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Walking with the Saints

During lockdown in Nigeria a young lady starts a book club with online meetings, with interesting results.

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I can't remember when I did not like reading. I generally read everything. The idea of starting a book club at first did not have much to do with starting an apostolic initiative. Someone had mentioned that she would be starting a book club for ladies and I decided that it was

something that would be fun to join in on. It was going to be a book club that was not focused on a particular genre of books but would generally encourage us to read good books. We got the books but a few technicalities stalled the eventual take off. I trust she will definitely still do this.

Back to me; at the beginning of the lockdown in Nigeria as a result of the pandemic, a friend had asked what I thought I could do as a personal project. My friends and I -prior to the lockdown - would meet to discuss some interesting doctrinal topics but I can't say we were doing much as it was difficult to find time for this and with everyone together on a regular basis. I just said to myself; "why don't you start a book club for your friends"?

All I knew for sure, was that it seemed I was constantly "marketing" books for others to read. This idea of

starting a book club was of course, one of my many "good" ideas which I had no idea when it would materialize.

Then I stumbled upon a forwarded message that had a link by Scepter publishers for free books. At that point it sounded so clear and I just saw it as my cue. I began to tell my friends about the book club and the interesting books available for us to read and have discussions on. The objectives of the book club were very clear and shared on WhatsApp groups I felt had people who would be interested and we started.

One of the best parts was that people joined of their own accord and I particularly liked this.

We have monthly meetings and a daily check - in to keep group members accountable to each other.

The atmosphere created has allowed and is allowing us to enter into one another's lives. It's leading to new friendships for which we remain grateful. The sessions from the book club have led us to have very natural conversations which function as informal doctrine classes as well.

We have learnt many things and have begun to see fruits and pray for many more. Books have the capacity to break the ice, to help initiate those difficult conversations which we aren't sure where to start from and to build new friendships.

A great testimony also is the shared ownership of all group members. The book club has been blessed with a really dynamic group of ladies including members who are outside Nigeria but consciously make the effort to attend club meetings via zoom. Group members have also invited their own friends to join.

These days the accountability has grown to include daily mental prayer. Each day is a lesson for me. The fact that the members of the book club have made it their personal initiative has been instrumental to the fruits received. They truly have become apostles of apostles.

Books have changed and are changing my life and can change the lives of people we love. All they need is a nudge in the right direction.

"Spiritual Reading has made many saints" - St. Josemaría Escrivá; *The Way* point 116.

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