms, inculturation would help to resolve the problem that the Catholic Diocese of *Orlu* has with Ozo title taking. Without inculturation, the faith of the Ozo title members would remain fragile, and superficial, lacking depth and personal commitment (*Instrumentum Laboris*, 1993). The *Instrumentum Laboris* (1993) also said that

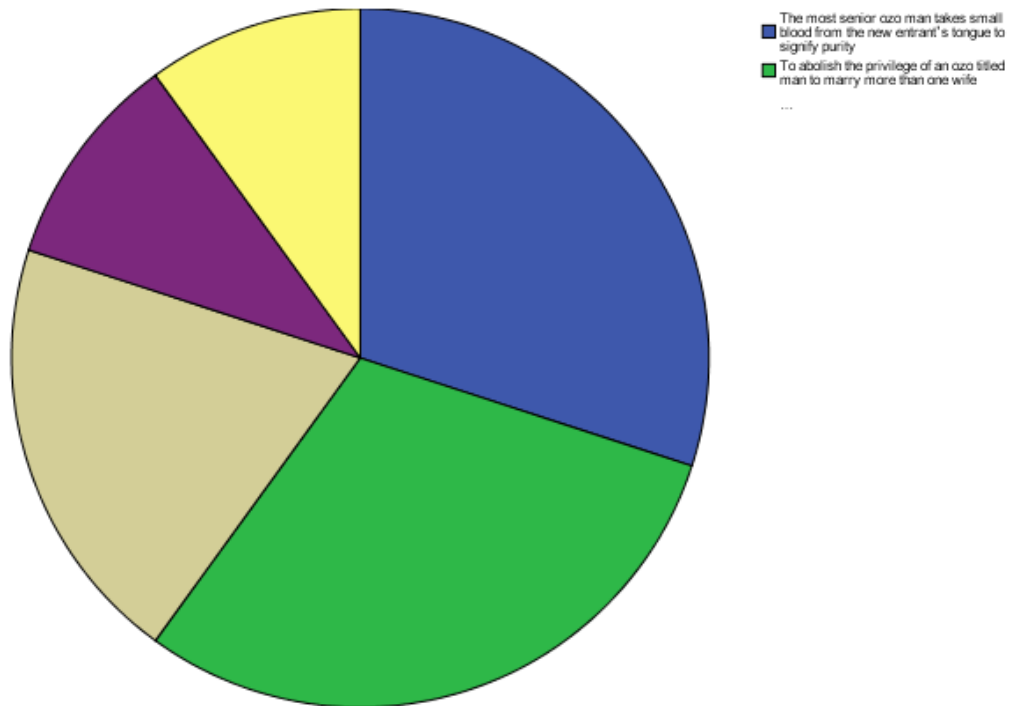
inculturation additionally would relativise the problem of the sects, enabling the (*Igbo*) Christians to express their faith in their own tongues, and in attitudes and gestures natural to them, in catechesis, liturgy, and pastoral work as well as in theological reflection.

John Paul II also emphasized the importance of inculturation in the *Igbo* Church. *Igbo* society is endowed with a wealth of cultural values (*Ecclesia* in Africa, 1995). The cultural values of *Ozo* title taking would enrich the Catholic Church in *Igbo* communities. A serious concern for a true and balanced inculturation is necessary in the Diocese of *Orlu* in order to avoid cultural confusion and alienation among the people (*Ecclesia* in Africa, 1995). The task of evangelizing the *Igbo Ozo* members constitutes the essential mission of the Church. This is what John XXIII had in mind when he opened the windows of Vatican to let in fresh air into the *Igbo* Church.

These observations represent the feelings and views of the respondents in the study on how to address the problems of *Ozo* title taking in *Igbo* communities with the Church practices. The participants expressed what they thought about *Ozo* title taking in *Igbo* land. These views which tallied with the Church Documents would help the Church leadership in *Orlu* Diocese to address the problems, and allow an *Ozo* title holder to worship God faithfully within the context of his culture. This would help to make him remain faithful to the commandments of God as he continues to take titles that would allow him to be a true *Igbo* man. Jesus Christ came to fulfil the law, and not to destroy it. He had a culture which he had profound respect for. He used images that were familiar with his people. He used images of light of the world and salt of the earth to preach. He did not come to call the righteous, but sinners (Matthew 9:13). Jesus came to give his life as a ransom for many, including the *Ozo* title members (Mark 10:45).

**Research Question 12: What would be the Guidelines for Ozo title taking among the Igbo Christians?**

**What would be the guidelines for Ozo title taking among the Igbo Christians**



**Pie-Chart 7.12: What would be the Guidelines for Ozo title taking among the Igbo Christians?**

- The most senior Ozo man takes small blood from the new entrants tongue to signify purity
- To abolish the privilege of an Ozo titled man to marry more than one wife
- A fallen Christian could be discouraged from taking the Ozo title taking
- By appointing a committee
- To allow the poor people to take the title

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid The most senior Ozo man takes small blood from the new entrant's tongue to signify purity	3	30.0	30.0	30.0
To abolish the privilege of an Ozo titled man to marry more than one wife	3	30.0	30.0	60.0
A fallen Christian could be discouraged from taking the Ozo title taking	2	20.0	20.0	80.0
By appointing a committee	1	10.0	10.0	90.0
To allow poor people to take the title	1	10.0	10.0	100.0
Total	10	100.0	100.0	

**Figure 7.12: What would be the Guidelines for Ozo title taking among the Igbo Christians?**

The respondents all agreed that to have guidelines to guide the Ozo title taking among the *Igbo* Christians would be a welcome idea. A guideline is an agreed guidance written down to set a standard or to determine a course of action in Ozo title taking among the *Igbo* Christians. The participants argued that if the Church could come up with blueprints to direct how the Ozo title would be taken, it would be very helpful. The

guidelines would stipulate what should be done, and what should be avoided while taking the title as Christians.

According to *Igbo* tradition, an *Igbo* man must be pure. He must not defraud anybody in the community. He must speak the truth at all time. In view of this, 30% of the respondents agreed that the most senior Ozo man in the community should take a small amount of blood from the new entrant's tongue to signify "purity". The blood is a sign that he must represent his community well, by not taking any bribe, or deny anybody justice. An Ozo man is usually given the *Ofo*, which is a symbol of justice and truth.

There are other issues agreed upon by the respondents that should be included in the guidelines. One of the privileges of an Ozo title holder is to marry as many wives as he could. This privilege is against the teaching of Christianity. From the charts, 30% of the respondents are in agreement that this privilege should be abolished. Also, another 20% think that lapsed Christians could be discouraged from taking the Ozo title in *Igbo* Christian communities. Equally, just 10% believed that a committee should be set up to oversee the Ozo title taking in *Igbo* society. The duty of this committee would be to stipulate what should be allowed and discouraged in the guidelines.

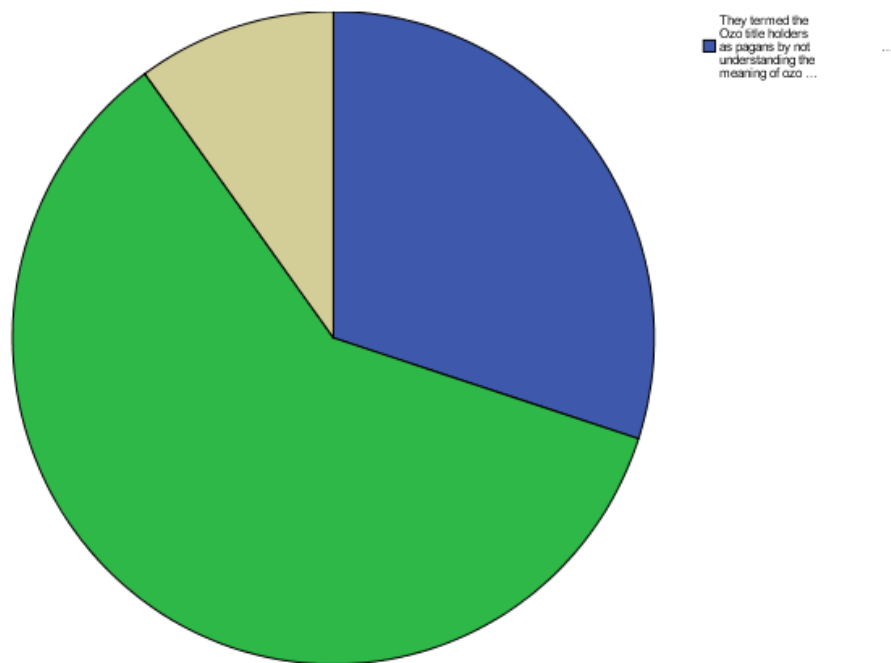
The Ozo title is usually very expensive to take in *Igbo* communities. This has made it extremely difficult for a poor man to undertake this project. In his novel known as, *Things Fall Apart*, Chinua Achebe (1994:7-8) depicted Unoka as a poor man who had taken no title. According to the participants, this trend is still prevalent in today's society in *Igbo* land. It is not therefore surprising that 10% of the respondents think that the guideline should allow poor people to take the Ozo title. The participants think that by cutting down the cost of taking the title, a poor man would be in the position to take the title. Equally, Fr. Fabian Nwokorie thinks that by stipulating how much each Ozo candidate should pay would encourage many poor people to take the title.

H.R.H Eze Robert Ogbenna thinks that this guideline should be uniform throughout *Igbo* communities where Ozo title is taken. To have a homogenous guideline in *Igbo* Catholic communities would help to remove any rivalry from neighbouring communities.

Kenneth Ezekwem thinks that a seminar should be organized both in the diocesan and parish levels throughout *Igbo* communities. The seminars would be used to explain what Ozo is, the purpose of Ozo, and other related topics that hinge on Ozo title taking in *Igbo* communities. George Adinuba believes that priests should play important roles, and therefore, should be invited during Ozo title initiation ceremony. Their presence would help to avoid any synchronism. Fr. Leonard Onwumere is in agreement with this view. He noted that the Ozo title must be taken before a Catholic priest.

**Research Question 13: What are the Missionary teachings that down-grade Ozo title holding in the Church?**

What are the missionary teachings that down-grade Ozo title holding in the Church



**Pie-Chart 7.13: What are the Missionary teachings that down-grade Ozo title holding in the Church?**

- They termed the Ozo title holders as pagans by not understanding the meaning of Ozo title taking
- In *Orlu* diocese, a Synod was used to condemn Ozo title taking

- The Ozo title holders settle disputes with *Ofo* symbols. This has made the Missionaries think that the titled men are pagans.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid They termed the Ozo title holders as pagans by not understanding the meaning of Ozo title taking	3	30.0	30.0	30.0
In <i>Orlu</i> Diocese, a Synod was used to condemn Ozo title taking.	6	60.0	60.0	90.0
The Ozo titled holders settled disputes with <i>Ofo</i> symbols. This has made the missionaries think that the titled men are pagans	1	10.0	10.0	100.0
Total	10	100.0	100.0	

**Figure 7.13: What are the Missionary teachings that down-grade Ozo title holding in the Church?**

Prior to the advent of Christianity, the *Igbo* people worshipped and made sacrifices to the gods, ancestors, and idols. Unfortunately, when the Christian Missionaries came to *Igbo* land to convert our people, they did not fully understand the customs and traditions of the *Igbo* people. Also, the early missionaries did not take time to study the *Igbo* customs. This inability to study and understand the *Igbo* culture made the early missionaries think that the *Igbo* people were pagans. From the above chart, it can be ascertained that 30% think that the Christian Missionaries regarded the Ozo title taking as paganism, because of their inability to understand the Ozo title in *Igbo* land.

In the *Orlu* Diocese, where the Ozo title taking has not been accepted, a Synod was called in 1999, where Ozo titled holders were condemned. From the chart, 60% of the participants agreed that the *Orlu* Diocese used a Synod to ban the Ozo title holders. According to the participants, this has made it difficult for the Ozo titled Christians in the area, because they are now regarded as lapsed Christians.

In *Igbo* traditional religion, the use of the *Ofo* is important in any deliberations. The *Ofo* serves different purposes. For example, the *Ofo* is used for sacrifices, prayers, in settling disputes, and swearing ceremony in *Igbo* communities. The *Ofo* is used to seal any decision reached by the council of *Ezes* and title holders in the community. Unfortunately, when the Christian Missionaries came to *Igbo* land, they did not understand the symbol of *Ofo*, and quickly came to the conclusion that the title holders were pagans, simply because they used *Ofo* to settle disputes. From the chart, 10% confirm that the title holders were regarded as pagans for using the *Ofo* to settle disputes in *Igbo* communities.

Equally, the participants observed that the Christian missionaries use the homily or sermons to down-grade the Ozo title holders in the *Igbo* Catholic communities. During the interview periods, the participants believed that some priests speak against Ozo title holders during the homily. They used the homily to down-grade the Ozo members, by saying that Ozo title taking is a pagan practice.

Similarly, the respondents observed that in most cases, pastoral letters have been used to down-grade the *Ozo* institution in *Igbo* land. This situation has not helped the image of the title holders. Some parishioners think that the *Ozo* title holders are not good practising Christians. According to the participants, this impression has very negative impacts on the image of the *Ozo* title holders in *Igbo* Catholic communities.

### **7.3 SUMMARY**

Chapter 4 analyzed the oral interviews of the dissertation. The researcher interpreted the interviews that were conducted. The representation of the interviews was based on the views, opinions, and arguments expressed by each of the respondents. The interview questions were thirteen, and each of these questions, was carefully analyzed to reflect the views expressed in the interviews. The interviews supported the findings of the literature review of the study. The participants expressed areas of concern as well as offering pragmatic suggestions that would address the problems identified in *Ozo* title taking in *Igbo* communities.

Emphasis was made on the need to use inculturation to resolve the *Ozo* title problem created in the Diocese of *Orlu*. Inculturation has the ability to reconcile the areas in which Christianity in the diocese of *Orlu* differs from the *Ozo* title taking in *Igbo* communities. Also, the participants noted the role of dialogue as a means to reconcile the *Igbo* traditional religion with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The research findings indicated that the *Igbo* nation have leaders. There is no central authority figure in *Igbo* society, but this does not mean that the *Igbo* people have no leaders. Leadership in *Igbo* communities does not recognize one figure as their leader. Leadership is shared among the *Igbo* sons, where people are allowed to express their views, opinions, and arguments before any decisions are taken that would affect the lives of the people.

## **CHAPTER 8:**

### **SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION**

This chapter presents an appraisal of the study, a study that focused on the *Igbo* Ozo title taking and its relevance to current leadership in *Igbo* Catholic Church. The study examined the theological assessment of Ozo title taking and its implications for current leadership issues in *Igbo* Catholic Church. It included an empirical study. The researcher employed intensive interviews and focus group discussions to garner data used for the study. This data was generated from interviewing the clergy, the Ozo title holders, and non-titled men from the different States and Dioceses in *Igbo* communities.

The study presented a new “Vision” of Ozo title taking and leadership among the *Igbo* Catholic Church. This “guiding vision” would help to confer Ozo title on the *Igbo* people in the spirit of Catholic practices. This vision would also guide the future of the Church to conferring the Ozo title on its members who participate in the social activity of the *Igbo* people. The theology of this vision is not new, but what is new in the vision is its articulation. The purpose is to have an inculturated Ozo title taking in *Igbo* communities that is transformational and Christ-like. This was discussed in light of Vatican II, which is the vision set forth in *Lumen Gentium*, the Bible, and other Church related documents.

The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy emphasized the right and duty of the baptized laity. The right of the laity is given to him/her by virtue of his/her baptism, which no one has the right to deny to any of the people of God. According to *Sacrosanctum Concilium*:

Mother Church earnestly desires that all the faithful should be led to that fully conscious and active participation in liturgical celebrations which is demanded by the very nature of the liturgy. Such participation by the Christian people as a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a redeemed people is their right and duty by reason of their baptism (SC 48).

The Vatican Council II challenged all baptized members of the Church to embrace the mission of Christ who has come to reconcile the world to the Father. Every baptized Christian has the right to the sacraments. Also, active participation of all the

members is important in their efforts to identify with God. This is why it is important to re-assess, re-evaluate, re-examine, refine, purify, reinvent, and inculturate the Ozo title, where required, to encourage active participation of the people of God as recognized by Vatican II. The *Igbo* Catholic Church would play a vital role in making this a reality.

However, the researcher understands that not all Ozo title holders might qualify for the reception of the Catholic Sacraments. Membership in *Igbo* Catholic Church does not necessarily qualify an *Nze* to receive the Sacraments. There are rules guiding the Catholic Church, and it would be expected for an Ozo title holder to respect the rules of the Catholic Church in *Igbo* communities. For example, the Holy Communion must be received worthily, regardless of the *status quo* in the Catholic Church. The Holy Sacraments are for members in good standing, and therefore, must be based upon Catholic theology, practices, morality, and ethics.

This study embarked on seeking inputs from the clergy, religious, and laity through in-depth-interviews to identify areas of concerns, challenges, and pastoral planning that would help to set a future direction for the Catholic Church in *Igbo* land. God has endowed us with cultural values that, if well harnessed and coordinated, would enrich our Catholic worship. The issue of Ozo title taking is comprehensive. There were both positive and negative values that were identified during the study. The positive values should be encouraged and incorporated into the *Igbo* Catholic Church. On the other hand, the negative values that were identified in this study could be transformed through the theology of inculturation. The Catholic Church encourages the transformation of traditional values, such as Ozo title taking in *Igbo* Communities. Based on the issues that were identified, some suggestions are made and presented. These suggestions are not just mere theory, but are pragmatic in *Igbo* society.

## 8.1 SUGGESTIONS

### 8.1.1 *The Family and Leadership in Igbo Context*

The findings of this study noted that the family system is an important institution in *Igbo* society. Individualism as seen in the Western culture is absent in the *Igbo* family system (Oforchukwu 2010:111). The *Igbo* people believe that they owe a great deal of responsibility to all with whom they are related (Ogbalu 1973). Each family head, usually, the *Diokpara*, holds the *Ofo* title for the family members (Agbo 1995:94). The *Diokpara* is the leader of *Ezi na Ulo* (the family) in *Igbo* community. *Ezi na Ulo* does not limit itself to the father, mother, and children, but extends to other extended family members. In-laws, uncles, nephews, nieces, and even maids and servants are included in the *Igbo Ezi na Ulo* phenomenon. The *Diokpara* owes a great deal of responsibility to all family members. The family *Ofo* binds all the members together. The *Diokpara*, as the leader of the family, uses the *Ofo* to maintain peace, order and harmony among the family members. While praying, he prays for the good of all members. It is his duty to call for order when necessary. If there is any quarrel among the members, he uses his prerogative right to call for settlement.

The *Diokpara*, if he is rich, must ensure that no family member lacks anything. If the *Diokpara* is a lawyer, doctor, or engineer, by virtue of his position in the family, he must lift other members coming after him. A person lifted up in a family owes a moral duty to lift others below him as much as possible (Ogbalu 1973:8). In the *Amugbara* village, the *Diokpara* holds the title of the family. As a title holder, he must be a man who should not lie. In the *Amugbara* village, it is commonly said that an *Nze adighi atu asi*. Also, an *Nze* does not steal, cheat, and must not subvert justice. An *Nze* must be a symbol of peace, love, unity and harmony in the family fold. The *Diokpara* or *Nze* holds a leadership role that unifies the family.

Ephesians 5: 21-33 is crucial for us to understand headship/leadership in the *Igbo* context. In this biblical passage, Saint Paul speaks of leadership in the family fold. Family leadership is important because it mirrors the type of leadership that should exist in Christian communities. Ephesians 5: 21-33 underscores the type of relationship that should guide both leaders and followers in communities. Paul outlined this relationship in the following ways:

1. Wives to husbands (5:22-25)
2. Husbands to wives (5:26-33)
3. Children to parents (6:1-3)
4. Fathers to children (6:4)
5. Servants to masters (6:5-8)
6. Masters to servants (6:9)

Paul was much concerned about headship (leadership). Family members have leadership roles for the growth of the family. This is what it means to be head: source, provider, sustainer, source of unity, and source of growth. However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband (Ephesians 5:33, KJV). This is an ideal type of leadership, which is derived from God. Paul's theology of marriage is the foundation of Christian leadership in *Igbo* communities. The *Igbo* Church is a family of those who believe in Jesus Christ. The *Igbo Diokpara* or *Nze* should be allowed to bring the *Igbo* values into the *Igbo* Catholic Church. These values should enrich the people of God. The *Igbo* people of God would then be encouraged to worship God authentically as *Igbos*, Catholics, and Christians.

### **8.1.2 The *Umunna* (Communitarian) Leadership in *Igbo* Perspective**

This study identified *Umunna* as an important component in the *Igbo* leadership cradle. From the family, responsibility spreads to the *Umunna* (Ogbalu 1973:8). The concept of community was first used by Mbiti (1982). Mbiti's (1982:144) analysis of community reflects the *Igbo* idea of community, "I am because we are, and since we are, therefore I am". The idea of "we" and "us" is entrenched in Africans right from childhood (Kunhiyop 2008:20). In the *Igbo* community, nobody would like to isolate himself/herself from other community members. Life is better lived within the *Igbo* community.

The *Umunna* (Community) can be seen as the most important pillar in *Igbo* society (Ilogu 1974). The *Umunna* is a form of patrilineage maintained by the *Igbo*. The *Igbo* has a leadership structure which is derived from a practice of democratic representation. Laws start with the *Umunna*. The *Umunna* is composed of elders,

*Diokpara*, *Ndi Ichie*, titled men and other family members. *Igbo* communities were governed by a council of elders and *Ozo* title holders (Gordon 2003).

The *Diokpara* becomes the leader of the family and therefore, presides over its meetings. In most cases, he holds the highest title in the community, and therefore, becomes the spokesperson. In *Amugbara* village, the *Nze*, and invariably, the *Diokpara*, with other *Umunna*, determine the bride price when any of its daughters is getting married. The head or leader of the *Umunna* must be notified when any decision is being made in the community. What the community says or believes is binding on the individual (Kunhiyop 2008:22).

The concept of democracy (*Umunna kwuru*) which is contained in the *Igbo* philosophy of republicanism is deeply rooted in *Igbo* life as embodied in the *Umunna* concept (Onwu 2009). In the pre-*Igbo* society, consensus in any decision making was paramount to the *Igbo* people. The *Umunna* have the tradition of gathering in the *Ama-Ukwu* to deliberate on any issue. An individual does not take a decision on behalf of the community. Under *Umunna* leadership, the people have a more participatory role in the decision making process. The *Ndi Chie*, *Ndi Nze* (title holders), the age grades, and other people present must be allowed to contribute their own views on the issue being deliberated. This process of arriving at a decision may take time and energy, but, the end result, could be rewarding. This process gives every member of the community enough time and latitude to give his own input. At the end of the decision making process, people would be proud to say that *O bu ihe anyi kwuru* (It is what we said).

It is from this way of arriving at a solution to issues that made the early Missionaries and neighbouring ethnic groups to say that *Igbo Enwe Eze* (The *Igbo* have no leaders). This does not reflect the character of the *Igbo* people. It is arrant nonsense (Onwu 2008). According to Onwu, *Igbo* republicanism goes with the consensus philosophy of *Igbo-kwenu*. Ekwuru (1999:134) observed that *Igbo-kwenu* represents a constituting symbol of the gathering of *Umunna*, which allows for full deliberative participation of every adult in decision making. This process of *Igbo kwenu* acknowledges the presence of every *Igbo* man in the gathering as well as recognizing his right and freedom of speech. This shows the *Igbo* solidarity (*Igwe bu Ike*). The *Igbo* republicanism must be rediscovered in modern society. The *Umunna kwenu* is often a

highly effective form of leadership. One should not be deceived by those who say that the *Igbo* have no king (*Igbo Enwe Eze*). The concept of *Igbo Amaghi Eze* is a form of saying that no one person could rule the *Igbo* people.

According to legend, the *Igbo* had kings, whom they called *Eze* (Ene 2005). The institution of the rugged republicanism makes every *Igbo* man king in his own castle. *Igbo* leadership is democratic in character (Uchendu 1965). The elders formed the leadership cradle. The village government gives much latitude to the youth. This also allows the young people to aspire to leadership in the *Igbo* community. *Nwata kwuo aka, ya esoro eze rie nri* (When a child washes his hand, he dines with a king). It is ability that qualifies one for leadership among the *Igbo* people. Though, age is duly respected. The picture of the *Igbo* political community is one that respects equality and divergent views. We have leaders, but never rulers. Decisions are arrived at through consensus, rather than by dictation. The *Igbo* communities are governed by elders (*Ndi Okenye*), title holders (*Ndi Nze*) and age grades.

The *Igbo* nation needs a rebirth in its thinking, behaviour, and attitude. They need true and dedicated leaders, not money bag leaders. *Igbo* need a pragmatic leader, not an opportunist. The *Igbo* people need a sincere leader, not the privileged class. It is true that the *Igbo* people need consensus before arriving at any decision. This does not negate the fact that the *Igbo* should have a central figure whose duty is to lead.

### **8. 1.3 The Ideal Leadership of Ozo Title Holders**

The research findings indicated that Ozo title holders are leaders in *Igbo* communities. The presence of Ozo title holders in *Igbo* communities is crucial. The Ozo title holders performed legislative, executive and judicial functions within the *Igbo* communities.

The Ozo title holders are not autocratic in decision making. The *Igbo* nation has no central authority. This has made the title holders democratic in their deliberations, decision making and pronouncements on issues that relate to the *Igbo* people. Decisions are made collectively by the council of elders, Ozo title holders, and age grades. Every person has an equal voice. There is no imposition of decisions, policies, and pronouncements on the community members. Whatever decisions they arrive at is

binding on the individual community members. The title holders settle disputes in the *Igbo* community.

The leadership of the Ozo title holders is relevant both in the *Igbo* community and Catholic Church. This approach would encourage the democratic process if introduced into the *Igbo* Catholic Church. The *Igbo* Catholic Church would gain from the ideal nature of the Ozo title holders. For example, the *Igbo* Catholic Church would be proactive. Second, the *Igbo* Church members would contribute to the growth of the Church. The collective sharing approach of the Ozo members should be encouraged. The giving orders approach is bad theology (Maestri 1989:32). The Holy Spirit has bestowed His gifts on the people of God. St. Paul used the analogy of the body to explain the gifts each person is given by God (1 Cor 12). The *Igbo* people are like the individual parts of the human body. All parts are needed in the community. None of the parts is complete without the others. Each member plays an important part in the decision making, which enriches the community. Great danger is done if any of the parts is allowed to dominate the whole body. The Ozo title holders are like a body. Each title holder has a role to play for the good of the *Igbo* community. The *Igbo* Christian community would benefit from the role the Ozo title ideally plays among the *Igbo* communities.

#### **8. 1.4 Ofo Symbols**

The Ofo phenomenon is important in *Igbo* society. It is made from the *Ogirishi* tree. It is found in most parts of *Igbo* communities. Ofo is the central symbol of *Igbo* spirituality. Scholars have written extensively on the Ofo phenomenon. Scholars like Cardinal Arinze (1970), Ejizu (2002) and Abanuka (2004) explored Ofo within the *Igbo* traditional religious culture. In the pre-colonial *Igbo* society, nobody could be conferred with the Ozo title without the possession of Ofo.

The Ofo symbols are parallel to the Christian Religion. they symbolize a staff of God. This notion is well expressed in the book of Exodus. And so Moses took his wife and sons, put them on a donkey and started back to Egypt. And he took the staff of God in his hand (Exodus 4:20", KJV). In the book of Numbers, the same notion is echoed. And the Lord said to Moses saying, "Speak to the Israelites and get twelve staffs from

them, one from the leader of each of their ancestral tribes. Write the name of each man on his staff (Numbers 17:2, KJV). For the Jewish people, the staff is a symbol of authority. For Ojike (1947), *Ofo* is a sacred symbol of truth, justice, law, and authority among the *Igbo* people.

In the *Amugbara* village in *Orlu*, *Imo* State, *Ofo* means a lot for the community. In *Umuduruji* kindred, *Amugbara*, *Ofo* is a symbol of unity. The lineage *Ofo* in *Umuduruji* represents the kindred ancestors and gods. The head of the family in *Umuduruji* kindred uses the *Ofo* as a means of prayers. He offers prayers every morning for protection, prosperity, good health, and the well being of all in the family. *Igo Ofo ututu* (Morning prayers) is common among the *Igbo* people. *Oji* (Kola nut), *Nzu* (White chalk), *Mmiri* (Water), *Ose Oji* (Alligator pepper) are some of the items used for *igo Ofo ututu*. The *Ofo* symbol for the *Umuduruji* people is the principal object of prayer.

Among the *Igbo* people, the *Ofo* is used for decision making. In *Umuduruji* kindred, the *Ofo* is used to reach important family decisions. During decision making, all the elders and title holders would bring out their *Ofos*. The *Ofo* represents the authority of the community. It is expected that any decision reached would be considered final. The *Ofo* is used to seal the decision. These important decisions reached are aimed at fostering peace, harmony, unity, and love within the *Igbo* community.

Besides the aforementioned functions, the *Ofo* is used for ritual sacrifices, naming ceremony, sealing covenants, oath taking, and disputes settlement. The *Ofo* is given to every titled holder. This is usually preceded by a ceremony. The giving of the *Ofo* to *Onye Nze* is ordinarily done at the final stage of *Ozo* title taking. In *Amugbara* village of *Imo* State, the *Onye isi Ozo* would hand the *Ofo* to the newly initiated. The possession of the *Ofo* symbolized the authority of the newly titled man. Also, it is a tool for dispute resolution. After his initiation, the title holder must always speak the truth in the presence of his *Ofo* (Abanuka 2004:87).

The *Ofo* symbolism is deeply rooted in the beliefs of the *Igbo* people. *Ofo* performs purely religious and moral duties. The *Ofo* is intricately bound up with the *Igbo* cosmology serving as a vital medium of communication between man and the supernatural order (Ejizu 2002:61). The *Ofo* is a typical *Igbo* ritual object that must be encouraged within the *Igbo* Church. The Church stands to gain from the religious,

moral, political, and cultural significance of the *Ofo*. The *Ofo* is a symbol of truth which the Catholic Church proclaims in its message. Jesus is a symbol of truth. Jesus promised to guide his Church into all truth (John: 12-13). Jesus uses the Church leaders to teach and proclaim this truth to all people. The *Nze* or title holder is the custody of the *Ofo*. The *Ozo* title holder offers sacrifices on behalf of his community members. On his initiation ceremony, he is charged to live and abide by the sanctions of the *Ozo* institution. These sanctions include avoidance of *Nso Ani* (taboos) such as lying, injustice, stealing, adultery, fornication, the *Ofo* and promiscuity. The *Ozo* title holder is an embodiment of truth, justice, love, and power in *Igbo* community.

The value of the *Ofo* should be appreciated through theology of inculturation. This study emphasized the role of the theology of inculturation that is transformative and Christ-like. The *Ofo* should be a symbol of truth that points to Christ. Accordingly, *Ofo* is a symbol of that which is to come, who is Christ (Hebrews 10:1-2). Also, in the Gospel of John, Christ referred Himself as the truth (John 14:6). For the *Igbo* Catholics, the *Ofo* should be regarded as sacred. This study emphasized the need to inculturate the *Ofo* into worship, where the *Ofo* would be used to reconcile erring Christians in *Igbo* communities. Also, the *Ofo* is a symbol of truth. As *Ofo* represents the authority of the community in *Igbo* tradition, when the *Ofo* is transformed through the theology of inculturation, it would now represent the authority of the priest, who represents both God and the people of God. This study identified two types of *Ofo*, ie, the traditional *Ofo* and Christianized *Ofo*. In *Igbo* society today, it is believed that the *Ofo* holders are Christians. However, this study recognizes that there are still some traditionalists in *Igbo* society. If it is assumed that the traditionalists would like to continue with the real traditional *Ofo*. However, this study recommends that Christians should have a new Christianized *Ofo* system. The issue raised here is: Would traditionalists accept a Christianized *Ofo* system, or would they reject it as not the real *Ofo*? In this case, the question is, "What can theology of inculturation do to transform *Ofo* that is free from syncretism?" This is another area of study in which a scholar could investigate in the future. However, this study has developed some guidelines that could help Christians to use the *Ofo* without necessarily contradicting any Biblical truth. This research recommends that the Christian Cross be given to a newly *Ozo* initiate, in place of the

*Ofo*. If this suggestion is accepted, it would be good, since the Cross reminds Christians of the sacrifice Jesus made on their behalf. For the newly Ozo initiate, the Cross would remind him of Christ's victory on Easter Sunday. This is the way the *Ofo* phenomenon could be Christianized, and therefore, it becomes Christ-like and transformative.

#### **8.1.5 Ozo Institution**

Abanuka (2004:86) argued that Ozo is a very prestigious establishment in *Igbo* land. According to Abanuka (2004:86) the Ozo is mainly for people of wealth and integrity in the society. Onyebuagu (1197:110) noted that the Ozo institution is an important aspect of *Igbo* culture. Ozo is not practised (Abanuka, 2004) in all parts of *Igbo* land. Otuwurunne (1997:9) observed that the holder of the title is *Nze* while the title itself is known as Ozo at its peak. However, the Ozo institution is an aspect that only admits people of impeccable character. Also, people to be admitted into the Ozo title must protect the interest of widows, orphans, and the poor across the *Igbo* communities.

The Ozo title taking is a social institution in *Igbo* community. However, a titled man across *Igbo* communities performed social, political, and religious roles among his people. Social institutions are designed to provide security, order, respect, and honour among the *Igbo* people. The origin of Ozo title taking is not known, but it is considered as old as the *Igbo* itself.

The Ozo title is male oriented. Women are not allowed to take the Ozo title. As a matter of fact, there is no satisfactory reason for excluding women from taking the title. The only acceptable reason is that it is the *Igbo* tradition and custom, and therefore, it is the way it has been done (*Obu Omenala*). Women are called *Lolo* of the *Nze* of the title holder. *Lolo*, in *Igbo*, has her own honour attached to the Ozo ceremony. *Lolo*, across *Igbo* land are respected.

The Ozo title has a common feature across *Igbo* communities. The initiation ceremony is taken in stages. There are certain items that must be used for the initiation ceremony. This makes the Ozo title a mystery event. It must be celebrated on a particular *Eke Ukwu* or *Eke Nta*. The Ozo initiation ceremony must be overseen by the highest Ozo holder in the community.

An Ozo title holder has some privileges and responsibilities attached to the title in *Igbo* society. For example, an Ozo title holder moves freely in the community. He cannot be abused. He enjoys respect and honour of the members of his community. He cannot climb trees. He is entitled to a special burial ceremony.

An *Nze* or a titled man is a custodian of tradition and culture. He cannot tell lie, no matter the circumstance. He is expected to tell the truth. The Ozo titled man is a symbol of truth, authority, power, sacred, and justice. He cannot subvert justice in any form. He cannot take his neighbour's wife. The Ozo Code of Conduct is similar to the Christian Ten Commandments. The Ozo man is another word for the Catholic Knight. This is why the Ozo titled man must be allowed to bring his knowledge of Ozo into the Catholic family. The Ozo institution promotes justice, ethical conduct, and integrity of life.

The Ozo titled members do not protect any erring member. The Ozo Code of Conduct is strictly adhered to regardless of the *status quo*. If any member is found violating any of the rules of the Ozo fold, the erring member is either sanctioned, or his title is revoked. For example, the former Senate president, Chief Adolphus Wabara's title was revoked for being involved in N50 million bribe allegations in the Senate. However, his title was later restored for opposing the third term agenda of the President, Obasanjo. According to the Monarch: The chairman of *Abia* Council of Traditional Rulers, HRH Eze Dr. I.A.Ikonne has announced the restoration of the traditional title of Chief Adolphus Wabara for his performance in the country during the just concluded debates on the tenure elongation bill (Nigerian Tribune, Sunday 28, 2006). This is important because it shows that the *Igbo* people do not hesitate to punish any erring title holder.

The *Igbo* Catholic Church stands to gain from the rich tradition of the Ozo institution. The question that arises is, "How should Ozo institution be inculturated?" This study believes that inculturation theology must provide guidelines as to how Catholic Christianity could transform the Ozo institution in *Igbo* society. In the early period, there were certain pagan practices associated with the Ozo institution. This study is not advocating that these pagan practices should be transferred into Catholic Christianity. This thesis recognizes two types of Ozo in *Igbo* society, i.e, the traditional

Ozo and the Christian Ozo. In the event that the traditionalists would want to continue with the real traditional Ozo institution, this study advocates a new form of inculturated Ozo system for the Catholic members in *Igbo* communities. The research issue raised here is, “Would the traditionalist accept the Christian modified Ozo system in *Igbo* communities?” This study emphasizes that Catholic theology must define the new inculturated Ozo system that is Christ-like and transformative. The purpose of this thesis is to construct pragmatic guidelines that should be acceptable to Church leadership in the *Igbo* Catholic communities. From the interviews conducted during the dissertation period, it is clear that traditionalists would be willing to accept the new modified Ozo system among the *Igbo* Catholics. The real problem would now reside on the Catholics who take the Ozo title whether they would adhere to the new modified Ozo rules. There are certain traditional Ozo practices that contradict the Biblical truth and Catholic practices. This thesis has developed some guidelines that could serve as blueprints for Ozo title taking among the *Igbo* Catholics. For example, the day the Ozo title is taken has always been on the *Eke Ukwu* market day. Since this study is bent on finding a common ground that would be acceptable to both members, this researcher would suggest that an *Orie* market day be chosen to confer the title on the new initiate. This *Orie* market day if chosen, would purge the Ozo title from its pagan belief and practice. This suggestion would reflect the mind of the Church, Vatican II, Catholic theology and inculturation theology, which is Christ-like and transformative. Whenever the word Ozo is used in this thesis, the researcher is invariably referring to the new Catholic inculturated Ozo institution among the *Igbo* Catholics.

#### **8.1.6 Some Pastoral Problems and Ozo Title Taking in *Igbo* Context**

Prior to the advent of Christianity, the *Igbo* man practised his religion without any sense of shame. He offered sacrifices to the gods and ancestors. During the title taking ceremonies, the traditional *Igbo* man is initiated into the Ozo title according to the *Igbo* Worldview Code of Initiation. But later in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the *Igbo* man was converted into Christianity. The *Igbo* man came into Christianity with his worldview ideology, culture, traditions, and tenets of religion. Some of these ways of life were antithetical to Christianity. The investigations made in this study revealed some conflicts between the

Ozo title taking and the Christian message. The task here is to find a common ground that would allow the inculturation of the traditional *Igbo* Ozo title taking into Christianity.

This study identified that some *Igbo* dioceses like the *Orlu* Diocese, the Ozo titled Catholics are viewed as *Fallen Christians*. They are not accorded some Catholic rites. This tendency has created some pastoral problems in the Diocese of *Orlu*. It is important to note here that in the *Orlu* Diocese, the Church leadership took the decision to ban Ozo title holders in 2000. Prior to 2000, some of the Ozo members were already receiving the Catholic Sacraments, and therefore, were in full Communion with the Church. This was why it was difficult for the Church hierarchy in *Igbo* communities to understand the steps that the *Orlu* Church leadership took. For non-*Orlu* members, the Ozo members who were now denied the Sacraments were those who were already participating in the Sacraments of the Church. This clarification will help the reader to understand the situation of the Ozo title holders in the *Orlu* Diocese prior and post 2000, when the decision to ban the Ozo members was taken.

First, during the initiation ceremony, the would-be Ozo titled person is initiated according to the *Igbo* traditional Code. He is examined by the Ozo title holders. If he is worthy, he would be allowed to proceed with the Ozo initiation ceremony. An Ozo man would be initiated only on the *Eke Ukwu* market day. It is conceived that *Eke Ukwu* day is linked to *Igbo* pagan worship. The members of the *Ozohold* could not change this day to another market day in *Igbo* land for fear of the gods and ancestors. This belief is against the teaching of the Christian message. The Christian argument is that if *Eke Ukwu* market day is not connected to a certain pagan idol, why can't the Ozo initiation ceremony take place on *Afo*, *Orie*, and/or *Nkwo* market day?

Second, during the Ozo initiation ceremony, goats, fowls, and rams are offered to the idols in certain shrines. The blood of these animals is smeared on the idols and shrines. It is the belief that the gods and ancestors would partake in the sacrifices. The Bible prohibits the making and erection of idols in any form. In the Ten Commandments, it is stated that, "Thou shall not have other gods before me" (Exodus 20:3, KJV). But the Bible is emphatic on this when it says, "You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above and on the earth beneath" (Exodus 20:4, KJV). Based on this, Christianity considers the sacrifices made by the *Nze* titled person to the idols

and shrines as paganism. The Ozo titled person is viewed by Christians as a *Lapsed Christian*.

Third, after the initiation ceremony, the Nze is handled an *Ofo* as a symbol of authority. The *Ofo* is made from a tree called *Ogirishi*. The *Ofo* is also conceived as the abode of the spirits and ancestors. Apart from the fact that the *Ofo* is a symbol of truth, unity, and justice, it is believed that it is used to make sacrifices to the pagan idols. This belief has pitched the Ozo title taking as paganism.

Fourth, the burial ceremony of an *Nze/Ozo* titled person is shrouded in pagan rites. Certain pagan rites are carried out when an *Nze* dies. For example, there is a rite performed called *Isa Anya Onye Nze*. This ritual ceremony is performed with a fowl. But, in some areas, a dog could be used to perform this ritual. The fowl is killed and the blood is smeared on the body, hand, eyes, and other parts of the body of the dead *Nze* person. This ritual rite of *Isa Anya Onye Nze* is considered against Christian ethics.

Fifth, an *Nze/Ozo* titled person is buried with two slaves (*Ohu*) when he dies. It is believed that these slaves would serve him in the next world as they did when he was living. The Christian message preaches against this practice, and considers the rite as pagan worship.

Finally, the *Igbo* worldview believes in the institution of the *Osu* caste system. The *Osu* or *Ohu* people were not allowed to take the Ozo title initiation. The Christians argue that if the Ozo institution is not paganism, why should the *Osu* people be excluded from the Ozo title initiation?

The aforementioned issues are not definitive. There could be other areas of dichotomy where the traditional *Igbo* Ozo title taking conflicts with the teaching of Christianity. The pastoral problems posed stem from the pagan rites or rituals involved during and after the Ozo title taking ceremonies. However, the five issues mentioned above relate to how they used to be taken during the initiation ceremony. But, in today's *Igbo* communities, there have been serious changes and transformations witnessed during Ozo initiation, which make the Ozo title taking Christ-like and transformative. The initial pagan practices during Ozo initiation have been purged from paganism. In spite of these changes witnessed accross *Igbo* communities, the Church leadership in *Orlu* Diocese has still decided to ban the Ozo title holders. The *Igbo* Christians who take the

Ozo titles in *Orlu* Diocese were excluded from the Christian Sacraments. The *Igbo* Church has *Abakaliki, Ahiara, Awka, Awgu, Nsukka, Enugu, Nnewi, Okigwe, Onitsha, Orlu, Owerri, and Umuahia* Dioceses/Archdioceses. It is important to note that among these Dioceses/Archdioceses, it is only in the *Orlu* Diocese that *Igbo Nze/Ozo* Catholics are denied the Sacraments. This is strange because, an *Ozo* title holder could not receive the Sacraments in *Orlu* Diocese, but could receive them in the neighbouring Dioceses in *Igbo* communities. What does this show? From the feedback received from those interviewed, it shows that either the Church leadership in *Orlu* Diocese is biased, or it has refused to listen to the voice of the theology of inculturation. However, *Ozo* title holders in *Orlu* Diocese are excluded from the following Sacraments:

#### **a. Denial of Access to the Sacrament of Reconciliation**

The Vatican II opened a new hope for the baptized Christians all over the world. The Vatican II was announced to foster the good of souls. Canon Law stipulates the right of Christians to the Sacraments. All Christians have the right to receive the Word of God and the Sacraments from one's pastor (Canon 213). Jesus instituted the Sacrament of reconciliation as a way of binding and loosing. After the Easter resurrection, Jesus says to the apostles, "Whose sins you forgive, they are forgiven, and whose sins you retain, they are retained" (John 20:21, KJV). The purpose of the sacrament of the reconciliation is to reconcile Christians to God and to one another.

However, it should be pointed out here, that this researcher is not trying to create an easy way for *Ozo* title holders. Any *Ozo* title taker must adhere to the rules of the Catholic Church, and these rules are embedded in the Ten Commandments. As already stated, this researcher is only referring to the Christianized *Ozo* title holders, who were both *Ozo* title holders and Catholics prior to 2000, when the *Orlu* Diocese took the decision to ban them. The purpose of this research is to formulate a formidable inculturation theology for *Ozo* title taking in the *Igbo* Catholic Church. But before the formulation of these guidelines, it would be good to reiterate the present situation of the Sacrament of Reconciliation in the *Orlu* Diocese.

Unfortunately, the *Igbo* Catholic *Ozo* title holders in the *Orlu* Diocese are denied access to the sacrament of reconciliation. Baptism is the gate to all other sacraments. It

is clear that a person who has not received baptism cannot validly be admitted to other sacraments (Canon 842). But in the *Orlu* Diocese, the *Ozo* title holders are validly baptized in the Church. In the *Orlu* Diocese in *Igbo* society, some *Ozo* title holders are forbidden from the sacrament of reconciliation. However, other neighbouring Dioceses such as *Owerri*, *Aba*, *Okigwe*, *Enugu*, and *Onitsha* have no bans on the *Ozo* title holders from the sacraments. It is evident that *Ozo* title holders from the *Orlu* Diocese are warmly received from the neighbouring dioceses for confessions. What this means is that the Church in the *Orlu* Diocese is not attuned to the principles of the current Code of Canon Law.

The denial of the sacrament of reconciliation to Christian *Ozo* title holders raises a pastoral problem for the *Igbo* Church. The church law should not be meant to punish Christians, but to liberate them. Jesus came to liberate the captives, the blind, deaf, and the destitute (Luke 7:22). Similarly, the Diocese of *Orlu* that is not attuned to the principles of the Vatican II should try to walk on the same level as the other Dioceses in *Igbo* land to grant Christian *Ozo* title holders access to the sacrament of reconciliation. This situation will continue to constitute a pastoral problem in the *Igbo* Church in so far as some Christian *Ozo* members have no access to the sacrament of reconciliation.

#### **b. Denial of Access to the Reception of the Holy Eucharist**

An *Igbo* *Ozo* title holder, by virtue of his baptism belongs to a Christian community. The Churches in *Igbo* land are created into Dioceses. Each Diocese is made up of different parishes. Each parish is run by a pastor. The pastors take directions from the local ordinary. Sometimes, the local ordinary has the right to institute guidelines on how to run the diocese. Unfortunately, in the *Igbo* Catholic Community, there are different rules that guide the Christian *Ozo* title holders. The *Ozo* title taking has taken a different stance since the *Igbo* traditional religion came into contact with Christianity. Some of the pagan practices involved in the *Ozo* title taking had disappeared. In some Dioceses in *Igbo* land, there had been meaningful inculturation, inculturation that is transformative, taking place to accommodate the *Ozo* title taking. While, in some areas like *Orlu* Diocese, there is a ban on the *Igbo* Catholic *Ozo* title

holders. This researcher is aware of the rules of the Catholic Church, and these rules must guide the Ozo title holders accross the *Igbo* communities. For example, an Ozo title holder must not receive the Holy Eucharist unworthily. He must go to confession before he approaches the Holy Communion. It is good to note the situation of Ozo title holders in the *Orlu* Diocese as regards to Holy Communion.

The Ozo title holders are restricted from the reception of the Holy Eucharist in the *Orlu* Catholic Community. This constitutes a very big pastoral problem among the parishes in the *Orlu* Diocese. Some of the pastors feel that the diocese of *Orlu* is not acting wisely on the issue of Ozo title taking. Some have openly condemned the current restriction on Catholic Ozo members. Unfortunately, these Catholic Ozo members who are denied the sacrament of the Eucharist in the *Orlu* Diocese are warmly welcomed to the neighbouring Dioceses. The nagging pastoral question is, “Why should a Catholic Ozo title holder be allowed to receive Holy Communion in *Owerri* Archdiocese, but is denied it in the *Orlu* Diocese? Or put differently, why should a Catholic Ozo title holder from the *Orlu* diocese be allowed to receive the Holy Communion from the *Aba* diocese, but is denied the Eucharist in his home *Orlu* Diocese? These are some of the pastoral problems the issue of Ozo title taking is posing in the Church in the *Igbo* Catholic community.

### ***c. Denial of Access to the Rite of Anointing***

An Ozo title holder fulfils his Christian obligations by going to Church on Sundays and days of obligations. He pays his monthly titles. He pays all church levies that help to maintain the running of his parish. When it comes to the church levies, it is an obligatory that an Ozo title holder must be up-to-date. He is happy to pay his Church levies. Some of the Ozo title holders attend regular morning masses or prayers. He is also a member of different societies in the parishes. He also fulfils his levy obligations in these religious societies.

Unfortunately, this study indentifies that in the *Orlu* Diocese, when an Ozo title holder falls sick, the parish priest would refuse to visit him. The parish priest would not anoint him when he is critically ill. St James tells us, “If any one of you is ill, he should send for the elders of the church, and they must anoint him with oil in the name of the

Lord and pray over him. The prayer of faith will save the sick man and the Lord will raise him up again, and if he has committed any sins, he will be forgiven” (James 5:14-15, KJV). The Sacrament of Anointing is one of the Sacraments instituted by Christ. Mark also alluded to the sacrament of anointing in his Biblical text. According to Mark, “And they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them” (Mark 6:13, KJV). There were no preconditions before the sick people were anointed during the time of Christ. In some Dioceses in *Igbo* land like, *Aba*, *Owerri*, *Onitsha*, *Okigwe*, etc, the Ozo title holders have access to the Sacrament of Anointing. However, while in the *Orlu* Diocese, this study found out that the Catholic Ozo title members have no access to the Sacrament of Anointing. There is currently a serious pastoral problem in the parishes in the *Orlu* Diocese where the Ozo title holders are denied the Sacrament of Anointing.

#### ***d. Denial of Access to the Rite of Burial***

The burial rite is not one of the Sacraments instituted by Christ. Each Diocese has the right to allow the burial rite to its faithful. Tobias did the corporal work of mercy by burying the dead (Tobias 29-10). He was rewarded by God for this simple act. This study found out that the Diocese of *Orlu* has continued to deny the Catholic Ozo title holders the right of burial in the church. The Local ordinaries in other dioceses across *Igbo* Catholic communities have incorporated Ozo title taking into Christianity, which allows the Ozo title members the right to a Catholic burial.

The *Igbo* Ozo title holder would be going to Church in the *Orlu* Diocese when he is alive. He would pay his normal Church levies. He would belong to other religious societies that help to nourish his spirituality. But when he falls sick, he is abandoned by his pastor. If he dies in his sickness, the parish priest would refuse to bury him. He would only send his catechist to bury him. This is unfair if the Ozo title holder has been baptized, paid his Church levies, and other Church relating dues. It is an injustice for the parish priest to deny the Ozo title holder the burial rite which is dear to him. The Church law that prohibits the burial rite in the *Orlu* Diocese should be discontinued especially when the Ozo title holders in other Dioceses in the *Igbo* Dioceses are accorded a

decent burial rite. The burial should be performed for the benefit of the living. In his homily when burying a priest who committed suicide, Bishop Pilla said that he used the celebration of the Eucharist to bury him because the burial is for the living. This practice in the *Orlu* community has posed a serious pastoral problem in the Church, because an *Ozo* title holder from the *Orlu* Diocese would have celebrated the Mass of the resurrection if he were living in any Diocese besides *Orlu*. The pastoral problem stems from the fact that the Dioceses in *Igbo* land do not have a uniform Church regulation. This study found that an *Ozo* title holder from *Orlu* is accorded all the rites outside his Diocese, but is denied the same church rites in his own home Diocese. This is a big pastoral problem in the *Igbo* Church.

The *Igbo* *Ozo* title holder who believes in the Eucharist, Mass, Confession, and the rite of Anointing should not be denied any of these Sacraments in the *Orlu* Diocese. These sacraments are dear to the *Igbo* *Ozo* Christians. These are the real Pastoral Problems facing the Church in *Igbo* society. The Dioceses in *Igbo* land should come up with a uniform regulation that allows the *Ozo* titled Christians the right to the Sacraments.

#### **8.1.7 Inculturating the *Ozo* Title Taking into Christianity**

Recent theory and practice of mission have included inculturation (King 2000). Unfortunately, some scholars have resisted inculturation in any form. Those who reject inculturation do so for fear that the truth of their culture would be lost or corrupted. On the other hand, some theologians believed that culture could provide a language which is adequate for a redefinition of theology. The purpose of inculturation is to make the Christian faith more acceptable, meaningful and relevant to Christians.

Inculturation as a term was first used by Pope John Paul II to the Pontifical Biblical Commission (Sybertz and Healey 1996:26). Inculturation is the process of incarnating the Good News in a particular cultural context. According to Sybertz and Healey (1996:26), inculturation allows people (say *Igbo Catholics*) of a particular culture to become able to live, express, celebrate, formulate, and communicate their Christian faith and their experience of Paschal Mystery in terms that make the most sense and best conveys life and truth in their social and cultural environment.

The *Igbo* theologians have much work to do to make inculturation a reality in Christian communities. In the *Igbo* context, this task involves the *Igbo* theologians in re-thinking and re-expressing the original Christian message in an *Igbo* cultural environment (Ukpong 1984:30). In the process of contact between Christianity and *Igbo* culture, there would be a new theology as an outcome that is more *Igbo* and Christian.

The bone of contention on the concept of *Ozo* is if it could be purified to allow the Christian Catholics to take part in *Ozo* title taking. Cardinal Francis Arinze maintained that the concept of *Ozo* could be purified where the practice is contrary to the Christian message. Cardinal Francis Arinze (1966) argued that the *Ozo* title could be purified from pagan religious elements contrary to the revealed truth and retain them as purely social customs. It is therefore surprising that the Catholic Diocese of *Orlu* argued that the *Ozo* institution couldn't be Christianized (Synod 2000:29). One is not talking of Christianizing the *Ozo* title but how does one purify it to allow the Christian Catholics to actively participate in the *Ozo* institution? Otuwurunne (1997:26-27) acknowledged that if the *Ozo* institution were purified, it would allow the *Ozo* title holder to be an *Igbo* man, Nigerian, African, as well as a good Christian. However, it is important to note here that there is not much difference between purification and Christianization. This researcher believes that purification could be used interchangeably with Christianization. The principles that guide purification must also guide Christianization, which should make the *Ozo* title taking acceptable in the Catholic Church. These principles include theology that points to Christ as transcending any culture, tradition, and race, but which upholds the Biblical truth as revealed in the incarnation.

The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (*Lumen Gentium* 1964 n 48) presents the Church as a mystery, as the communion of baptized believers, as the people of God, as the body of Christ, and as a pilgrim moving toward fulfillment in heaven but marked on earth with sanctity that is real although imperfect. In so far as we are still on earth, we are in a defective world. We are still evolving, waiting to be perfected like the angels in heaven. The *Ozo* title taking is not exceptional. As a cultural practice, it has its values, strengths, defects, and flaws. It must face the challenge of every age and be ready to be constantly renewed. Even though the process of *Ozo* title taking may be faulty due to human flaws, the *telos* (from the Greek *τέλος* for "end") is certain. This

study concludes that the end of Ozo title taking is Christ. The renewal, adaptation, adjustment, and reinventing of the Ozo title taking is to allow the *Igbo* Christians to know Jesus Christ more intimately, to love Jesus more ardently, and to live Jesus more totally as *Igbos*, Nigerians, and Africans. In this way, the Ozo title holder has been transformed to mirror Christ.

The *Lumen Gentium* urges all bishops to recognize and promote the dignity and responsibility of the laity in the church. According to the *Lumen Gentium* (1964 n 37), a great many wonderful things are to be hoped for in the dialogue between the laity and their spiritual leaders. This is important as one explores all this important cultural value in the spirit of the Vatican Council II. There must be an honest dialogue between the bishops and laity to promote their spiritual hunger for God. This dialogue must be ongoing, honest, and involving an avenue to encourage the laity to live Jesus more totally in their cultural environment.

In his *Ecclesia* in Africa, Pope John Paul II (1995:51) brought out fully the place of Africa in the Church of Jesus Christ. The Pontiff (1995) argued that God's redeeming love embraced the whole of humanity, every race, tribe, and nation including all people of the *Igbo* Christians. God willed that Africa should be present during the Passion of Christ in the person of Simon of Cyrene who was forced to help the Lord to carry the Cross (Mk 15:21). Equally, Pope John Paul II acknowledged that Africa is endowed with a wealth of cultural values and priceless human qualities, which it could offer to the Churches and to humanity as a whole. The Africans have a (John Paul II 1995) profound religious sense, a sense of the sacred, of the existence of God the Creator, and of a spiritual world. The *Igbo* Christians could only worship God faithfully through the rich values of the *Igbo* culture. It becomes necessary for the *Igbo* Christians to harness these values for the good of the people. One of these *Igbo* cultural values is the Ozo title taking in *Igbo* Land.

John Paul II (1995 in 142) asked two crucial questions in *Ecclesia* in Africa, which has become the focus of this study. These questions were ipso facto directed to the African bishops. How must the church carry out her evangelizing mission as the Year 2000 approached? How could African Christians become ever more faithful witnesses to the Lord Jesus? The year 2000 had come and gone without much

significant impact the *Igbo* church having been made on the Ozo title taking in *Orlu* Diocese. John Paul II gave the African Bishops instruction what to do in order to allow the African Christians to worship God faithfully. According to John Paul II, the Synod Fathers affirmed that a serious concern for a true and balanced inculturation is necessary to avoid cultural confusion and alienation in the African fast evolving society. The challenge of Pope John Paul II to the African bishops, which has not been realized, is the utilization of inculturation to purify the Ozo title taking across the *Igbo* land. Genuine inculturation would allow the Ozo title holders to live their *Igbo* traditional values in line with their Christian faith. This is the challenge before the *Igbo* Bishops which some of them have not fully explored.

The *Igbo* traditional Ozo title taking is rigorous. It involves a series of traditional rituals to some deities. These rituals could take different stages to complete. In *Igbo* society, there are some classes of people that were excluded from taking the Ozo title. It is commonly believed that if the outcasts (*Osu*) were allowed to take the titles, the laws of the land would be violated. It is also conceived that if the outcasts (*Osu*) were allowed to take the Ozo titles, the ancestors and the gods would be annoyed with the people. Subsequently, the people would be visited with serious calamities. All these beliefs were based on *Igbo* myths.

The researcher will endeavour to outline some of the guidelines that would enable the *Igbo* traditional Ozo title taking to be incorporated into Christianity, guidelines that will allow the *Igbo* Catholics to participate in the Ozo ceremony. The first task is how to incorporate the *Igbo* traditional title taking into Christianity without watering down the teachings of Christian religion. The researcher wants a situation whereby the *Igbo* Christians would feel at home with their religion and culture. As it is presently practised, the *Igbo* Catholic title holders live a “double life”, i.e.; as a Christian and as a traditional Ozo title holder. Some of the Christian Ozo title holders secretly possess the *Ofo* symbol. They do not want to be branded as lapsed Christians. Some of them also secretly take the titles for fear of being called fallen Christians. This situation is not healthy for the *Igbo* Catholic Ozo title holders. The task of this research study is to fashion out the steps that would accommodate the Catholic Ozo title holders in

Christianity. This research study recommends pragmatic ways to rid the Ozo title taking from fetish practices.

This research study must acknowledge the efforts some dioceses in *Igbo* society have made towards the inculturation of the Ozo title taking into Christianity. It is also unfortunate that the *Orlu* Diocese has not accepted the Ozo Catholics in its fold. These *Igbo* Ozo titled Catholics have been facing some pastoral problems with the diocese. The researcher wants to look into the problems these Ozo title holders are facing with an intention to come out with some pragmatic suggestions to the problems. If other dioceses in *Igbo* land could permit the Ozo title taking for the *Igbo* Christians, it becomes evident that the church in the *Orlu* Diocese could also allow its Christian members to take the Ozo titles.

The first task here is to ask, "Whether it is pastorally possible to inculturate the Ozo title taking into Christianity"? This question is not needed in the twenty-first century. The question whether it is possible to inculturate the Ozo title taking into the Christian religion is redundant because some Dioceses such as *Awka*, *Onitsha*, *Enugu*, *Owerri* and *Ahiara* have already allowed its Christians to participate in the Ozo title taking in *Igbo* society. The question that should be asked is, "What should be done to purge the *Igbo* traditional Ozo title taking from pagan practices to allow the members to live a meaningful Christian life"? As earlier stated, some Christians are still being denied the Sacraments for taking the Ozo titles. It is believed that these Ozo title holders are Catholics who are in full communion with the Catholic Church prior to the decree that banned them from the Sacraments. This researcher does not support some Ozo title holders who take the title in a pagan way. But, we must differentiate the Ozo traditionalists from those who follow the rules of the Catholic Church. But, the problem in the *Orlu* Diocese is that the Church hierarchy have lumped both the Ozo traditionalists and those who follow the rules and laws of the Catholic Church together. Based on this principle, this study concludes that this is a serious violation of the Christian right of the sacraments. The Vatican II has opened the door for the *Igbo* Christians to participate in the Ozo title taking. The *Igbo* traditional Ozo title taking could be inculturated into Christianity with the rules and principles the researcher will lay down.

The decree on the missionary activity of the church (*Ad Gentes*) outlined the new role of missionaries in mission lands. It echoed the incarnation of Christ as the foundation of missionary activity. Missionaries should not abolish the culture of the people, but should be willing to incorporate the people's cultural values to enrich the gospel message of salvation. The Council Fathers noted,

So too indeed, just as happened in the economy of the incarnation, the young Churches, which are rooted in Christ and built on the foundations of the apostles take over all the riches of the nations which have been given to Christ as an inheritance. They borrow from the customs, traditions, wisdom, teaching, arts and sciences of their people everything which could be used to praise the glory of the Creator, manifest the grace of the Savior, or contribute to the right ordering of Christian life (AG 22).

The Council Fathers were emphatic on the role of missionaries in mission areas. They were willing to incorporate the tradition of the people to enhance the beauty of the Christian liturgy. Based on this fact, the church in *Igbo* society should incorporate some of the *Igbo* traditions, customs, and arts for the good of the *Igbo* Christian community. The unpurged *Ozo* title taking is one of the traditions and customs the researcher is advocating as outlined in the decree on the missionary activity of the Church. The document on *Lumen Gentium* echoed the same sentiment when it asked the church to preserve whatever is good in the mind and heart of man, including the religious practices and cultures of the people (LG 17).

Pope Pius XII was in favour of preserving the culture of the people. Missionary activity should not be an avenue to destroy the culture of the people. The Pontiff was against destroying the culture of the people in the name of evangelization. This idea was well expressed in his encyclical *Evangelii Praecones*. Pope Pius XII advised, "Let not the Gospel, on being introduced into a new land, destroy or extinguish whatever its people possess that is naturally good or beautiful" (1951:522). The wisdom of the Pope would extend to the Church in *Igbo* land. The *Igbo* Church should not destroy the traditional *Ozo* title taking, but should rather allow it to stay side by side with the Christian religion. The researcher is speaking of inculturation. The Church must inculturate the traditional *Igbo* *Ozo* title taking into Christianity. The researcher stated

the reason for doing this. It is to allow the *Igbo* Christians “to bear a crop of delicious fruit.”

The perception of the fathers on non-Christian religions should be encouraged. The *Nostra Aetate* was proclaimed by Pope Paul VI on October 28, 1965. The Declaration on the relation of the church to non-Christian religions was a step forward to acknowledge the value of other religions and cultures. The intention of the council fathers was also to foster peace, unity and harmony among other religions in the world. Article 2 of *Nostra Aetate* noted the position of the church on non-Christian religions. The Catholic Church rejects nothing that is true and holy in non-Christian religions (NE 2). The council fathers noted that the means to attain the respect of other religions would be through dialogue. The Declaration on the relation of the Church to non-Christian religions advocated for authentic dialogue and collaboration with the followers of other religions (NE 2). It is through this way that the Catholic Church would preserve, promote the good things, spiritual and moral and cultural values of the *Ozo* title taking in *Igbo* society.

The researcher rejects any type of discrimination and persecution of any man and culture. The Church must preach about the infinite mercy, grace and cross of Christ. The message of Christ is based on love. He who does not love does not know God (1 John 4:8). Christ is the fountain from which every grace flows. The Council Fathers decreed that the church reproves, as foreign to the mind of Christ, any discrimination against men or harassment of them because of their race, colour, condition of life, or religion (NE 5). Based on this, the researcher therefore encourages the church in *Igbo* land to maintain good fellowship with the members of *Igbo Ozo* titled men. The purpose of this fellowship is to maintain peace with the *Igbo* titled men so that they might truly be sons of the father who is in heaven (Matthew 5:45).

The steps for authentic inculturation involves taking time to study the culture of a particular people. A careful study would shed light to the religious and cultural values of the people. Pope Paul VI had this perception when he issued his document on African Traditional Religions. In his *Africae Terrarum*, Pope Paul VI advanced the need to study the African Traditional Religions. He believed that the African Traditional Religions had been misrepresented as animism by the earlier missionaries. The study of the African

Traditional religion would reveal the deep African spiritual view of life. Pope Paul VI therefore challenged the African Christians to have an African Christianity based on African human values and characteristic forms of cultures (Knitter 1986:124). This study is aimed at challenging the *Igbo* Christians in *Igbo* society on Ozo title taking. The researcher recognizes the value of Ozo title taking and would want the *Igbo* Christians to study the values, morals, and ideals of Ozo title taking to enrich the members in *Igbo* culture.

Pope John Paul II had deep respect for the African Traditional Religions and cultures. He visited Africa several times. He never hid his admiration for the African cultures. Like his predecessors, Pope John Paul II recognized the role that African cultures would play to the message of Christ. The African culture would enrich, improve and enhance the gospel of Christ (Bologna 1981). The views of Pope John Paul II should also extend to the Ozo title taking in *Igbo* land. The *Igbo* Ozo title is founded on strong moral principles. The Christian Ozo titled men respect and practise high ethical and moral values. The *Igbo* Christian title holders should not tell lies. They should not commit adultery. They should not steal. They should not distort justice among the people. These are the values that Christianity exhorts its members (Exodus 20:2-17). The Ozo title taking should be inculturated into Christianity to encourage the members to uphold and practise these cultural values found in the Ozo title taking.

*Ecclesia* in Africa was emphatic in Pope John Paul II's respect for the African culture. The Post-Synod was issued to validate the Pope's admiration for the African religions, cultures and values. The Pope re-echoed his stance on the African Traditional Religions. The Church respects the religions and cultures of peoples and wishes that in her contact with people, to preserve all that is good in their culture and religions (John Paul II *Ecclesia* in Africa 1995:51). The *Igbo* bishops should borrow a leaf from the action of the Pope to preserve the Ozo title taking among the *Igbo* Christians. This is a value that would enrich the people of God if inculturated into the Christian religion.

In *Ecclesia* in Africa, Pope John Paul II had a special word for the African bishops as shepherds of the people. The African bishop's evangelization must be focused on the needs of the Christian faithful. In their daily ministry to the flock entrusted to the bishops, they should never lose sight of the needs of the church as a

whole (John Paul II 1995 n 132). In the same way, the *Igbo* bishops should feel the concern for all the churches which burned in St. Paul's heart (2 Corinthians 11:28). The *Igbo* bishops should have a unified document that stipulates the ways to attain a genuine inculturation of the Ozo title taking into Christianity.

### **8.1.8 The Role of Dialogue in Igbo Context**

The study noted that the Church is not just the hierarchy, but the Church is everybody. The Vatican II emphasized that we are the people of God; the very life of God is therefore in each of us. Pope Pius XI strongly maintained that the laity is part of the church. According to Pius XI (1926):

You, the Catholic laity, are Christ in the world, you are one  
with Him the true Vine, member of the Body of which He  
is the Head. You are the Church.

Similarly, Bishop Joseph Galante understood that the Church of Christ belongs to all of us. In his vision for the future church in the Camden Diocese of America, he clearly stated that every one of us is the Church. He stated (The Catholic Star Herald, January 13, 2006):

My dear family, I call you my family. All of us belong to the same  
body, as St. Paul tells us, the Body of Christ. All of us are the  
people of God. All of us are the Church.

The bishop is the leader of the church in each diocese. The Second Vatican Council Document on The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church called Bishops to dialogue with the laity. This study identified the role of dialogue in resolving conflicts between Christianity and the Ozo title taking in *Igbo* land. Dialogue is an important impulse in discerning the areas of conflicts of Ozo title taking with Christian practices. The researcher believes that a meaningful framework for the Ozo title taking could be developed by a diverse group of laity, clergy, and religious at the suggestion of Bishops through dialogue. The participants should keep an open mind and continually listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit in their efforts to come out with a blueprint and benchmark for Ozo title taking in the Church in *Igbo* land. If possible, the committee should be made up of men and women (clergy, religious, and laity) who are knowledgeable, but

who are free from prejudice. The Catholic Star Herald, December 9, 2005 observed that today people live in a world where dialogue rather than suspicion marks relations with other religions. The committee, if set up, should encourage a variety of viewpoints.

Pope John Paul II in recognition of the African Traditional Religions in 1988, appointed the Nigerian Cardinal Francis Arinze to head the Secretariat for Non-Christians. The pontiff urged the African bishops to give pastoral attention to the African Traditional Religions that had been misrepresented for decades. He challenged the Bishops to have profound dialogue with the African Traditional Religions, to respect and preserve what is noble, true and good in their religions and cultures. Pope John Paul II believed that a thorough study of the African Traditional Religions would be necessary and beneficial to the Africans. According to Pope John Paul II (1995):

A study of traditional religion will identify the underlying felt needs of Africans, and clarify the manner in which Christianity can respond to them. This way, the Church will be at home in Africa, and Africans will feel more and more at home in the Church.

Pope John Paul II echoed the mind, spirit, and principles of the Second Vatican Council when he called for a detailed study of the African traditional religions for the good of the African Christians. This must be the basis of the study of *Ozo* title taking in the *Igbo* context. The aim is to allow the *Igbo* Christians to be at home in worshipping God. The *Ozo* title holders would be happy to worship their God in their God-given culture that is rooted in the Christian values. To ostracize the *Ozo* title holders from the Sacraments of the Church is to negate the insistent call of this research, namely, to allow the *Igbo* Christians to feel more and more at home in the Church as *Igbos*.

### **8.1.9 Urgent Need To Form Seminarians in Igbo Culture**

There is an urgent need to train the “future priests” in today’s *Igbo* culture. The seminarians should be encouraged to appreciate the values of *Igbo* culture. The prospective priests should understand their culture well enough to enable them to minister to the *Igbo* people. The seminary faculty should emphasize the historical, theological, and cultural aspects of priesthood of Jesus Christ, who has come to identify with his people in a Jewish historical perspective. The African Traditional Religions (ATR) should be incorporated into the seminary curriculum. Pope John Paul II (1995) strongly advocated for the inclusion of ATR into the curriculum and programmes of seminaries and religious houses of formation.

Candidates for the priesthood, whether diocesan or religious, also have a responsibility here, particularly given the challenging cultural circumstances in which they are called to serve. The bishops, major superiors, seminary faculty, and vocation directors should ensure that the seminarians are taught according to the spirit of the Vatican Council II. More importantly, the future priests should be allowed to do a research on the Ozo title taking. This would be able to expose them on the relevant issues of *Igbo* culture. This study believes that when these steps are taken properly, it would allow the *Igbo* Christians to worship God more faithfully, authentically, piously and devotedly.

### **8.1.10 Urgent Need to cut down the Excessive Expenses of Ozo Title Taking in Igbo Society**

This study also identified the excessive expensive nature of Ozo title taking in *Igbo* land. The participants in the study also expressed the alarming high cost of Ozo title taking in *Igbo* land today, a rate that is beyond the reach of the poor. There is the need to cut down the expenses to allow the least affluent in the society to afford them the opportunity of taking the title without paying “through their nose.” The Church leadership and Ozo titled members should jointly look into this to fashion a moderate rate that is affordable by everybody who takes the title. It is distressing to note that at present, the Ozo title taking could cost over two hundred thousand naira (200,000.00) to

take in *Amugbara* village. This is much in a society that is poor. The new rate would avoid competition among the members who take the title.

Considering the harsh situation in Nigeria today, the researcher will suggest that the rate of taking the Ozo title should not exceed fifty thousand (50,000.00) naira. If the members accept this, it would relieve so many people who want to take the Ozo title among our people. Also, those who have earlier taken the title with a high rate should be able to accept the new rate for the sake of peace and love. The researcher appeals to all Ozo titled members to accept this as one of their crosses as Christians. There would be joy if we have a uniform rate of taking the title among our people.

#### **8.1.11 The Position of Slave (Osu) and Ume in Ozo Title Taking**

Presently, certain classes of people are prevented from taking the Ozo title in *Igbo* communities. We as Christians teach that all men are created equal before God. If this principle is true, why then do we discriminate against certain kinds of people from taking the title? There are no Jews, Gentiles, males, and females before God (Romans 10:12). It is also argued that there is no difference between the *Di-ala* and *Osu* in *Igbo* land. Christianity was able to destroy the earlier way of killing twins in our *Igbo* culture. It was believed that twins were against our laws and values in *Igbo* land. It was Christianity that helped to stop the obnoxious law that allowed it. Now, our twin brothers and sisters could live and we thank God who made it possible.

It is alleged that the opposition to Ozo title taking in the Diocese of *Orlu* could be as a result of discriminating against some people on the basis of *Osu* system. Who is an *Osu* in *Igbo* community? For Achebe (1994:156), an *Osu* is a person dedicated to a god; a thing set apart, a taboo forever, and his children after him. Dike (2007:12) defined an *Osu* as an outcast, a person whose ancestors were sacrificed or dedicated to the local deity in the *Igbo* community to appease the gods. The institution of *Osu* in the *Igbo* community is borne out of a belief coloured by superstition. According to this *Igbo* belief, an *Osu* could not marry nor be married by the *Di-ala* (freeborn) among the *Igbo* people. In the *Igbo* community, slaves (*Ohu*) could not be raised to the rank of Ozo (Abanuka 2004:86).

It has been difficult to abolish the practice of the *Osu* caste system in the Orlu Diocese. The Church leadership has used its authority to abolish the *Ozo* title taking in the Diocese for discriminating against the *Osu* people. However, the Church leadership is not upfront in condemning the practice of the *Osu* system in the diocese. The church is sympathetic towards those who are being discriminated on the basis of *Osu*. The researcher is appealing to our *Di-ala* title holders who have the privilege of taking the *Ozo* title to allow those considered being *Osu* and *Ume* among them to take part in the title taking. It should be noted that Christianity should be liberating. Christ has brought us the Good News of freedom, liberation, and salvation. It is in view of this that the researcher passionately appeals to our *Di-ala* brothers to consider this as an important message. The practice of *Osu* has become obsolete, primitive, and pagan-oriented.

There are a number of ways to abolish this practice. There could be a dialogue between the Church leadership and the *Ozo* titled members on the way forward to abolish the practice. A day of purification and pacification could be arranged in which the Church could celebrate the Eucharist to appease God. The celebration of the Eucharist is the highest sacrifice offered by Christ, which would be seen as acceptable to God. Also, the existing shrines and deities associated with the practice could be blessed and sprinkled with Holy Water. The shrines and deities would not be destroyed. They would be preserved to serve for posterity as a sign of reconciliation between the Church and the *Ozo* titled members when a definite step is taken to accept our *Osu* brothers into the *Ozo* fold.

#### **8.1.12 Reinventing the *Ozo* Title Taking in Igbo context**

From the various voices of our participants, there is a great need to reinvent the *Ozo* title taking to fit into the Church practices across the *Igbo* church. Caution should be taken not to yield to what could encourage syncretism in the Church practices. Authentic efforts should be made to discern the spirit of the Vatican II that allows an honest preaching of the Gospel of Christ to all nations. It is wrong to say that Catholic Christians should not take the *Ozo* title (2000:28-29) because the *Ozo* title is valuable for both Christians and non-Christians. The ethical code of an *Nze* is similar to the Ten Commandments of the Christian Church. For example, an *Nze* is known for his truth, honesty, and fairness in the community.

For a better reconciliation of the Ozo title taking to the Church practices, a committee should be set up to look into the cases made by different groups on the way forward to purify the Ozo title taking to suit the Church members who are interested in taking the title. The committee should detail what would be the blueprint of Ozo title taking in the Church. The blueprint should guide all the Church members irrespective of the *status quo* in the society. The idea is to guard the Church from syncretistic practices such as those who hide to perform the rituals at night. This attitude of some Catholics should be discouraged.

The Church leadership may also resort to using a seminary as a testing factory for designing what would be a guiding principle of Ozo title taking across the *Igbo* Church. The Church has many learned men and women who could fashion out a guiding principle built on sound theology. The Church should give such elected or appointed theologians a free hand in doing their work. This would help to fashion out a guiding blueprint that is rich in theology that would allow our brothers to be fully incorporated into the church practices. This would make them worship God as *Igbos*, Nigerians, and Africans. This task may not be easy. However, it would help to resolve the conflict between the Ozo title members and church practices. The goal is to make sure that before the year 2050, all the conflicts in Ozo title taking would be laid to rest. This reinvention would allow the new breeds of Ozo title taking to be fully part and parcel of the Church practices as envisioned by the spirit of the Vatican Council II in the new dispensation.

In any case, the researcher is not writing on Ozo title taking to be controversial. The researcher loves the Church. The researcher wants the Church in *Igbo* land to live up to expectations of the Vatican Council II. The researcher wants the Ozo members who are in full communion with the Church to be fully incorporated into the Church in the *Orlu* Diocese, where the Church has not fully accepted the Ozo titled members. The Church would not gain anything to see its members being denied the Sacraments. We are called to feed the sheep of Christ (John 21:15-19). We are called to serve the poor, voiceless, and the rejected. This service is modelled on Christ, the leader of the visible and invisible Church.

### **8.1.13 We Must Not Repeat the Mistakes of the Past Missionaries in Igbo society**

Our past missionaries who evangelized African communities did a good job. They tried their best within the situation they found themselves. They were faced with enormous challenges. They could not speak the African languages, yet they did wonders in evangelization. According to Pope Paul VI:

The church of Christ is well and truly planted in this blessed soil. One duty, however, remains to be fulfilled: we must remember those who, before you, and even today with you have preached the Gospel in Africa, for Sacred Scripture admonishes us to remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God.

The early missionaries to Africa made a lot of sacrifices for the people of God. It is due to the heroic sacrifice of these men and women that we know the love of God.

According to Pope John Paul II (1995):

The splendid growth and achievements of the church in Africa are due largely to the heroic and selfless dedication of generations of missionaries. Everyone acknowledges this fact. The hallowed soil of Africa is truly the tombs of courageous heralds of the Gospel.

The task of evangelization now falls back to the Africans. Pope John Paul II acknowledged that the church in Africa is now responsible for the evangelization of the Continent and the world. Also, in Kampala, Pope Paul VI said, "Africans, you are now your own missionaries".

The early missionaries to Africa inaccurately misrepresented the African Traditional Religions. What is said about Africa could also be said about *Igbo* society. For them, the African Traditional Religion is no more than animism. This misrepresentation is a hindrance to the understanding of the *Igbo* culture. Thanks goes to Pope Paul VI who had tried to correct the past misrepresentation of the African cultural values in his *Africae Terrarum*. According to Pope Paul VI (1967):

Many customs and rites once considered being strange are seen today in the light of ethnological science, as

integral parts of various social systems, worthy of study and commanding respect. In this regard, we think it profitable to dwell on some general ideas which typify ancient African religious cultures because we think their moral and religious values deserving of attentive consideration.

We must appreciate the recognition Pope Paul VI accorded to the African Traditional Religions. This recognition is anchored on the fact that the African people have a religious expression that is properly African. The expression and recognition of Pope Paul VI to the African cultural values is very much rooted to the spirit of the Second Vatican Council. The Second Vatican Council noted that the Catholic Church rejects nothing of what is true and holy in other religions (*Igbo* Traditional Religion included), which are found throughout the world. This is a challenge therefore to the *Igbo* Church leadership to have an open mind to inculturate the *Ozo* title taking to the Christian practices to enable the title holders to proudly worship their God faithfully. Pope Paul VI (1967) could be regarded as the first Pontiff to challenge the African Church leadership to have an African Christianity based on African human values and culture.

Following the precedent of his predecessor, Pope John Paul II had a profound respect for the African cultural values. He had visited the African continent so many times that he fell in love with the African values and heritage. The Pontiff believed that the African culture could positively contribute to the church practice and so he urged the African church leadership to have a profound dialogue with the African Traditional Religions.

Equally, this study adds its own voice to that of Pope John Paul II in urging the *Igbo* church leadership to seek dialogue to purify the *Ozo* title taking where necessary. This would allow the *Igbo* Church to present the Gospel of Jesus Christ in a manner that the Church would take root on the *Igbo* soil. This is the aim, spirit, and principle of Pope John Paul II as well as the call and spirit of Second Vatican II.

#### **8.1.14 The Ethical Values of Nze Na Ozo Must Be Encouraged**

The Ozo Ethical Code of Conduct in *Igbo* land existed prior to the coming of Christianity. This ethical code, even though it prefixed Christianity, had similar ethical values to the Christian Ten Commandments. In the *Igbo* Traditional Religion, an *Nze* (Title holder) is expected to avoid certain acts considered inimical to the *Nso Ala* (Taboos). For example, an *Nze* would not steal, lie, commit adultery, kill, harm any person, and (or) suppress the poor people in the community. Also, an *Nze* would not discriminate against anybody in the community on the basis of race and colour. An *Nze* is a custodian of cultural values that promote habitual co-existence in the community. Above all, an *Nze* is one who speaks the truth in any communal deliberations. He must be fair, just, and honest. These are ethical values which every human person – whether Christian or not should uphold and encourage. The Christian church is founded on love that asks its adherents to observe the Ten Commandments given to Moses at Mount Sinai (Deuteronomy 5:2). These ethical values of an *Nze* should therefore be preserved, not condemned by the *Igbo* Church.

Cardinal Francis Arinze has a lot to say on the need for the church to accept the good found in another culture while challenging the negative side of the same culture. According to Francis Arinze, thus the Church encourages inculturation of the Gospel, embracing the positive elements of each culture while challenging the negative ones. On the issue of the Ozo institution, Cardinal Francis Arinze argued (1990) that the church of Christ also has its own titles. He is against the suppression, repression, oppression, and misrepresentation of the Ozo institution in *Igbo* land. This is anchored on the fact that the Ozo title has some good things that could enrich the Christian faithful.

#### **8.1.15 Sick Call and the Sacrament of Reconciliation**

Christ's death is a victory over sin and death. Christ died to reconcile us to the Father. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is a gift to the world. St. James also urged the Christian leadership to pray and anoint any sick person of the community (James 5: 13 – 18). The prayer and anointing of the sick are to help him in his suffering. The Christian practice of anointing is derived from St. James' instruction to pray, anoint, and forgive

any sick person in the Christian community. This has been part of the faith of the Christians across the world.

This study found out that the Diocese of *Orlu* has banned the titled men from the sacraments to the effect that some priests and religious leaders have refused to go on a sick call to the *Ozo* titled members. Our duty is to usher hope to everybody in the church. The titled men are Christians who believe in the efficacy of the Sacraments. They have not denied the efficacy of the sacrament of Reconciliation, prayers, and anointing. These titled men have been yearning for the Sacraments, but our clergy who represent Christ when they hear confessions refused them these sacraments. This study is appealing to the *Orlu* Church leadership to reverse its ban on the titled men.

#### **8.1.16 Guidelines to *Ozo* Title Taking in the *Igbo* Church**

The local church must have common guidelines for *Ozo* title taking among the *Igbo* Christians. If *Ozo* title taking is peculiar to the *Igbo* people, it means that all the dioceses in *Igbo* land must have a unique guideline that states what should be included as well as avoided. The *Igbo* bishops should set up a committee to oversee the guidelines to avoid syncretism. These guidelines should be studied and debated on to ensure that they represent the teaching of the church. These guidelines should be blueprints for all *Ozo* title taking in the church across the dioceses in *Igbo* land.

The items that should be involved in *Ozo* title taking would enable both rich and poor Christians to handle the expenses comfortably. This would also help to curb excessive competition among the Christian *Ozo* title holders. Initiation of new members should be done in the presence of the parish priests to avoid syncretism. The idea is to allow our Christian members to feel a sense of belonging, and not to be ostracized from the reception of the Sacraments.

### **8.1.17 Ozo Proposal Guidelines**

1. Appoint a diocesan co-ordinator to oversee the Ozo title taking (Ceremony)
2. A committee on the diocesan/parish level to be established
3. Seminars on Ozo title taking to be held at least once in a year (both diocesan and parish levels)
4. New members should be initiated before the parish priest(s)
5. Date to be chosen should be decided by both the parish priest and the prospective candidate for Ozo title holder
6. Ceremony should be held in the house or obi of the prospective Ozo title holder
7. Conferment of Ozo title should be carried out by the highest Ozo title holder in the village/town
8. The Ozo attires – shirt, red cap, and other related regalia should be blessed by the parish priest
9. A token stipend of 300.00 for the parish priest
10. Old members of *Nze na Ozo* title holders should also receive their own entitlement
11. Date for thanksgiving might be chosen
12. No other ceremony would be carried out before any other title holders
13. New members should be decided by members of the Ozo title holders
14. Old members of Christian Ozo title members should be incorporated into the church
15. The parish priest should be the chaplain of the Catholic Ozo title holders
16. All Christians should abide by these guidelines
17. A Seminary should be used as a laboratory in *Igbo* land

### **8.1.18 Jubilee Celebration**

The practice of Jubilee is biblically founded. The Jubilee year (Hebrew *Yovel* יובל) is the year at the end of seven cycles of sabbatical years (Hebrew *Shmita*). The celebration of the Jubilee has a special meaning for the Jewish people. There is a debate on the actual day of the Jubilee; some scholars have argued that it was observed on the 49<sup>th</sup> year (the last year of seven sabbatical cycles); others believe that it was observed on the following 50<sup>th</sup> year. The Jubilee year is announced by a blast on an instrument made from a ram's horn during that year's *Yom Kippur* (Leviticus 25:9).

Of primary interest is the purpose of the Jubilee celebration, and its potential applicability to *Igbo* Christians. The Jewish people observe the weekly Sabbath, the annual Sabbath (which is every seven years), and the Jubilee Sabbath (which occurs every 50 years). The law prescribed that sowing would not be permitted on the Sabbath (Leviticus 19:23-35). The seventh year is important, which is called the year of release (Deuteronomy 15:1-18). On the seventh year, all debts are forgiven. The reason for this law is to relieve the poor. The Hebrew servants also benefited from the seventh year, unless they voluntarily chose to be lifelong servants.

The Jubilee year celebration is vital for the Jewish people. The word Jubilee refers to liberty (שנת דרוֹר). God owns the land, and in the Jubilee, he wants the return of every man to his possession. The land also must be redeemed. Men must be returned to their land and their family. The importance of Jubilee is not limited to resting the land. The aim of Jubilee is to remind followers that the Creator is eternal. Jubilee is a time to release (Deuteronomy 15:1). It can also mean to “drop.” As noted, the seventh year is a year of dropping or cancellation of debts.

The Jubilee year can be applied to the specific circumstance of *Igbo* Christians. The *Igbo* Church can celebrate the Jubilee Year in order to release *Igbo* Christians who have been in bondage. The next year to celebrate another Jubilee will be 2028. Jesus himself proclaimed the year of the Lord, a year where captives were released, the poor were proclaimed the good tiding, and the oppressed were set free. Jesus said (Luke 4:18-19, KJV), “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed a year acceptable to the Lord.” Jesus’ mission

was to bring freedom to the oppressed. His ministry is liberating. His death brings absolute freedom, liberation, and emancipation from sin and death. He died to reconcile humanity to God. He commissioned his 12 apostles (Luke 9:1-9) and the 72 disciples (Luke 10:1-20) to bring good news to the poor – *Igbo* Christians included. The researcher suggests that the *Igbo* Church should use the next Jubilee year, 2028, to release, drop, and free Christian *Igbo* Ozo title holders who are ostracized, banned, excommunicated from the Catholic Diocese of *Orlu*, and who are denied the sacraments. This would be the time for the *Igbo* church to settle its old scores and cancel the sins of *Igbo* Ozo Catholics. This act is biblically founded. It is also theologically built. Jesus was constantly concerned with helping the poor, sinners, outcasts, and tax collectors (Luke 15:1-2). On these principles, the Jubilee year celebration can be applied to the specific cultural circumstances of *Igbo* Ozo Catholics.

#### **8.1.19 Recommendation for Future Research**

There are some unanswered questions that arose in this study that could be investigated by future researchers. The following are some suggested issues that the researcher feels are crucial.

First, there is need for future researchers to investigate the origin of *Igbo* Traditional Religion. Much has been written on the *Igbo* Traditional Religion. The *Igbo* man/woman is deeply religious. The knowledge of the origin of *Igbo* Traditional Religion would help us to appreciate why the *Igbo* man/woman is traditionally religious.

Furthermore, another area of interest that could be investigated is why the outcasts (*Osu*) in *Igbo* communities are not allowed to take the Ozo title. The outcasts are people dedicated to the *Igbo* deities and shrines. We should understand that man is created in the *imago Dei*, in the image of God (Genesis 1:26 - 27). The task of the researcher could be to investigate the theological doctrine of Genesis 1:26-26. If the *Igbo* people were able to recognize the special qualities of human nature which allows God to be made manifest in humans, then, they would appreciate the human person of those they call *Osu* (outcasts). The *imago Dei* has a moral undertone. The moral implications of the *imago Dei* is that if we say that we love God, implicitly, we are bound to love our fellow human beings whom God has created (John 13:35). This

understanding would allow the Ozo title holders to appreciate the contributions that those they call *Osu* (outcasts) would make towards Ozo title taking in *Igbo* communities.

Finally, future study could also focus on the significance of the ethical values of *Nze na Ozo* in the *Igbo* community. Much has been written on the Ozo title taking in *Igbo* society. Unfortunately, scholarship on the ethical values of the *Nze na Ozo* in *Igbo* land is still scanty. The researcher could focus on the relationship between the Ozo Ethical Code of Conduct and Deuteronomy 5:2. The *Igbo* people do not confer the Ozo title to just anybody. The prospective Ozo candidates must have certain qualities before they are accepted. The Ozo Ethical Code of Conduct is similar to the Ten Commandments given to Moses by God on Mount Sinai. An Ozo holder must not steal, commit adultery, or take his neighbor's property by force. The life of an *Nze* is centred on his righteousness. These are some of the ethical values which the Decalogue upholds. The *Igbo* Church would be able to appreciate the role of an *Nze* if a study is done on the Ethical Code of Conduct of the *Nze na Ozo* in *Igbo* society.

### **8.1.20 Conclusion**

The Ozo title taking is rooted to the *Igbo* culture. The *Igbo* culture is a set of shared attitudes, values, goals, beliefs and practices of the people. Everybody is born within a particular culture. Christ was born into the world from the Jewish culture. This is the basis of inculturation. Every culture (John Paul II 1995) needs to be transformed by Gospel values in the light of the Paschal Mystery. The Pontiff emphasized that the Good News, the Word of Jesus Christ proclaimed to the nations, must take root in the life-situation of the hearers of the Word. *Ecclesia* in Africa understood the role of culture and its inculturation into the Gospel message of Jesus Christ. There is no culture that is a hundred percent perfect. Not even the Jewish culture! All cultures need transformation. Just as the Word of God became like us in all things but sin, so too the inculturation of the Good News takes on all authentic human values, purifying them from sin, and restoring to them their full meaning.

The *Igbo* people should not be ashamed of their God-given culture. To be ashamed of our culture is a disservice to God who created the *Igbo*. The Ozo title taking must undergo rigorous changes to enable the *Igbo* Christians to participate fully in the

Gospel message. It should be proclaimed in the *Igbo* way of life for the message of Jesus to be meaningful. It is therefore wrong to say that the Ozo institution (2000:29) cannot be Christianized. The Church Christianized Christmas to allow its members to participate actively and fully in the Christian celebrations. Similarly, “Ozo” like the “Christmas” institution should be purified to allow the *Igbo* Christians to pray like *Igbos* in their God-given Church. Sarpong noted that inculturation deals with contextualization. It makes relevant the Word of the Lord in a given environment.

The inculturation of the Ozo title taking into the Christian values would not be easy. It is a challenging task. The Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM) recognized the challenge inculturation imposed on the Christian message when they said (African Synod 1988):

We recognized as well the challenge of inculturation of Christianity in Africa, and evangelization in depth of the African Christian, which respects and affirms his specific cultural identity and seeks to bridge the gap between faith and culture. In this important and delicate task, we are determined to proceed with courage, faith as well as with due sense of pastoral responsibility.

The Local Church should be involved in the process of Ozo title taking. It should be an ongoing process to avoid any syncretism. The major aim is to dispose the *Igbo* people to receive the message of Jesus Christ in an integral manner. According to Pope John Paul II, it touches them on the personal, cultural, economic, and political levels so that they can live a holy life in total union with God the father through the influence of the Holy Spirit.

The problem of Church leadership in the *Igbo* Church is to tally the application of the directions of the Church officials with theory and practice. There were expressions of betrayal, anger, resentment, and bitterness by those who participated in the study on the role of Church leadership in the *Orlu* Diocese. Some priests, laypeople, and *Ndi Nze na Ozo* title holders have appealed to the church leadership to change its attitude towards Ozo title taking in the *Orlu* Diocese. The parish priests had no answer to this problem, as the priests in *Igbo* land solely depend on the bishops on this particular issue. The bishops have the final say on Ozo title taking in the *Igbo* Church. The

researcher wants this research to pave a path to authentic and honest dialogue between the Church leadership and the *Igbo* Traditional Religion where the issue of Ozo title taking will be resolved cordially in the *Igbo* Church.

This study inspires the hope that Ozo institution can be Christianized in *Igbo* land. The Ozo title taking among the *Igbo* people is a cultural organization that has a lot of cultural values. We should encourage these values among our people. The church leadership should not ask the Ozo title holders to renounce their Ozo title. This would never solve the problem. The fact that one Ozo title member misbehaves does not make the institution bad. The fact that Judas Iscariot (Matthew 26:47-50) betrayed Jesus Christ does not mean that Apostleship is bad. Also, the fact that a bishop or a priest misbehaves does not make the priesthood bad. Priesthood is good and should be encouraged. Similarly, Ozo title per se is good even when one of the members does things that are inimical to the Gospel message of Jesus, since the purification of the Ozo title allows the members to worship Christ as *Igbo* Christians. The Ozo institution should be encouraged.

The mission of the Church is to preach the Good News to all creation (Mk. 16:15). This mandate is from the Risen Christ and the Church must carry it out. The Church in turn sends out preachers or evangelizers who would go to the people's culture to save souls. For like St. Paul to the Gentiles, the Church can say: "I preach the Gospel...for necessity is laid on me. Woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel" (1 Corinthians 9:16, KJV). As evangelizers, our mission is to help others to see God. It is important to realize that both the evangelizers and the evangelized could not be saved because of their *status quo*. We cannot be judged by our status. It is believed that we can only be judged by what we were able to do (Rom. 2:6-10) for the least of our brothers (Matt. 25:41 – 46, KJV). In these Biblical passages, it is only our good deeds that could earn us God's salvation. The good deeds (Harrington 1983) include feeding the hungry, offering hospitality to the homeless, clothing the naked, comforting the sick, and visiting the imprisoned. These deeds deserve a reward at the last judgment because of the relationship of identity between the Son of Man and the least advantaged (Matt. 25:40, 45). This means that clergy, laity, and (or) an Ozo title holder

who honestly identified with the poor would be saved; not condemned. God deserves mercy, not sacrifice (Matthew 9:13).

The *Igbo* Church is known for embarking on huge projects both at the Diocesan and parish levels. Huge Cathedrals or any other related projects are embarked upon. Levies are made and each parishioner is expected to pay irrespective of his or her financial ability. The *Ozo* title holders, as part of the parishioners, are happy to be part of these projects. There is always anger, hostility, and frustrations when the *Ozo* title holders are denied the sacraments after fully identifying with the Church. It is only when they needed the Church for one sacrament or the other that the church leadership would leave them like a sheep without a shepherd (Matthew 9:36). The excommunication of the *Ozo* title holders from the Church sacraments in *Orlu* Diocese is a disservice to Christ. Let us recognize that we are called to serve these people of God. Christ washed the feet of the apostles on Holy Thursday, an action He wants us to be doing. Also, the Vatican II emphasized this role very well. According to the Degree on the up-to-date Renewal of Religious Life, *Perfectae Caritatis* (No. 1 22), the life of the religious is to be a witness to the perfect charity of God through the profession of the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience. As ministers and pastors, we are called to serve one another. We are called to identify with the poor, helpless, and rejected in the society. It is only in doing this that we are serving God through our brothers and sisters. Christ asked Peter to feed His sheep (John 21: 17). The sheep belong to Christ. Similarly, we are called to feed the *Ozo* title holders that belong to Christ. We cannot do otherwise. We have an obligation to feed the sheep of Christ. Feeding these sheep means that we should not deny any sheep the Sacraments. Equally, the church in the *Orlu* Diocese should rethink its position on the *Ozo* title holders. They have an obligation to feed the *Ozo* title holders with the Sacraments. This is the mind of Christ. This is in line with the teaching of the Church.

Let us be aware that the devil is clever to distort the wonderful role of the church in serving the poor brothers and sisters in our communities. The devil can still quote the Bible. The devil asked Christ to fall down to worship him. Those who killed Christ thought that they were doing a service to God. Similarly, the devil is still at work in our own time. The priests and bishop(s) in the *Orlu* Diocese sometimes listen to some

desperate laypeople who would want the Ozo title taking to be abolished. Envy, resentment, and jealousy should not be our basis for administering the Sacraments. If this becomes our basis for denying the Sacraments from the Ozo members, then we have lost the focus of our call to service. Similarly, the church leadership in the *Orlu* Catholic Community that denies the faithful the Sacraments would be thinking that they are doing a service to God while in actual fact, they are disregarding the spirit of God that speaks to us through the Vatican II. The spirit and directions of the Vatican II has approved inculturation in the Church. This means that the *Igbo* cultural value of Ozo title taking should be incorporated into the church practices to allow the Church members in the *Igbo* Dioceses to have access to the Sacraments. This study is making a case that the Ozo title taking should be re-organized to accommodate the Ozo title taking into the Catholic Church.

Jesus does not spare anybody in denouncing those who are bent in blocking the Kingdom of heaven from people. He was hard on the Scribes and Pharisees who wanted to block people from entering into the Kingdom of God. Jesus accused them of tying up heavy burdens, which they would not attempt to carry. According to Saint Matthew: “They tie up heavy burdens (hard to carry) and lay them on people’s shoulders, but they will not lift a finger to move them” (Matthew 23:4, KJV). Jesus also said: “Woe to you, Scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites. You lock the Kingdom of heaven before human beings. You do not enter yourselves, nor do you allow entrance to those trying to enter” (Matthew 23: 14, KJV). The pastors are the new Scribes and Pharisees who preach the Good News of salvation to people. Our duty is to direct them to God who is the gate to heaven. Our duty is not to block the entrance of heaven to our brothers who take the Ozo title. Our duty is also not to tie up heavy burdens, which are too heavy to carry. Let us make their burdens light. For Jesus also said: “Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest, for my yoke is easy, and my burden light” (Matthew 11: 28-30, KJV). Harrington (1983) noted that using the traditional image of the law as a “yoke”, Jesus, the authoritative interpreter of the law promises refreshment and rest in his wisdom school. For Jesus desires mercy, not sacrifice (Matthew 12:7). The Church in *Igbo* land has a mission to feed the Christian Ozo title holders with the Sacraments among the *Igbo* Christians.

From this study, it has been established that the *Igbo* have leaders. Leadership in *Igbo* communities is not trusted into one person. The *Igbo* have conventional rules that guide the people. The people have an organized pattern of democracy by which they govern their society. The *Umunna* is a very important institution in *Igbo* society. The Ozo title holders perform important decision roles across *Igbo* communities. The Ozo titled men perform legislative, executive and judicial systems. What is important is that administration of justice across *Igbo* communities is democratic. At the rate things are going in the *Igbo* communities today, if it is not checked before the year 2050, the *Igbo* culture may be extinct. This thesis demonstrates that the title holders should be accorded their respect, because, they are custodians of *Igbo* traditions. Ozo title holders should speak the truth, should maintain peace and order, and should be just and upright in *Igbo* communities. And for the titled holders to make significant impact in the *Igbo* Church, Ozo title taking should be incorporated into Church practices in *Igbo* communities.

The Ozo titled man is initiated into the Ozo institution for service in the model of Christ the servant, who came to serve, but not to be served (Luke 9:11). He is called to lead his people by example. The Ozo man should know his role in the community, know what is expected of him, and do it. He should anticipate to the best of his ability, to meet the needs of his people with humility, kindness, and compassion.

The Ozo title holders are great men of honour across the *Igbo* communities. They live by the Code of Conduct and Ethics of the Ozo institution in *Igbo* land. They are the *Igbo* Knighthood of great warriors and men of ability and wealth (Kamau). They are men of integrity and honesty. Based on the inspiring qualities of the Ozo title holders, *Igbo* communities are in dire need of the integrity of the *Nze na Ozo*. Their leadership acumen should be emulated. Their integrity, honesty, honour, love, truth, righteousness, and sincerity would help to transform the *Igbo* communities. The Ozo title holders are the type of leaders *Igbo* want in *Igbo* and Church communities in the twenty-first century.

## 8.2 SUMMARY

Chapter 8 is the conclusion of the thesis scholarship. This chapter has been able to evaluate the entire thesis. The researcher outlined some pragmatic policies that if followed, would make significant changes in *Ozo* title taking across *Igbo* communities. These policy suggestions were anchored in *Igbo* context. This chapter proposed constructive guidelines that should be used during *Ozo* title taking for *Igbo* Catholics. These guidelines should be overseen by pastors of souls. What is important is that these suggested policy guidelines should be uniform in all *Igbo* communities where *Ozo* title taking is part of their culture.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A: Permission Letter

South African Theological Seminary

PO Box 258

*Rivonia*

South Africa

2128

July 13, 2010

*Imo* State Board of Education

*Owerri*

*Imo* State

Dear Sir/Madam,

This letter and the accompanying interview questions are from Joachim I. Oforchukwu from *Imo* State (Nigeria) who is currently a student at South African Theological Seminary. The interview questions attached are designed toward gathering information for the completion of my Doctoral thesis.

I am writing to request for permission to be allowed to conduct interviews in *Igbo* communities in the five States. I am doing my Doctoral research on: "A Theological Appraisal of Ozo Title Taking and its Implications for current Leadership issues in *Igbo* Catholic Church (Nigeria)". I will be interviewing ten participants. The researcher will respect the confidentiality of the participants unless they otherwise give consent to reveal their identity.

The topic under discussion has generated a lot of controversy within the *Igbo* communities. This research is crucial since the suggestions would help in future decisions in *Igbo* communities on Ozo title taking.

I anticipate that my request will be given a positive consideration.

Yours sincerely,

Joachim Ifezuo Oforchukwu.

## Appendix B

### LETTER OF CONSENT

Dear respondent,

I am writing to invite you to participate in a research study of my Doctoral thesis. The topic of my dissertation is: “A Theological Appraisal of Ozo title taking and its implications for current leadership issues in *Igbo* Catholic Church (Nigeria)”. The interview questions attached are intended for garnering information for the completion of my doctoral thesis. There are no anticipated risks related to this research. Also, your participation in this research is completely voluntary and you can quit from the study at any time without any consequence.

The Ozo title taking has raised a lot of controversies in some communities in *Igbo* society. The result of this doctoral thesis is important for some reasons. First, this research would generate a rich set of suggestions that could be applied to any part of *Igbo* Catholic community. Also, the suggestions in this study would be helpful in future theological decisions in the *Igbo* Catholic Church in Nigeria.

Your consent to participate in this research would be appreciated. Several steps would be taken to protect your identity and anonymity. If you have any information about this study, please contact me through my e-mail address.

\_\_\_\_\_ (Printed Name).

\_\_\_\_\_ (Signature).

\_\_\_\_\_ (Date)

Yours sincerely,

Joachim Oforchukwu

## Appendix C

### Interview Questions

RQ1: What is Ozo title taking?

RQ2: What are the purposes of Ozo title taking?

RQ3: Who could be admitted into Ozo title taking?

RQ4: What are the functions of Ozo title holders?

RQ5: Do the *Igbo* have leaders?

RQ6: What does the Church say about Ozo title?

RQ7: What does the Church say about inculturation?

RQ8: What does the Church say about Ozo title holders?

RQ9: What pastoral problems do *Igbo* Christians face with regard to Ozo title taking?

RQ10: Does the Ozo title taking conflict with Christian Practices?

RQ11: How should the Church address these problems?

RQ12: What would be the guidelines for Ozo title taking among the *Igbo* Christians?

RQ 13: What are the missionary teachings that down-grade Ozo title holding in the Church?