

I AM HERE TO LOVE AND TO SERVE ALL OF YOU

I am Fr Johnpromise Ikenna Umeozuru, originally from Nigeria but a citizen of Great Britain. Born on the 1st of May 1982 in Aba town Nigeria, and into the family of Mr Marcel and Mrs Elizabeth Umeozuru of Umuchu village in Anambra State, Nigeria. I have five other siblings: four brothers and one sister. I felt the call to the priesthood at the age of 7 through the exemplary life of my then parish priest in Nigeria – Late Mgr Raph Nwosu. I entered the minor seminary when I was 11 years old and after 19 years of seminary formation in Nigeria, Rome and England, the amiable Bishop Philip Egan ordained me a priest on the 20th of July 2019. My long stint in the seminary led to my graduating with a B.A Hons in Philosophy from University of Ibadan Nigeria, a B.Phil and B.STh respectively from Pontifical Urban University Rome, a B.Tec from International School of Business Studies London and an MBA from Cardiff Metropolitan University Wales. After my priestly ordination, I worked in Jersey for 2 years as an Assistant Priest under Canon Dominic Golding. In 2021, I was transferred to City Centre Southampton Parish for 2 years as an Assistant Priest under Mgr Canon Vincent Harvey. Before joining the diocese of Portsmouth, I worked full time for 7 years as a deputy manager in a residential care home in London, and part time as a qualified Assessor/Tutor within the Health and Social Care Sector in England. My hobbies include: gyming, jogging, running, singing, cooking, movies, meditation, long walks, travelling, reading, and writing, arts, making friends and critical thinking.

I am here to love and to serve all of you. I am a strong believer in the 3 Principles of Divine Renovation – BELONG, BELIEVE, BEHAVE. It is only when people feel they Belong to a welcoming, loving, merciful and forgiving community that they would Believe in what that community tells them and then model their Behaviours on the community's principles. For the next few years, I would like all of us to focus on BELONGING. Yes, let us make Fleet and Church Crookham a WELCOMING HUB for all peoples be they practicing or lapsed Catholics, Christians of various denominations, people of other faiths and those of none. This is the first principle of Jesus Christ – He met people where they were, and He continues to meet us where we are. **Let everyone who comes into our 2 churches find a welcoming, loving, merciful and forgiving community.** I am aware many of our parishioners here and elsewhere have been hurt in the past either by the Church or by her Clergy; on behalf of the Church and all Clergy, I apologise to such persons and beg you to forgive us. Come back and join me in making your parish what you wish it to be. We need you and have missed you so much.

My Ministry of Service among you will be an INCLUSIVE ONE and my door will always be OPEN TO ALL. **This is your parish and I want you to take ownership of it.** I am here to serve you all and to walk with you all in that Synodal Journey of LISTENING and JOURNEYING TOGETHER. I am not perfect at all, and I might make mistakes along the way; however, do correct me when I make mistakes and do not be afraid to point me in the right direction. **Remember, I am here to love you and to serve all of you.**

FR JOHN PROMISE IKENNA UMEOZURU, BA.Hons, B.Phil, B.STh, B.Tec, MBA.