

WELCOME ADDRESS TO THE OFFICIAL HANDING OVER AND COMMISSIONING OF A BLOCK OF CLASSROOMS BY THE NATIONAL PRESIDENT ST LOUIS OWO ALUMNI ASSOCIATION (MRS OYEYEMI JIMI-SALAMI Nee FADAKA) ON 30TH NOVEMBER, 2018.

PROTOCOL:

His Royal Majesty, Kabiyesi Olowo of Owo Oba Victor Folagbade Olateru-Olagbegi,
The Lord Bishop of Ondo Diocese, Most Rev. Jude Ayodeji Arogundade,
The Honourable Commissioner of Education, Ondo State,
The Permanent Secretary Ondo State Ministry of Education,
The Tutor General Ondo North Senatorial Zone,
The Chairman and Executive School Based Management Committee (SLO),
The Chairman and Executive Parents Teachers Association (SLO),
The Parish Priest St Stephen's Church Fr Cajetan Famakinwa,
Sisters of St Louis,
The Principal, St Louis Girls Grammar School Owo,
Members of ANCOPSS present,
Staff of St Louis,
Alumni members St Louis Girls Grammar School Owo,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

In the name of the Almighty God, the giver of all that is good, I welcome you all to our dear Alma Mater on this beautiful day. Indeed, It is a beautiful day for us because it is a day of joy and fulfilment. A day when a journey which commenced five years ago is brought to a glorious close and crowning.

We are so delighted that we as Old girls of this great school are beginning to make impact on our darling old school. For years we watched forlornly as old girls of other sister schools like St Louis Ondo, Akure and Ikere provided solid support to their schools. The Alumni Association of this school can trace its existence to 1993. However, there was difficulty in reaching out to members across all generations. Nevertheless, the old girls on ground under the leadership of Mrs Margaret Adare decided to start the Classroom Project in 2013 to commemorate the 50th year of the School's existence. The project is the reason we are all here today.

The story of our Alumni Association changed in December 2016 when two old girls namely Monisola Akinrosotu Esan and Morayo Ayodele Asekun of the 1993 Set decided to create an Alumni group of St Louis Owo on the WhatsApp Electronic platform. This provided a very strong substratum on which we were able to build a virile Alumni Association. A bridge of friendship and cooperation was built among all generations of old girls of the schools and of course, across all continents of the world. Ours is an enviable platform of peace, love, harmony and mutual respect. Relationship among all generations have been cordial and seamless. This to me, is a requisite ingredient for teamwork and growth. If we continue in this stead, we definitely will be unstoppable.

These impressive traits are possible as a result of the training, the grooming and the modelling of character imbued in us by this school. We were indeed raised to be Ladies!

Our lives were shaped in a way that we are distinguishably resplendent in morals and character wherever we are found across the globe. We are in all professions, contributing our quota to humanity. Indeed, the contribution of this great school to our lives cannot be wished away.

St. Louis Girls Grammar School Owo was built in the early sixties to give quality education to the girl child in Owo Division. However, parents from all over the world and from all walks of life sent their girl children to St. Owo, not just for academics but also moral education. It was very compact, with adequate facilities to support a population of about three hundred students (both Day and Boarding

Students). Oh! St Louis was the girls school to beat then. A line up of St. Louis girls would fire the desire to associate with St Louis in every watcher. Infact, girls in Owo went to other schools only when they could not gain admission to St Louis Owo.

The takeover of the Mission Schools by the government of the day increased the intakes into the school, thus putting so much pressure on existing infrastructure in the school. It has grown from a school of two hundred students to a school of about one thousand, nine hundred and fifty. However, there had been no commensurate infrastructural development to support the population boom.

The school was not just known for academic excellence, but also morals, spiritual upbringing and vocational training. Girls were taught to be confident, resilient and independent. It is therefore no surprise that we have produced excellent Doctors, Lawyers, Professors, Engineers, Pharmacists, Nurses Teachers and super Administrators and Business women.

Having made a success of our own lives, we are determined to join hands together to take St Louis beyond its past place of glory, by positioning it as the "primus inter pares" among the schools in Ondo state. We shall continue to liaise with the School Authority, the Ministry of Education and the Catholic Diocese of Ondo to identify and address the needs of the school.

The Alumni Association as presently constituted, has organised itself in a manner that ensures speedy service delivery making use of modern internet tools. We are able to communicate effectively to arrive at timely decisions in the interest of the school. Perhaps it will interest you to know that this project was completed through video supervision. Snippets of videos were sent in by the school at different stages of the project which helped our decision making. Every old girl on the whatsapp and Telgram platforms had the benefit of watching the transformation of the project in the last two months.

It will surprise you to know that this Association conducts all its meetings online with attendance from across the globe. We have been able to organise ourselves to Branches and Set groups for greater effectiveness. We have been successful in birthing the North America and United Kingdom branches. Our Lagos and Akure branches are waxing strong and our Ibadan and Owo branches are picking up. We are hopeful that other branches will spring up shortly

In the spirit of giving back to the school, we have been able to collectively sink a borehole for the Boarding House to provide portable drinking water and also build the block of classrooms. Apart from these, we encourage our members who are capable of rendering personal assistance to the school to do so. In the light of this, one of us Mrs Derin Oloye Ogunleye donated a 42" inches television and a DVD player to the Boarding House. Mrs Justina Oduyemi of the 1979 set and an anonymous member of the Association have granted scholarships to brainy but indigent students from JS2 to SS3. Among these students is a visually impaired student. This will however be subject to their ability to sustain "A" scores in the course of their studies.

We are sub divided into Branches and Set groups for effectiveness, we also encourage them to adopt projects in the school. The 1979 set has picked up the gauntlet by taking the lead in this aspect. They have replaced firewood cooking with gas cooking in our kitchen. We were actually surprised to see that firewood was still in use in our dear old school in this age. They bought gas cooker and cylinders for the school. In addition to this, they decided to give the Dining Hall a facelift by painting its interiors and that of the kitchen

. Ladies and Gentlemen, the Dining Hall and the kitchen are works in progress in the hands of our 1979 sisters. A round of applause for them please.

The Lagos Branch had an impressive start and has not looked back in its pursuit of transforming our school. They hold their meetings once in two months and the level of attendance is impressive. They are currently contributing money for the refurbishing of the toilets in the Boarding House. Our sisters in diaspora and Akure are already strategising on what project to adopt. Our sisters in diaspora contributed immensely to the borehole project.

Having completed the classrooms now, we are going to allocate projects to the various Sets of the Association. A lot of projects are begging for immediate renovation and standardization. Below is a list of projects that have been identified and their estimated costs:

ICT building and equipping.	N40,000,000
State of the Art Furniture for the Classrooms.	N3,000,000
Building of a 10 room toilet for Junior School	N3,500,000
Laboratory Equipments	N5,000,000
Library Stocking	N3,000,000
Staff room and toilet for Teachers.	N10,000,000
Language Laboratory.	N8,000,000
Generator 40 KVA.	N3,000,000
Painting of the hostel	N2,500,000
Upgrading the Kitchen	N500,000
Food and Nutrition Dept.	N2,000,000
Laundry shed:	N1,500,000
School Bus (Brand new Toyota Coaster. Bus)	N50, 000,000
TOTAL	N132,000,000

One Hundred and Thirty Two Million Naira

Apart from the kind donations of Philanthropists like Chief Fatusin, Chief Akintan and Mrs Olukemi Mimiko who donated towards the classroom project in 2013, every other project was achieved through self levying. We have got to a point where we require external support. We shall be sending letters to the government, organisations, affluent individuals and of course, some of the dignitaries here today. We are optimistic that you will not disappoint us.

In order to put the school back in good stead, we shall constantly liaise with the Ministry of education and the Ondo Catholic diocese for key decision making. We want to be involved in decision on who leads the school and the number of students intake yearly. We will appreciate greater presence of the Catholic Church in the school. We want Reverend Sisters in our academic staff. We shall be in great support of the ongoing move to return our dear school to the Catholic church as this will contribute immensely to the restoration of the school's lost glory.

This speech will be incomplete if we do not thank all old girls of this Association both young and old who have risen to the clarion call to arise and support our developmental drive. Your responses have been phenomenal. You gave both your money, time and resources willingly for the progress of the Association. So many Mummies among us willingly and humbly took instructions from me to embark on assignments on behalf of the school. This to me, is humbling. You have all done very well, and I am deeply appreciative of your altruism and liberal spirits. If I start mentioning names of wonderful and supportive old girls here today, I am likely to offend some people by leaving their names out. But I am so certain that God knows you and your reward is coming soon. God bless you all, you are all great.

We thank the ever responsive Principal of the school, Mrs B.A. Anya who is ever willing to work with the Association. God bless you ma.

There are some Teachers here today, who assisted in the video coverages and the supervision of the projects. They are: Messrs Oyesusi, Adebayo and Ayodele. Can they they stand up for recognition please.

We thank Rev. Sister Christy Ibiang who works day and night to ensure that our girls receive proper training and grooming.

We have a special group of men here today, they are men I have been instructing and directing in the last few months without having met them. They are the hands that built the building. The Bricklayer Mr Anthony Talade the Welder Mr Salihu Usama, the Carpenter Mr Samuel Olorunmuwe and Chief Tunde Talabi the Painter. We thank you all for the good work. Finally I thank my Husband Jimi Salami for his unwavering support since I was saddled with the responsibility of leading this organization.

We thank you all for being here and wish us all journey mercies back to our various destinations.

Thank you.