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IIT: An Exciting Project Empowering Young Nigerians

IIT was set up in commemoration of the centenary of the birth of St. Josemaría Escrivá, the founder of Opus Dei, a Catholic institution. He was greatly concerned about helping the less privileged members of society to improve their social conditions, such that they could obtain the needed resources to live more dignified lives.

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The school aims to provide top-quality technical training to persons belonging to the lower income stratum of society by means of scholarships. It also provides technical retraining and skills upgrading courses for industry workers. It is also a values dissemination centre, which teaching Work Ethics in all its training programs. It is open to all, irrespective of their religious or ethnic affiliations or creed.

On the occasion of the fifth graduation of the Institute for Industrial Technology (IIT), on Friday December 7, 2007, Norbert Edomah had a chat with the director general, Olatunji Makun.

Norbert: It's the fifth graduation ceremony of IIT and the first in her permanent site. How do you feel about it?

Tunji Makun: Great, Very excited, because it's what we have been hoping for, despite all the challenges.

Norbert: And why does IIT give you so much joy? Are you any nearing to accomplishing the aims for which the technical school was set up?

Tunji Makun: Yes, I would say that the aims, that of *impacting technical knowledge, vocational skills and good work values (ethics) to deserving out-of-school youths from low-income groups and adult workers from industry, including technicians, engineers and machine operators* is being achieved.

We have trained quite a good number of people, both regular young students, as well as people

from the industry. We have gotten and are still getting good positive feedback about the quality of training we deliver. An alumnus of IIT was recently heard to say that: ***“IIT shows keen interest in the training and formation of the entire person, the people there are interested in making you professionally, morally, and even spiritually sound. They would tell us that it is wrong for one to be known as a ‘good’ and competent technician whose moral integrity is questionable”.***

This makes me happy because this is what we have been aiming to do and will continue doing.

Norbert: I imagine you have had some challenges in fulfilling and actualizing this mission?

Tunjui Makun: Sure there are challenges, but we are surmounting them all with the help of all

stakeholders. The Lagos State Government for example has been a great supporter of this social and educational project. We hope to continue to count on their help as we build other phases of the school project that will require further allocation of land.

The second is the challenge of the floods causing by a nearby overflowing dam, which occurred twice this year. During those periods, school activities were completely paralyzed. It however seems the state government has started making moves to tackle that problem.

The third challenge is that of getting more scholarships and grants to help train more youths at the new facility.

The last but not the least is the challenge of seeing IIT grow and make some necessary impact in society.

Norbert: And your future dreams for IIT?

Tunji Makun: To be the best technical training institute in Africa, a center for spreading good Christian morality, and an important center for technological development in Nigeria.

I look forward to having as many people as possible attend the graduation ceremony. Many pleasant surprises await them!

Norbert Edomah, Lagos

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