

**Guardian Angels Motherless Babies Home:  
Celebrating 25 Years of Love, Care, and  
Transforming the Lives of Motherless and  
Orphaned Children**

*Editors*

**Msgr. Prof. Obiora Ike  
Sr. Martin Agnes Ibewuike**

© 2024

Msgr. Prof. Obiora Ike  
Sr. Martin Agnes Ibewuike

**ISBN: 978-978-773-422-3**

All rights reserved.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the prior permission of the copyright owners.

***Printed and bound in Nigeria by:***

**STRATEGIC CONSULTS**

14 Peter Okoye Street

Uwani, Enugu.

Nigeria

Tel.: 08038946169

&

**CIDJAP Publications**

1 CIDJAP Street,

Uwani, Enugu

# Table of Contents

Dedication	iii
Acknowledgements	v
<b>Preface:</b> GAMB at a Glance	vii
<b>Chapter 1:</b> History of Guardian Angels Motherless Babies Home (GAMB)	1
<b>Chapter 2:</b> GAMB's Aims, Mission, Vision, and Goals	3
<b>Chapter 3:</b> Early Challenges and Achievements (1998–2001)	5
<b>Chapter 4:</b> Leadership and Development under Sr. Lucy Ohademere (2001–2016)	7
<b>Chapter 5:</b> Relocation to Nwannedinamba (2015)	9
<b>Chapter 6:</b> Interim Leadership under Sr. Sylverline Nnaji (2016–2017)	11
<b>Chapter 7:</b> Second Phase of GAMB (2017–2024)	13
<b>Chapter 8:</b> Community and Apostolate Contributions	17
<b>Chapter 9:</b> Acknowledgements and Closing Remarks	19
<b>Conclusion:</b> Reflecting on 25 Years of Transforming Lives	21



## Dedication

This book is lovingly dedicated to:

- **The children of Guardian Angels Motherless Babies Home**, whose resilience and joy inspire hope and purpose in every step of our mission.
- **The Daughters of Mary Mother of Mercy (DMMM)**, for their unwavering dedication and selfless service in nurturing the most vulnerable.
- And to all the benefactors, particularly Dr. Deacon Edmund Eze of St. Wendelinus Parish, Mainhausen, Germany, and Dr. Elmar Kuhn of Christians in Need, Austria.

May this work serve as a testament to your enduring love, faith, and commitment to transforming lives.



## Acknowledgements

We extend our deepest gratitude to all who have contributed to the success and growth of Guardian Angels Motherless Babies Home over the past 25 years.

**CIDJAP** for initiating and managing this project.

Our heartfelt thanks go to the parishioners of **St. Wendelinus Parish, Mainhausen**, whose steadfast support laid the foundation for this mission. Special appreciation to **Deacon Edmund Eze** for his role in fostering connections that brought this vision to life.

We are profoundly grateful to **Christians in Need, Austria (CiN)**, and the **Pontifical Missionary Works in Germany** for their unwavering financial and moral support.

To the **local supporters, prayer groups, parish priests**, and countless individuals who have worked tirelessly in various capacities, your contributions have been invaluable.

Special thanks to the **Daughters of Mary Mother of Mercy (DMMM)** congregation, whose love and care for the children are the heart of this mission.

The **Catholic Diocese of Enugu** under the Bishops Michael Eneja (RIP), Anthony Gbuji and Callistus Onaga.

Finally, we thank **every staff member, volunteer, and well-wisher** who has walked this journey with us, ensuring that GAMB remains a beacon of hope and compassion for abandoned and orphaned children.

May God richly bless you all for your sacrifices and generosity.

For more information, updates, and ways to support Guardian Angels Motherless Babies Home, please visit our website: [www.gambhome.org.ng](http://www.gambhome.org.ng).

## *Preamble*

### **GAMB at a Glance**

Guardian Angels Motherless Babies Home, Nwannedinamba, can be compared to the parable of the mustard seed (Mt. 13:31-32), which was the smallest seed but grew to become the biggest of trees. **GAMB, which started with only three babies taken from Holy Child Motherless Babies' Home, Ogui, in 1998, has grown to care for more than 500 children over 25 years (1998–2024).**

Many of these children would have died without the loving care received in Enugu and beyond. The home came into existence through the dreams of many people in Germany, Nigeria, and Italy.

GAMB's humble beginnings started with a parish in Germany named St. Wendelinus Parish through Deacon Eze in 1998. They became the founding support that helped in the construction of a three-floor building at Emene, which was handed over to the Catholic Diocese of Enugu through CIDJAP. The home is managed by the Daughters of Mary Mother of Mercy (DMMM) congregation under CIDJAP's supervision. The parishioners of Wendelinus have remained loyal and supportive of GAMB to date.

**Msgr. Obiora Ike and Deacon Edmund Eze, during the bishopric of Most Rev. Anthony Okonkwo Gbuji, Bishop of Enugu, visited Mainhausen, Germany, where they met the then Bishop of Mainz, Cardinal Karl Lehmann, to discuss support for this vision.** They made the dream a reality with many strategic plans and actions put in place to promote life

and to house and care for the motherless and abandoned babies (orphans) with love and compassion.

On 10<sup>th</sup> April 2015, the home was relocated from the old site at Nebedum Close, Emene, to the new site at Nkpologwu, Nwannedinamba, as a result of environmental threats to the land, floods with torrential rains, and insecurity. At Nwannedinamba, a new home was established, this time through the support of Christians in Need in Vienna, Austria, under Dr. Elmar Kuhn, who made funds available for the construction of the new home—a place of peace for the little angels.

We thank and appreciate the parishioners of St. Wendelinus Parish through the Mission Group under Deacon Edmund Eze. We also extend our gratitude to CSI and CiN Vienna, Austria, and the Pontifical Missionary Works in Germany for their unwavering support.

We further acknowledge the countless local supporters, families, friends of GAMB, parish priests, legionaries, individuals, prayer groups, and the Bishop of Enugu, alongside the CIDJAP Team.

May God bless everyone abundantly for their selfless sacrifices and contributions to GAMB. It is a reality that the home is a haven for children who are homeless, victims of Christian persecution in Nigeria, orphans, and abandoned kids.

We say bravo to CIDJAP under our humble and visionary Rev. Msgr. Prof. Obiora Ike.

- Long live Enugu Diocese.
- Long live St. Wendelinus Parish.
- Long live Deacon Edmund and family.

- Long live CIDJAP.
- Long live DMMM Congregation.

Since the inception of the home 25 years ago, and up until this report, the home has cared for and nurtured more than five hundred (500) babies, some of whom will take their rightful positions in society.

To learn more about Guardian Angels Motherless Babies Home and our ongoing mission, visit us at [www.gambhome.org.ng](http://www.gambhome.org.ng).



## *Chapter 1*

# **History of Guardian Angels Motherless Babies Home (GAMB)**

### **Introduction**

The Guardian Angels Motherless Babies Home (GAMB) was established in 1998.

Following the negotiations between Holy Angels (Opus Angelorum) in Rome and the Catholic Diocese of Enugu to receive the transfer of a property funded and started by the German Catholic Parish of St. Wendelinus, Mainhausen, under Deacon Edmund Eze, the then Bishop of Enugu, Most Rev. Dr. Anthony Okonkwo Gbuji, together with Very Rev. Msgr. Obiora Ike, the Vicar General and Director of CIDJAP signed an Agreement of Transfer. Opus Angelorum in Rome transferred the buildings, project, and intentions of a Motherless Babies' Home project in an earlier proposal with the German parish of Mainhausen to the Catholic Diocese of Enugu.

### **Inception and Early Beginnings**

The Catholic Diocese of Enugu, under Bishop A. O. Gbuji, invited the Daughters of Mary Mother of Mercy (DMMM) to manage the orphanage. On 28<sup>th</sup> December 1998, the Superior General of the Daughters of Mary Mother of Mercy (DMMM), Mother Beninga Amadi, sent two sisters, Sr. Sophia Maria Nwanekezie and Sr. Rita Mario Ibeabuchi, accompanied by Sr. Concepta Okparaji (of blessed memory), the then bursar general of DMMM, to Enugu to manage the orphanage home at Emene, Nnebedum Close, on behalf of the Diocese of Enugu through CIDJAP.

Since the place was not yet ready, the two Sisters shuttled daily from the Ogui Community to Emene to put things in order. They worked tirelessly for three months to get the place ready to receive the babies and provide comfort for the sisters.

Hence, the work they started on 28<sup>th</sup> December 1998 was completed by 22<sup>nd</sup> February 1999. They moved to Guardian Angels Motherless Babies' Home in February 1999. As they moved in, they brought along three babies from Holy Child Motherless Babies' Home, Ogui, as a start. The names of the three babies were:

- Chinazaekpere
- Kelechukwu (K.C) and
- Kaosirisochukwu

### **Initial Support and Contributions**

On 23<sup>rd</sup> March 1999, almost one month later, they received the first baby named Emeka, brought by Rev. Fr. Herbert Eneh, the deputy director of CIDJAP at the time. As providence would have it, Sr. Lucy Ohademere arrived the same day, appointed by the congregation as the secretary and bursar of the home, as well as the superior of the community. Sr. Sophia, a nurse by profession, served as the matron, overseeing the care of the babies, while Sr. Lucy, with her background in secretarial studies, fulfilled her role as the secretary and bursar of the home.

Sr. Sophia managed the home from December 1998 until March 2001, when she left for further studies, while Sr. Lucy, who learned on the job, assumed dual responsibilities as the second matron and the secretary of the home. Sr. Lucy worked with several bursars during her tenure.

## *Chapter 2*

### **GAMB's Aims, Mission, Vision, and Goals**

#### **GAMB's Aims and Objectives:**

- To accept and provide shelter for motherless and abandoned babies
- To offer care and support with love and compassion
- To provide them with the tenderness of a mother
- To help them feel a sense of belonging
- To uphold their dignity as human beings and enhance their health and well-being
- To ensure their education
- To instil sound morals
- To instil hope in them

#### **GAMB's Mission:**

- To protect and nurture life while promoting love and compassion
- To give persecuted, abandoned, and orphaned children a sense of equality and belonging.
- To ensure no discrimination based on race, colour, or religion
- To prepare children for the challenges of life ahead
- To prepare children to contribute to societal development
- To equip children to contribute to the propagation of the gospel

#### **GAMB's Vision:**

- To nurture children who are blessed with peace, freedom, dignity, and the shared love of God and humanity

**GAMB's Goals:**

- To help children develop their potential
- To help them discover their destiny
- To help them secure their rightful place in society
- To make them aware of their equal rights with others

## *Chapter 3*

# **Early Challenges and Achievements (1998–2001)**

### **Initial Efforts by Sr. Sophia Maria Nwanaekezie**

Sr. Sophia Maria Nwanaekezie, conscious of the fact that she had a lot to do in the new home as the first young matron, fresh from nursing school, applied herself to work. She diligently settled into the enormous responsibilities and challenges imposed by the new position and site.

### **Challenges in Establishing the Home**

- Reconstruction and refurbishment of the existing vacant building handed over to the Enugu Diocese by Opus Angelorum. Rev. Fr. Ezekwugo, a Nigerian priest and monk in Rome, had initiated earlier discussions about the project with Rev. Edmund Eze.
- Insufficient personnel.
- Inadequate funds to pay salaries.
- Lack of access to clean water.
- Absence of reliable electricity.
- Poor environmental conditions.
- Pollution from a nearby pottery industry.
- Erosion caused by water overflowing its banks during the rainy season.
- Lack of a washing machine making hand washing laborious and challenging.

Despite these challenges, the Sisters' unwavering zeal, unmatched dedication, and steadfast determination led to remarkable progress in the home.

**Milestones Achieved**

From the three babies she started with, Sr. Sophia was able to care for thirty-three babies within just two and a half years (1998–2001). Sr. Sophia, a vibrant, competent, and resourceful manager of human, material, and financial resources, achieved the following for the home:

- Refurbishment of the convent
- Equipping the convent chapel
- Provision of beds and bedding for the babies.
- Provision of mattresses and rubber sheets for the babies and the convent.
- Recruitment of additional staff to meet increasing demands.
- Writing of staff guidelines for the home.
- Provision of cupboards for storing babies' clothing.
- Registration of the home with the Enugu State Gender Affairs Commission in February 1999.

It would be an understatement to say that the tremendous success achieved by Sr. Sophia and Sr. Rita in their apostolate came without untold hardships, which included shuttling from Ogui to Emene daily for three solid months, hand washing babies' napkins, and enduring a lack of staff, water, and hygiene. Despite these challenges, Sr. Sophia was able to make remarkable strides. She is a goal-setter and a trailblazer.

## *Chapter 4*

# **Leadership and Development under Sr. Lucy Ohademere (2001–2016)**

### **Transition and Leadership**

A new chapter began in 2001 when Sr. Lucy Ohademere became the second matron and first secretary/bursar of the home. Under Sr. Lucy, an amiable, progressive, and development-minded leader, the home underwent significant improvements.

During her tenure, she exhibited unwavering dedication to touching the lives of the babies, earning her the title 'Mama of the Home.' Her desire to sustain the growth of the home led to its relocation to the new site at Nwannedinamba Estate. Her commitment was so profound that her zeal was unparalleled.

### **Notable Achievements:**

- Purchase of a Sienna car.
- Construction of a well.
- Installation of a new generator set.
- Installation of a landline phone and a fax machine.
- Purchase of a new typewriter.
- Equipping the chapel and parlour.
- Installation of a three-phase meter.
- Construction of a laundry room.
- Provision of cupboards for storing babies' clothes.
- Renovation and painting of the home.
- Tiling of the rooms.
- Engagement of medical services, including a pediatric consultant, to improve the health and well-being of the babies.
- Installation of an inverter.

- Recruitment of personnel.

She made remarkable improvements to the home, and her exceptional work speaks volumes. Sr. Lucy applied her outstanding organisational skills and commendable administrative acumen to the challenging task of ensuring the home's steady growth.

### **Challenges Faced**

During her tenure, the home reached an enviable height but not without significant challenges:

- Insufficient accommodation as the number of babies increased.
- Shortage of staff.
- Financial constraints.
- Lack of access to clean water.
- Poor environmental conditions.
- Frequent power outages due to electricity instability.
- Insecurity.
- Air pollution.
- Flooding caused by erosion.
- Lack of a washing machine for efficient laundry.
- Inadequate quarters for staff and caregivers.

Despite these challenges, Sr. Lucy not only sustained the growth and development of the home but also made the most of every situation. On 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2016, God called her to her heavenly reward amidst her labours after a life of remarkable achievements.

## *Chapter 5*

### **Relocation to Nwannedinamba (2015)**

#### **Reasons for Relocation**

GAMB was relocated from Nnebedum Close, Emene, to Nwannedinamba Estate on 10th April 2015. The relocation was necessitated by disasters that claimed most of the home's property. These issues were caused by erosion, a high mortality rate among the inmates due to pollution, poor environmental conditions, lack of potable water, inadequate accommodation, and other challenges.

This dire situation drew the attention and compassion of Msgr. Obiora Ike who took swift action to alleviate the suffering of the Sisters and the babies. His swift intervention, combined with prayer, inspired Elmar Kuhn, Director of Christian Solidarity International Austria (now Christians in Need Austria), to secure resources for constructing the new home.

#### **Building the New Site at Nwannedinamba**

As a member of the National Conference for Constitutional Reforms in Nigeria under the governance of President Goodluck Jonathan in 2014, Msgr. Obiora Ike served as the leader of the southeast geopolitical zone at the Conference alongside General Ike Nwachukwu. During this time, he garnered goodwill support from friends at the National Conference to assist in building the new orphanage.

Given the urgency of the situation, the new site was completed in less than one year. The new home is located at Nwannedinamba Estate, along Enugu-Abakaliki Express Road, opposite New Haven Suite, Enugu City Layout, Enugu.

The new site features four magnificent buildings designed for the Sisters, babies, stores, and offices. It is spacious, well-landscaped, and lush with greenery. The environment is clean, spacious, and airy—a truly wonderful place.

### **Improvements and Transformation**

The relocation to the new site brought numerous transformations to the home, including:

- A conducive atmosphere.
- A clean environment.
- Improved hygiene standards facilitated by new technology, such as washing machines.
- Availability of water.
- Regular electricity.
- A playground for children's recreation.
- Improvements in the babies' health and well-being, along with encouragement and support from Msgr. Obiora Ike, foreign benefactors, and local friends.

Sr. Lucy was the driving force behind the relocation to the new site at Nwannedinamba. By God's grace, she witnessed the beginning and completion of the new site and even moved in herself, although she lived there for only one year and seven months.

Nevertheless, she saw her wishes and desires fulfilled. May her gentle soul rest in peace. She left behind a legacy of hard work and selfless service.

## *Chapter 6*

# **Interim Leadership under Sr. Sylverline Nnaji (2016–2017)**

### **Maintaining Stability during Mourning**

Sr. Sylverline Nnaji assumed the role of interim matron following the death of Sr. Lucy Ohademere. She served the home from 23rd November 2016 to March 2017. During this period, the home was in a state of mourning, fear, and confusion due to the sudden loss of Sr. Lucy.

Despite the challenging circumstances, Sr. Sylverline managed to maintain equilibrium and ensured that the home continued to function smoothly. Her calm and steady leadership provided much-needed stability during this difficult time.

### **Achievements in a Short Tenure**

Although she served for only a few months, Sr. Sylverline successfully overcame numerous challenges. Her ability to navigate the home through this transitional period exemplified her dedication and resilience.

May God bless and reward all those who have worked tirelessly in this home since its inception up to March 2017, helping to bring it to its current state.



## *Chapter 7*

### **Second Phase of GAMB (2017–2024)**

#### **Leadership of Sr. Martin Agnes Ibewuike**

The second phase of GAMB began in March 2017 while the home was still in a state of mourning and uncertainty due to the passing of its beloved matron, Sr. Mary Lucy Ohadomere.

The interim leadership of Sr. Sylverline Nneji ended when the dynamic Sr. Martin Agnes Ibewuike was appointed as the new matron of GAMB. She was sent to GAMB with the primary goal of maintaining peace between the Diocese, CIDJAP, and the DMMM congregation.

Aware of this responsibility, she diligently worked to maintain harmony among the staff, the babies, benefactors, and friends of the home. Known for her peace, orderliness, cleanliness, and managerial acumen, Sr. Martin Agnes transformed GAMB within a few years. With her arrival, things began to change.

#### **Organisational Reforms**

Upon taking over, many aspects of the home were in disarray, including office organisation, programme planning, and children's room arrangements. Above all, there were no Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) in place.

Despite encountering numerous challenges both internally and externally, Sr. Martin Agnes' unwavering zeal, dedication, and vision brought significant changes. She implemented protocols for the admission and discharge of babies, provided educational materials, clothing, and food supplies for discharged children, and improved staff conditions of service. These measures also

ensured protection from unnecessary embarrassments and legal issues, safeguarding the reputation and smooth operation of the home.

She also developed and implemented policies that improved the smooth running and management of the home. In addition to these organisational reforms, Sr. Martin Agnes demonstrated her excellence as a teacher and organiser. She trained the staff in best practices for handling, preparing feeds, feeding, and caring for the babies, ensuring their holistic growth and development.

Her motto, "*Make the place better than you see it,*" inspired these reforms and set a high standard for the operation of the home.

### **Infrastructure Development**

Sr. Martin Agnes oversaw significant infrastructural advancements, including:

- Refurbishment of the convent chapel, parlour, babies' kitchen, and rooms, as well as the addition of projections and walkways, beautified with bricks and furniture, among other enhancements.
- Construction of fish ponds, a poultry facility, and a playground.
- Renovation and painting of existing buildings.
- Installation of a water reservoir in 2018 and a new staff hostel in 2024, both funded by Monsignor Obiora Ike. The hostel was blessed on 15th August 2024 by His Lordship Most Rev. C.V.C. Onaga.
- A grotto constructed and donated by Mr. & Mrs. Edwin Okum was blessed and commissioned for public use on 2nd April 2024.
- Donation of a Lexus 330 car by Pastor Paul in July 2024.

- Contribution of an incomplete storied building by Master Chinedu.

These efforts transformed GAMB into a modern home, earning it the nickname "Local Small London."

### **Awards and Recognition**

Under her leadership, GAMB received an award for excellence in record-keeping, environmental cleanliness, and neatness, as well as for well-kept babies. This recognition came from Northern Youth Corps members and the Gender Affairs Commission in Enugu.



## *Chapter 8*

### **Community and Apostolate Contributions**

#### **Outreach Programmes**

Despite her tight schedule, Sr. Martin Agnes dedicates time to family and youth apostolates. She established groups such as Catholic African Family Life Care (CAFLiC) and Little Friends of Christ (LFC) to enrich the lives of families and children.

#### **Family and Youth Apostolate Efforts**

Sr. Martin Agnes organised a seminar titled "**Marriage Encounter**" in the diocese in 2022, aimed at strengthening married life and helping families reclaim pristine values. She is also known for her generosity, always giving as she receives.

The home has nurtured more than 500 children, many of whom have gone on to achieve success in society, including a senior seminarian from its care.



## *Chapter 9*

# **Acknowledgements and Closing Remarks**

### **Appreciation for Contributors**

Sr. Martin Agnes worked in close collaboration with:

- Sisters Sylverline Nneji, Anthonia Paul, Enderline Emeka, Gloria Ebegbulem, and Sr. Chidera Ikeh.
- The visiting doctor.
- Staff members.
- The driver, Master Anayo Abah.
- Directors of CIDJAP: Rev. Fr. Chinedu Anieke, Rev. Fr. Donatus Onuigbo, and Very Rev. Msgr. Prof. Obiora Ike.

Their collective efforts ensured the glory of God and the continued growth of GAMB.

### **Prayers and Blessings**

We pray to God for the physical and spiritual strength Sr. Martin Agnes needs and commend her to the maternal care of Our Mother of Mercy.

- Long live GAMB!
- Long live CIDJAP!
- Long live the Catholic Diocese of Enugu!
- Long live the DMMM congregation!
- Long live all our benefactors within Nigeria and abroad!

May God abundantly bless all those who have contributed to the smooth operation, growth, and development of GAMB.



## *Conclusion*

# **Reflecting on 25 Years of Transforming Lives: A Postscript by Chinedu Chukwu (Publisher & Printer)**

As we celebrate 25 years of love, care, and transforming lives at Guardian Angels Motherless Babies Home, we reflect on the incredible journey that began with a mustard seed of faith. From the humble beginnings of caring for three babies to nurturing over 500 children, this mission has grown into a beacon of hope for the abandoned, the orphaned, and the vulnerable.

This achievement would not have been possible without the unwavering dedication of the Sisters, the visionary leadership of Msgr. Prof. Obiora Ike, the steadfast support of our local and international benefactors, and the countless individuals who have contributed in various ways.

Looking forward, GAMB remains committed to its mission of nurturing children with love, dignity, and compassion while striving to create an even brighter future for every child under its care. With God's guidance and the continued support of our benefactors, we are confident that this home will remain a sanctuary of hope for generations to come.

### **Be a Part of the Mission**

Join us in continuing this journey of love, care, and transformation. Together, we can bring hope to the lives of many more children in need.

Visit GAMB's website, [www.gambhome.org.ng](http://www.gambhome.org.ng), to learn more about our work, explore inspiring stories, and discover meaningful ways to support our mission.

Contact the Catholic Institute for Development, Justice and Peace (CIDJAP) at:

**Address:** No. 1-3 CIDJAP Street,  
Uwani,  
Enugu 400001  
Nigeria

**Email:** [admin@cidjap.org](mailto:admin@cidjap.org)

**Website:** [www.cidjap.org](http://www.cidjap.org)