



# **In the Service of Mars: Proceedings from the Western Martial Arts Workshop 1999-2009, Volume 2**

*Gregory D. Mele*

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Marriage was ordained by God for the good of spouses and for procreation. But how often does marriage turn out to bring unhappiness to partners! And how often do even happy marriages end up childless! Among the Igbo of South-eastern Nigeria, to whom offspring is the chief goal of marriage, childlessness leads often to unhappiness in marriage and not less often to the break-up of marriages or to polygamy. In this work, the author expounds the importance of marriage and its practice among the Igbo. He explains the importance of children in Igbo understanding of marriage and identifies childlessness as the key factor which could endanger (and sometimes do endanger) the Igbo acceptance of the Catholic doctrine of the indissolubility of marriage. Using the relevant clauses of the Code of Canon Law, the author explains in detail the Catholic understanding of marriage and the goals of the catholic doctrine on marriage. He writes of the possibility of marriage impediments due to impotence and sterility (that lead to childlessness) and recommends not only a thorough pre-marriage preparation but also a continual formation of marriage couples as efforts that could check the increasing rate of divorce and polygamy due to childlessness. But the author knows that childlessness can still occur despite all precautions. He therefore recommends adoption (instead of polygamy) as the ultimate panacea to childlessness in marriage. The author condemns in unmistakable terms the mentality among the Igbo which blames and traumatizes the woman in cases of childlessness.

Fr. Augustus Chukwuma Izekwe is an indigene of Akokwa in Ideato North Local Government Area of Imo State (Nigeria). He was born in 1974. He holds Bachelor's degree in Philosophy and Theology (Seat of Wisdom Seminary Owerri, Nigeria). He was ordained a catholic priest in 2003. Spurred by his thirst for knowledge, he acquired Master's degree in Religious Studies (from Imo State University, Nigeria) in 2009 and the doctorate from Julius Maximilian University, W|rzburg in 2014.

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