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Standing for Others in Lagos

Several women attending the means of formation in centres of Opus Dei in Lagos started WiNE (Women in New Evangelization) an initiative that organizes activities for young professionals. They decided to start one to help the less privileged during the COVID-19 pandemic.

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It all started one day, as a result of the stay-at-home situation during the

Covid 19 pandemic, when the ladies of *Women in New Evangelization* (WiNE) took the initiative to help the less privileged. Our activities usually take place in the Centre of Opus Dei, but for this project, we created a virtual tour group of about 170 young professionals (headed by seven people) to serve as a channel of communication, and this has enabled a safe interaction. Our aim was to reach one hundred and fifty families who have little to eat.

As the pandemic spread in Nigeria, Lagos metropolis was placed on a lockdown. Majority of its twenty million residents are engaged in daily jobs, and this means that an imposed lockdown would mean that most of them would not be able to work, and hence not be able to eat. Through interactions with friends in their parishes, we identified *St. Monica's Parish* in Maza Maza (Amuwo Odofin LGA) and *Our Lady*

of The Holy Rosary Parish, in Ibeju-Lekki, as areas with people we might be able to help.

Although government authorities had begun to share relief materials, it was not enough for the teeming population, most of whom live on below a dollar a day. Nevertheless, there was a call for private bodies, institutions and establishment to support their efforts. Already, the Archbishop of Lagos reiterated Pope Francis call to help vulnerable people in their needs. Following this lead, we at WiNE decided to do our bit.

We started asking for donations. The response was so good that in a matter of three days, the committee's budget had been surpassed. With the money raised we bought foodstuff such as six bags of rice, two bags of beans, two bags of garri, sixteen cartons of chikki noodles, seventeen cartons of sachet pureed tomatoes

and bags for repackaging. These repacked items were divided into two and sent to the two locations.

Apart from helping those residents, we also asked that our own members in need reach out privately for assistance, as Charity had to 'begin at home'.

We are very happy with the stories, testimonies and feedback from the two places to which we sent help. Those who went to St. Monica's said: *"we were able to share the items among eighty (80) families, many of which had nothing to eat before now. They are so grateful for your kind gesture"*. Our Lady of the Holy Rosary Parish also sent a message through their Parish Priest as follows: *"such donations at this critical time are unexpected, quite timely and very helpful"*. Altogether, a total of one hundred and fifty-eight (158) families benefited from this

outreach. Prayers were showered on WiNE for their benevolence and gracious effort to help those in need. Subsequently, the wealth of the blessings that were poured on the benefactors will carry them for a lifetime. On our part, we attributed all glory to God who gave us the idea and the zeal to carry out this outreach.

God bless us all!

St Josemaría Escrivá, pray for us!

Our Lady, Queen of Nigeria, pray for us!

Brenda Unuavworho