**TRIBUTE TO A GUARDIAN ANGEL OF SOULS VERY REV. FR. BUCKLEY, C.C.S.S**p

Daddy Buck,

So this is true!

Seeing you in that helpless but peaceful coma condition the day before your demise, we still trusted and so did we pray as we rallied round your sick bed asking the Lord Jesus to spare your life so that you can be with us longer. He did instead call you home. We are not disappointed because Jesus has mysterious ways of answering prayers. But we feel a big vacuum within us; we miss your physical presence even as we thank God that you were.

Your heroic Catholic faith, your commitment to a missionary religious life and your Christ-like priestly ministries are evidence of a man consumed by his love for God. We have no doubt that Jesus and Mary whom you loved much, in union with our parish patron Joseph must have welcomed you home saying: Well done, good and faithful servant, come and join us in your master’s happiness (Matt. 25:21).

Casting our minds back, we recall that come rain come shine, come light come darkness, come strength come feeble health, you were not only there, not only punctual but would even in the last days of your life ring the church bell summoning us your parishioners to Mass / Rosary and Benediction. You were even committed at the slightest opportunity to minister to a soul or to do charity. Out you went, fearing no dangers, distance not withstanding, trekking or in your old kit-car carrying The Word to hungry souls, converting, administering Confessions, baptizing, anointing the sick and wedding the people of God.

In our weekly Monday – Tuesday convent Masses to which for over 15 years you never failed till death, you always arrived very early to hear confessions before celebrating the Eucharist. After Mass you were never in a hurry to leave but would continue confessions (the long queue not withstanding) until the last Sister has been ministered to.

Fr. Buckley, your reverence to the Blessed Sacrament was superb. Not excusing your age, you would genuflect – body straight, hands together, eyes focused on the Tabernacle and stiff knee made to bend until it cam knocking on the floor ‘Gbim’.

How about when you went on home-leave to Ireland and brought a bouquet of flowers that impresses us of your fatherly love. Nor shall we forgot your legacy last April instructing us to pray extra daily rosary.

Bukiito! (as we fondly called you) we love you from our hearts. We cherish and appreciate with deep gratitude all that you were for us; all our interactions with you including the opportunity to help keep your room in the parish house these last years.

Thank you Fr. Buck, thank you torch bearer for souls. Thank you Hero of the Gospel of Christ; thank you Mechizedek of our day. Thank you father of many children; thank you our confessor and parish priest. Thank you lover of our country; and many thanks for opting to rest here with us. Please go home and receive your deserved reward.

Kind and generous soul. Enjoy your eternal rest on the laps of our Blessed May, in the kingdom of our God.

Adieu Fr. Buckley. Remember to intercede for us.

Bye-bye Ogozi-obodo I of Emene. Rest in perfect peace.

Daughters of Divine Love

DRACC Community

St. Joseph’s Parish, Emene.