

10th Anniversary Celebration of Godfrey Okoye University

10 Years of Godfrey Okoye University: The Narrative of Our Growth (The Speech of the Vice Chancellor, Rev. Fr. Prof. Dr. Christian Anieke, on the Occasion of the 10th Anniversary)

Protocol

On behalf of every student of Godfrey Okoye University, every member of staff, every living creature and the whole ecosystem of GO University, I welcome each of you to Godfrey Okoye University and to this milestone occasion of the tenth anniversary celebration of one of the fastest growing private universities in Nigeria. You have certainly made tremendous sacrifices in time and comfort to attend this occasion. I ask God our Father who is the real owner of this university to bless you and let his incandescent face shine on you!

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, in the last nine years, we have told our stories with different narrative plots, themes, language, characters and settings. We have presented the long list of our wrestles and victories amidst loud drums and flutes and innumerable praise singers. But each year at the end our story, we have always indicated that our narrative continues. Godfrey Okoye University is indeed a living and continuous narrative, with plots, and subplots of increasing complication and fascination. This explains why we have chosen as the theme of this anniversary: 10 Years of Godfrey Okoye University: the Narrative of Our Growth.

The narrative of our growth is studded with characters whose roles are as diverse as the themes and subthemes of the story. Since a narrator, however influential or omniscient, is hardly recognized as a character in literature, I will not count myself as one of the characters in this GO Uni narrative. As this is not going to be a short narrative, I would like to ask for your patience as I present first of all the long list of the characters in our narrative:

- Bishop Anthony Okonkwo Gbuji, whose idea of Cor Unum University sparked off a cascade of ideas and feelings that gave birth to Godfrey Okoye University;
- Bishop Callistus Onaga, together with the Enugu Diocesan Curia, the promoter and proprietor of Godfrey Okoye University, whose non-interference approach and unflinching financial cum spiritual support of the GO project continuously provides the manure for our growth;

- Bishop Ernest Obodo, who was a member of staff of Godfrey Okoye University until his appointment as Auxiliary Bishop, and whose speeches and reflections during our retreats and other ceremonies have continued to resonate in the spiritual and intellectual landscape of this university;
- Archbishop Ignatius Kaigama, the Chancellor of Godfrey Okoye University, whose ideas, guidance and deep love for Godfrey Okoye have continued to water the flowers of the robust intellectual and spiritual activities in our university;
- His Excellency, the Executive Governor of Enugu State, who has a soft spot for Godfrey Okoye University and who got his State Executive Council to approve the sum of 500 million naira to assist us in the construction of the 12-kilometre road to this university and also donated a 500-kva transformer to the university;
- Alhaji Aminu Waziri Tambuwal, one of the finest minds in our political landscape, a great friend and fan of GO University, who has continued to support our university in countless ways;
- Prof. Julius Okojie, who as the NUC Executive Secretary, gave the official nod for our university to be sent to the Federal Executive Council for the approval of its licence and who has never hidden his admiration for this university. Prof. Okojie's unhidden support is one big secret of our success. With him are so many friends of Godfrey Okoye University at the National Universities Commission: Mrs. Goddy Constance Nnadi, Dr. Noel Saliu, and Dr. Mrs. Florence Asemadahun, whose advice cannot be quantified;
- Prof. Abubakar Rasheed, the current Executive Secretary of the NUC, for his strong support of our work and innovation in the university and for being my dearest friend;
- All members of staff of the NUC for their assistance, good advice, mentoring and guidance;
- The late Justice Anthony Aniagolu, the Chairman of the Governing Council of the Institute of Ecumenical Education, who stood behind this narrator, with the Governing Council, to provide the support and approvals needed for the establishment of the University;
- The late Prof. Dr. Julius Onah who chaired the Planning and Implementation Committee (with Barrister Anthony Mogboh, Architect Christopher Orji, Architect R. C. Odumodu, Prof. Dr. Ngodi, Prof. Dr. Joseph Chidobem, Prof. Dr. Obiora Ike, Rev. Mother Ifechukwu Udeorah, Prof. Dr. Festus Eze, Prof. Dr. Edwin Onyeneje and Mrs. Bernadette Ugwu as members) and worked assiduously for the approval of our university;

- Prof. Dr. Joseph Ikechukwu Chidobem, the pioneer Chairman of the Board of Trustees of University, whose wise advice and leadership, together with the pioneer members of the BoT (especially Dr. Mrs. Vero Mogboh, Monsignor Prof. Dr. Obiora Ike, Prof. Dr. Christian Nwachukwu Okeke, and myself) provided a solid foundation for our growth;
- Prof. Dr. Christian Nwachukwu Okeke, the Pro Chancellor and Chairman of the Governing Council, who, together with the Governing Council members, carefully steered the Council away from being a contract-seeking Council to being a hardworking, creative and selfless Governing Council, providing workable guidelines and policies for the continuous growth of the university. Without any fear of contradiction, I can say that the Governing Council of Godfrey Okoye University is the best Governing Council in Nigeria, and perhaps in the world. The Council is indeed the secret of our success;
- Prof. Dr. Bato Okolo, the current Chairman of the BoT, whose time-tested administrative skills and sagacity have given Godfrey Okoye University the face of a serious and goal-orientated university. With such current members of the BoT as Prof. Dr. Bath Nnaji, Prof. Dr. Joseph Ikechukwu Chidobem, Prof. Dr. Christian Nwachukwu Okeke, Monsignor Prof. Dr. Obiora Ike and Dr. Mrs. Vero Mogboh and my humble self) who can doubt the seriousness of our university?
- Prof. Dr. Obiora Ike who, as Chairman Board of Directors of Umuchinemere Procredit Microfinance Bank, helped to secure the bank guarantee required for the approval of the university and who also as a member of the BoT has continued to attract friends and funds to Godfrey Okoye University;
- Ms. Meggy Kantert, the GO Uni Foreign Liaison Officer, whose work of coordinating our relationship with European and foreign universities and institutions has made us very visible in the western world and helped our graduates to secure admissions in reputable universities overseas;
- The Catholic Women's Organization (CWO) of Enugu Diocese with Prof. Bene Okoli as President, for building the first female hostel of this main campus of our university, which was started under Dr. Mrs. Ngozi Agu (the former president); and
- Enugu Deanery under Monsignor Patrick Ugwu for building the first male hostel of this campus of our university.
- Other characters in our narrative are Sr. Prof. Dr. MaryGloria Njoku, who laid the foundation of academic planning, research ethics, and our annual peace conference. It is indeed heart-rending that Sr. Prof. Dr.

Mary Gloria Njoku is not physically present here today to celebrate this great narrative of our growth at our 10th anniversary. May her soul and the souls of our departed staff and students rest in peace!

Of course I will not forget the pioneer principal and key officers of our university, who played defining roles in our narrative: Prof. Dr. Festus Eze, the pioneer Registrar; Mrs. Mary Ellen Chijioke, the pioneer University Librarian; Mr. Fabian Ugwu, the pioneer Bursar; Sr. Prof. Dr. Mary Gloria Njoku, the pioneer Director of Academic Planning and pioneer Dean of the School of Postgraduate Studies; Prof. Dr. Eugene Nwadiakor, the pioneer Dean of Management and Social Sciences; Prof. Dr. Emmanuel Adinna, the pioneer Dean of Natural and Applied Sciences; Prof. Dr. Romanus Unegbu (late), the pioneer Dean of the Faculty of Education; Prof. Dr. Romanus Egudu, the pioneer Dean of the Faculty of Arts; Prof. Dr. Gozie Ogbodo, the pioneer Dean of the Faculty of Law; Prof. Dr. Richard Okafor, the pioneer Director of the General Studies Unit.

We cannot forget the erudite professors and senior academics of this university. Also I must mention our ICT Manager, Chinedu Chibuzor with his team, whose work in the last three years has seen our university rise tremendously in the webometrics and 4icu.org ranking. Furthermore I cannot but continue to praise all our workers in the Works Unit, under the headship of Mr. Isaac Nwibo, who have made our university the cleanest and most eco-friendly university in Nigeria.

We also cannot forget our big benefactors as major characters in our story: my Austrian and German friends (Dr. Michael Spendelegger, Mr. Wilhelm Molterer, the late Mr. Peter Natter, the late Mrs. Maria Feitzinger, Father Josef Michal, Ms. Rosemaria Panhofer, Mr. Anton Aichinger, Mr. Andreas Gebauer, Mr. Keston Egbon, Mr. Wolfgang Artmayr, Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Zach and Prof. Dr. Herman Real). Also I cannot forget Senator Gil Nnaji (who funded the famous GO Uni E-Library; Dr. Vitalis Ozonweke (Andy Young), who helped us finish our beautiful Andy Young Hostel; Mr. Walter Linsi, who placed 50 students of Godfrey Okoye University on his Linsi Foundation scholarships; Igwe Alfred Achebe (Agbogidi) who has given us a very strong financial support for our scholarship funds and is the Chairman of GO University Scholarship Trust Fund; Justice Cordelia Chukwurah for her huge financial contributions to the building of the Justice Chukwurah Hall; the ParentsqForum of Godfrey Okoye University for donating three vehicles to the university and giving continuous intervention funds, the Parentsq Forum of IEcE and the GO University Alumni Association for their strong financial support; Mr. Donald Eketete (Eketeson) for a strong financial

support and for playing the role of an ambassador of our university; Dr. Pat Asadu for constructing the road to a part of our Thinkers Corner Campus; Dr. Cosmas Agu (COMAC) for his strong support; Chief Loretta Aniagolu, Dr. Chichi Aniagolu and the Aniagolu Family for supporting and funding the biennial Justice Aniagolu Memorial Lecture which has attracted prominent Nigerians to our university, and for being great friends and supporters of GO University; and Prof. Dr. Luke Anike, the current VC of ESUT, for being a good mentor and playing the role of a big brother to our university.

As you know, unless the Lord builds, they labour in vain who try to build. Without God all these characters I mentioned could not have done anything. Therefore, the final and biggest gratitude goes to the almighty God who is the Supreme Owner of Godfrey Okoye University since our university is called God's own university. To him be all the glory through Christ our Lord!

Ladies and gentlemen, the narrative of our growth is indeed a long one. Let me say a big thank you to all those, especially those I have not named here, who have played remarkable roles in our narrative and contributed to the narrative length and twists of our plot and subplots in innumerable ways. I will not fail to thank all those who sent goodwill messages to us on the occasion of this tenth anniversary and all those who gave the 10th Anniversary lectures (particularly Bishop Chukwuma of the Anglican Communion and the Catholic Bishop of Nsukka, Bishop Godfrey Onah). May God bless you for being part of our beautiful story. As you can see, our narrative characters include those we are honouring in this anniversary with an honorary doctorate. But there is one character I have not mentioned. He is not a *Deus ex machina* because his ideas have continued to shape our narrative themes. This character is Jonathan Ebele Goodluck. His sense of dialogue and political disposition wrapped in one sentence "My political ambition is not worth a single drop of the blood of a Nigerian" has continued to resonate here and shape our narrative themes and subthemes. To immortalize these words of his we named our Thinkers Corner Convocation Arena after him and have invited him to give today's tenth anniversary lecture. Thank you Sir for accepting our invitation! My gratitude also goes to you, the Metropolitan of Onitsha Ecclesiastical Province and Archbishop of Onitsha Archdiocese, Archbishop Valerian Okeke, who was the Chief Celebrant at today's 10th Anniversary Mass, which he celebrated with bishops, priests, superiors of various congregations, reverend sisters, reverend brothers and a countless number of people of God. Today's mass and other activities have already received the papal blessing through the

Apostolic Nuncio, Archbishop Antonio Guido Filipazzi, who visited our university on Thursday last week and blessed our 10th anniversary activities.

Yesterday, during the convocation, I promised to reveal the present and future face of this university in the seemingly unending plot of our narrative. The first part of the face of GO which captures your attention as you drive to the main campus is the road. Before our amiable Governor mounted the gubernatorial throne in the Lion Building, our road was comparable to the road to my town Umumba Nidiagu in Ezeagu Local Government. But this Governor changed that craggy part of face to what you see today. I cannot forget the tears of joy rolling down my cheeks and the dancing of young men and women as we watched the laying of the first asphalt on this road. With deep sigh of relief, I muttered: ~~%~~At last...+

With the construction of the new road it has become very glaring that the old main gate had become like old wine in a new wineskin. We felt that we needed to reconstruct a new main gate to match the twist in our unfolding narrative. What is interesting in all the projects on this main campus of Godfrey Okoye University is that each project is a fantastic revelation of our philosophy based on the understanding of education as a dialogical process. Our first and second gates speak unmistakably our language of dialogue, which I would like you to discover as you stop to take a look at them.

Another fascinating point in our beautiful narrative is the construction of this auditorium, which is named after one of the greatest legal luminaries of our time, Barrister Anthony Mogboh, SAN. I call this auditorium a miracle of the century. Today our auditorium stands, a testimony of human veracity, dependability, reliability and dignity. This is one of the biggest auditoriums in any Nigerian university, bestriding the Tambuwal Convocation Arena like a colossus and overlooking the GO Uni cynosure: the GO University Lake.

Furthermore, like good novelists, we have penned down the skeleton our narrative. The details of the design of this campus of Godfrey Okoye University have been completed by a famous Austrian Architect Manfred Jäger in collaboration with Architect John Bello who, with Architect Orji, did the Master plan of this university. Everything here and where it will be has been properly designed with fascinating ecological

consciousness and a good understanding of the Nigerian geophysical setting.

Before the end of June next year, we will have completed the construction of the plant to be manned by the famous Austrian expert in the use of bricks and environmentally friendly materials in building constructions, Prof. Martin Rauch. The company, which will begin production next year, will supply about 60 percent of the materials needed in the construction of ecologically friendly buildings here.

Furthermore, the GO Uni-European Business Park will be commissioned here next year. This project has already taken off at the Business Park Zone of this university. Also next year the College of Practical Skills and Start-up Centre (for which our Vice President Prof. Yemi Osinbajo has already thanked the Austrian and European sponsors) will take off on this campus with the training of about 3000 Nigerians in different entrepreneurial skills.

Also we have secured a provisional licence for the GO Uni television. Four years ago we got the licence for our campus radio, the famous GO Uni Radio 106.9 FM, which in 2016 was named the best campus radio in Nigeria. When we got out licence for the campus radio, I knew then that it was just the beginning. I knew then that Godfrey Okoye University, being a university on the go, would not stop with a campus radio. As I was getting the radio licence, I was already dreaming about a campus television. Today we have secured a provisional approval from the NBC to mount a campus television. This campus television will be on air on this campus early next year.

Furthermore, we have completed our Prof. Dr. Bato Okolo DNA Learning Centre, which will transform our Biotechnology programme as well as provide a training ground for Nigerian students in DNA sequencing and analysis. The Centre is collaborating with the Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, under the headship of Dr. Dave Micklos, for the exchange of research and personnel. Already even now Godfrey Okoye University, which has the Biotechnology programme as one its signature programmes, is leading in Nigeria in Biotechnology research and studies.

We have finished constructing the access road to our GO University Lake, built a beautiful jetty and bought a new motorboat for cruising and exploring the lake. Our team of scholars from the Biological Sciences and Geology and Mining will now start exploring the GO Uni Lake with

our newly acquired deep see smart Fish-finder in search of rare, unidentified fish for DNA sequencing and possible registration in the world DNA Database. The project will be led by our own Prof. George Ude and our American-trained Alumnus, Mr. Michael Okoro. Our Biological Sciences Department with its Biotechnology programme is certainly set to be the best in Africa.

Also for the supply of electricity on this campus, we constructed over 2 kilometers of electricity lines from the Ugwuomu community to this main campus of university. We also installed two 500 kva transformers to take care of our electricity needs. We have also installed solar lights on our major roads here. One of most important elements of our narrative here is the planned installation of water turbines and waste plants for the generation of up 2 megawatts of electricity on this campus.

Our GO University Farms

Furthermore, we have continued to develop our farms. We have completed our new cattle ranch with a capacity for 1000 cows. Our cattle are doing exceedingly as well as our fishery. We intend to increase our cattle stock to one thousand next year with a plan to start milking them using very modern milking facilities and a good milk storage system. We are also doing a trail study on crayfish farming in this campus. Besides, we have planted over five thousand palm trees for palm oil production. We have also a cashew plantation with about 1000 cashew trees. We also have raffia palms for palm wine (in case you want wet your tongue with it).

Please permit me to summarize the key elements of our narrative with a list of projects which have commissioned on this campus during this anniversary week:

- The 12 kilometer GO University Access Road with 2 Kilometer Campus Dual Carriage Way, markings and speed checks
- The GO University Main Gate (first gate)
- The Security Personnel Hall (for meetings of security officers)
- The GO University Second Gate
- The GO University Back Gate
- The GO University main campus electricity project
- The DNA Learning Centre
- Four Office Buildings
- Three Faculty of Engineering Workshops with Offices
- The 3000-capacity Chief Anthony Mogboh Auditorium
- The 100,000 capacity Tambuwal Convocation Arena
- A Male Hostel (built by Enugu Deanery)

A Female Hostel (built by the Catholic Women's Organization)
 The GO University Information Point/ Hall of Fame!
 The GO University Road Network including the Famous GO University Crescent
 The Austrian Bridge
 The GO University Weather Station
 The GO University Sports Arena
 The GO University Block Industry
 The GO University Lake with its jetty and boat
 The GO University modern ranch with a capacity for 1000 cattle
 The Flag-off of GO-European Business Park
 The Flag-off of College of Practical Skills
 The GO University Farms
 The GO University Garri and Palm Oil Processing Plants

Ladies and Gentlemen, let me present in a summary fashion the narrative of our scorecard in the last ten years:

- The first university in Nigeria and Africa owned by a single Catholic diocese, the Catholic Diocese of Enugu
- One of the first three universities to receive the NUC permanent licence after three years of probation with a provisional licence
- The best private university in the Southeast of Nigeria and one of the fastest growing private universities in the Southeast
- The university in Nigeria with the best campus radio (2016)
- The biggest employer of labour in the private sector in Enugu State
- The first Nigerian university to make the General Studies programme ~~the~~ Use of English a three-year programme
- The first university in Nigeria to introduce town-and-gown assembly
- The first university in Nigeria to start the STEP (Student Training for Entrepreneurial Promotion) in collaboration with Leuphana University for the entrepreneurial and financial empowerment of students
- The first Nigerian university to offer scholarships to students from each of the 19 Northern states to encourage national integration and development of all parts of Nigeria
- The first university in Nigeria to establish a well-organized Scholarship Board with an annual budget of 150 million naira and offering scholarships to one hundred students
- The first university in Nigeria to establish a DNA Learning Centre in collaboration with the Cold spring Harbor Laboratory in New York, USA

- The first university in Nigeria to establish a Liaison Office in Germany
- The first university in Nigeria to attract a College of Practical Skills and Start-Up Projects for Youth Empowerment in Nigeria
- The first university in Nigeria with two natural lakes on campus (with indescribable tourist attractions and incandescent beauty)
- The first university in Nigeria to establish a Directorate of Ethics
- The first university in Nigeria to be recognized by the Austrian Government as a dependable development partner
- The first Nigerian university to introduce the April Project Month for all students to enhance their entrepreneurial and professional development
- The first Nigerian university to translate important concepts in the Biological Sciences into Igbo
- A university with one of the best law faculties in Nigeria
- The first Nigerian university to introduce mentorship programme for all students, whereby each student has a mentor who is a member of staff of the university
- The first Nigerian university to introduce a certificate programme in Nanny Education to provide professional nannies for Nigerian families
- The first university in Nigeria to introduce a one-year certificate programme in social media studies
- The first private university in Nigeria whose staff member has been appointed a Catholic Bishop (in the person of Bishop Ernest Obodo, the Auxiliary Bishop of Enugu)

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, can there be a better scorecard than this letter I got last week from a graduate of Godfrey Okoye University:

The Soul of a Go University Child, Prepared for such a time like this.

Mother University,

The world is in chaos, it is on the brink of disaster, the youths are in trouble, and our identity and race are challenged. Christianity is attacked, our faith and belief are questioned. It is a cycle, can't you see it? It has been structured this way, and no one is questioning the system. The agenda has been set, and the media is also playing a significant role in the

agenda-setting of the affairs of the society. Global warming is thrown at us, and the chunk part of the world could lose its inhabitants' in a twinkle of an eye. Modern-day technology has been helpful in keeping humans connected but is gradually taking over our jobs, and more skills are needed. Mother University, you saw this, and you brought me out here to experience it. I was afraid at first not until I realized you have planted a special kind of seed in me, and I am prepared for, such as time like this.

My home Alma mater, the gentle voice that speaks to my soul, the sharpener of my future, when you introduced the one-month skill acquisition training (project month) for students, I never realized how important it was to horn skills that will set me apart in the future. You organized Monday guest lectures that had experts from different fields come to speak to us, some students neglected it, but I gained for the most parts because I was a student representative and my soul yearns for knowledge. Today, I write to appreciate you. Thank you for believing in me, for not giving up on me. With an unrelenting love so gentle and robust, unending in your guidance, you shaped and established a well-rounded black woman who now is in Washington DC, United States of America, competing with her Cohorts in the field of Academia. You poured everything in you into me and allowed me to strive. Thank you.

You prepared me for the world full of opportunities. As your student, I had the privilege to serve the student as the Vice President of the Student Council. That position was a turning point in my life as I was exposed to a high level of leadership. I still look back at my years at Godfrey Okoye University in awe of the privilege that was given to me to serve and represent you on different occasions. Mother University, I hold you so dear to my heart, and I embody the love and protection you showed me as your child. The prayer culture you cultivated in me has given me a lasting peace in the world where suicide and depression have become the order of the day. My faith is challenged every day, but, you remember the morning Mass you made us attend every morning throughout the four years I was with you, I am seeing the effect now.

Thank you for trusting me. You have prepared me so well that I don't know where I would have been without you. Starting from the time I went for my visa interview to the moment I got to the United States, I have uncovered the unrelenting might that you deposited in me. Cultural shock and communication challenges were the first to welcome me when I found myself in the United States, but that did not throw me into a panic state like it will do to other international students. Still, because I have been prepared for such as time like this, I had a very smooth transition into the American culture.

After getting my master's degree, I have been able to design a teaching syllabus and have taught over 150 undergraduate students at Bowie State University. I am currently teaching the Honors students at Howard University Washington DC, where I am presently doing my Doctor of Philosophy degree. I would not have been able to do this if not for the hardworking and resilient spirit I developed from Godfrey Okoye University. I have also been able to stand in front of scholars in both national and international conferences to present my research work. I combine my job with going to school. This is what you can only do when you have mastered the art of discipline and hard work. It all started with you, Mother University, because you have prepared me for such as time like this.

You have trained dependable representatives that are all over the world today. You have done so well in the last 10 years, and you should be proud of yourself. I would not have asked for a better foundation than the one you gave me. Thank you immensely, and may your seeds yield more fruits. Thank you for preparing me for such a time like this.

Juliet Onyiba

Ph.D. student, Howard University Washington DC

Adjunct Professor Bowie State University

United States of America

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, the narrative of our growth is as fascinating as it is endless. A university is an embodiment of the human spirit of adventure, research and preservation of nature, which Pope Francis celebrates in the famous encyclical *Laudato Si*. Here on this campus an interesting narrative has begun and will continue as it

pleases God, who inspires all good actions and directs them to their end.
Today I recollect my poem for you Godfrey Okoye University:

My Beloved GO Uni

Today sitting in my office I admire your incandescent beauty
I gaze at your broad chest and watery waist
Ringed by long flowing green kaftan
An orchestra of birds and bats playing for you.

Today sitting in my office I meditate on your two liquid hands
Dancing hands with variegated colours and shapes
With a melting heart I eavesdrop to catch the clapping of these hands
Your liquid music sipping through my veins: soft and soothing.

Today sitting in my office I watch fat parading cows:
Out of fear or excitement they break into trumpeting
Necks bent and feet thudding in perfect accompaniment
With an army of flies and insects dancing in circles and labyrinths.

Today sitting in my office I glare at a green parade of trees
Trees yet unrecorded by biologists and researchers
A plant kingdom in colours: green, blue, red, yellow, white, gold, orange
And inspiring shapes: snake-shaped, tortoise-shaped, grass-cutter
shaped.

Today sitting in my office I muse on your beauty
And today I have fallen in love with you again.

Happy 10th Anniversary our beloved GO University! Your Excellencies,
Your Lordships, Distinguished Ladies and gentlemen, thanks for coming
and for being part of the narrative of our growth. Thank you all! God
bless you!