

Joining the Family

Genesis, a 3D programmer in Lagos, Nigeria, found his new home in the Church, with encouragement from a friend and help from an app.

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One Saturday in the middle of 2021, Fr. Tobe arrived at *Ojumo House*, an apartment we use for formation activities in Lagos, with someone new: Genesis, a 3D programmer. He introduced us, and I learned that Genesis wanted to be taught catechism classes in preparation for

the sacrament of Baptism. Genesis and I agreed on a time for our meetings. We also agreed to vary the venue. I was curious about his work, and as I wanted to know what 3D programming was, and he was happy to explain, even showing me samples of his work. I was impressed!

Our first class was at his home, a spacious and cozy place he shared with two friends. Our class went smoothly. Afterwards, he invited me to dinner, a dish called *giz-dodo* (gizzard & plantain in sauce)... A fancy name, but very nice. With a high resolution anime film playing in the background, we ate and chatted freely.

Subsequent classes were online. From time to time we met in-person to chat and resolve his doubts and fears. Life's ups and downs occasionally interrupted his desire for the classes. They became

irregular. At one point, it seemed like it was all over. We didn't make efforts to see or hear from each other. However, we didn't stop praying for one another.

Our guide for the class was the *Mini Catechism* app from Google Play. The goal was to cover the curriculum, emphasizing certain topics, like the Creed, the sacraments, and the commandments.

Still the preparation wouldn't have been effective without the support of Genesis's friend Amarachi. Although Genesis had always admired the Church, it was she who inspired him to seek Baptism. Her efforts to live a life consistent with her Christian values rekindled within him the conviction that some goods were immaterial, transcending the physical reality. Amarachi accompanied him to Mass, guided him through the liturgy, taught him

the devotional prayers and helped him memorize the Creed. With support and personal study, in no time, Genesis was ready for Baptism.

Fast forward to when I informed him that he had passed his catechism test, and that he could be baptized and receive our Lord on Ascension Thursday. It was a mix of excitement and nervousness. Getting his white dress for the ceremony involved some drama. He chose his friend and former secondary school classmate Peter to be his godfather. It was an easy choice. Prior to meeting Amarachi, had he been asked to name any Catholic in his life, that Catholic would have been Peter. He is a medical doctor by profession, articulate, simple, and conscientious; Genesis didn't waste a second in choosing him as his godfather. He chose the baptism name Philip, in honour of the Apostle whose feast

day was May 26, the date of the baptism.

On the anticipated day, we beat Lagos traffic well in time for the ceremony, which was very solemn. Many times he repeated the spiritual communion, an act of his faith in our Lord and his deep desire to receive Him.

He was so full of gratitude at the end of the ceremony, for our Lord's great love for him. The event ended with many pictures, joy, peace, and a renewed desire to love God and all men.

Emmanuel
