

A Memorable Afternoon with the Archbishop of Lagos

The archbishop of Lagos, Most Rev. Alfred Adewale Martins, visited Lakeside, a student's residence near the University of Lagos. His visit brought joy to everyone, and his words of encouragement left a deep impression. The visit ended not just with heartfelt gratitude, but with a renewed sense of purpose in the mission of helping young people build an impactful life.

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It was a warm and peaceful afternoon on Friday, May 23, 2025, when the Archbishop of Lagos, Most Rev. Alfred Adewale Martins, visited Lakeside Study Centre. He arrived shortly after 2 p.m., accompanied by his secretary, Rev. Fr. Paul Ariole, and the Dean of Yaba Deanery, Rev. Fr. Michael Okonkwo. The Archbishop was warmly welcomed by the Centre's Director, Francis

Onwumere, along with many university students.

Upon his arrival, the Archbishop went straight to the chapel to pray for a few minutes and observe the arrangements for worship and the sacraments. He was then given a brief tour of the library and other areas dedicated to professional formation. During the tour, as the Director described the evolution of the Centre over time, the Archbishop remarked that such a gradual approach is “how the work has always been done”—starting with what one has and making the best of it.

The visit continued with an interactive session in a family setting. The Director gave a concise presentation on the various initiatives of the Centre that benefit over 300 students each year, helping them build a solid foundation for

their life and career during the school years. Highlights included Lakeside's professional and Christian formation programmes such as the Scholars Program, the Data Science and Software Development programs, the Wealth and Personal Finance programs, Christian Conversations classes, catechism, retreats, and more. In response, the Archbishop praised Lakeside's efforts in providing formation as a way of shielding young people from distractions that pull them away from life's high goals.

The session also featured personal accounts, including one from Damian, a medical student at the University of Lagos, who volunteers to teach catechism in non-faith-based secondary schools, where Christian formation is often lacking. He shared how he and his friends have been preparing students from King's College for the sacraments over the

past five years. The Archbishop was visibly impressed by their dedication and consistency in accompanying young people in the faith.

Another personal account was from David, a young professional, who took the opportunity to personally thank the Archbishop for a letter of recommendation he had written to the Italian embassy. That letter enabled him to travel to Rome in April 2025 as a volunteer, helping pilgrims have a fulfilling experience during their visit to the Holy City.

The Archbishop listened attentively and commended the Centre's commitment to forming both the minds and hearts of young people, especially in an age when many face challenges such as drug abuse and a loss of moral direction. He encouraged everyone to continue the good work, saying it was deeply needed in today's society. The

Archbishop smiled warmly when the Director shared that people at the Centre pray for him at least three times a day. Touched by this gesture, he responded, “I’m counting on your prayers—please don’t stop.”

Before taking his leave, the centre presented him with a framed ceramic artwork of Our Lady of Mount Carmel as a simple yet heartfelt commemorative souvenir. The green and gold mantle in the artwork is symbolic of hope in difficult times. The Archbishop received it with sincere appreciation, then offered his blessing to all those present, bringing the visit to a gentle and uplifting close.

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Victor Ilori

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