



Tenth Matriculation of Godfrey Okoye:

# A Beautiful Milestone

(The Address of the Vice Chancellor on 26 January 2019)

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On behalf of the senate, staff and students of Godfrey Okoye University, I warmly welcome you all to this tenth matriculation of our university. You have come from every nook and cranny of Nigeria and Africa to be part of this milestone celebration. You have certainly made tremendous sacrifices to be here, sacrifices in cash, time and comfort. I would like to thank you, parents and guardians, for trusting us with the education of your children and wards. I would like to assure you as the pioneer Vice Chancellor of this great university that we would go the extra mile to justify your trust and confidence. We are aware that your expectations are also resting on the foundation of a deep-seated feeling that a Catholic university will do a good job in the field of education. Let me assure you that we will do a good job! For we are a Catholic university on the go!

In my first matriculation speech ten years ago entitled 'This Is Our Chance', I said unambiguously: **This is our chance to define education the way we want it to be!** I prayed for the opportunity to add my own tributary in the ever-expanding ocean of university education. Godfrey Okoye University is the answer to the prayer. It is our God-given space to define university education in our own language and philosophy. We at GO Uni are carving the face of university education in our own artistic fashion.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, you will find here professors, lecturers, and scholars who either feel they need to make a name in the world with their first dancing steps or desire to give their best dance before the fire of life peters out. There is therefore an incredible sense of duty among scholars here, which you may not find in any other Nigerian university with uncountable strikes and celebration of indolence. You have therefore made the best choice for your children or wards.

Furthermore, this matriculation is happening in the year of our tenth anniversary. This is its uniqueness. This is why I call it 'a beautiful milestone'.

My first matriculation speech was delivered ten years ago to just 215 students. Today, ten years afterwards, over five hundred undergraduate students and hundred Postgraduate students are listening to my matriculation speech in the presence of about 3000 students, 660 members of staff and many parents and guardians of our fresh students. Godfrey Okoye University is indeed like the biblical mustard seed, very small at the beginning but today it has become what one pastor who was chatting with me last week called 'the pride of the East'. Godfrey Okoye University is seen by many as the fastest growing private university East of the Niger. Apart from growing very fast, this university has also within ten years of its existence attracted a fascinating international recognition. This explains why the European Union (as well as many private investors) has chosen Godfrey Okoye University for its multi-billion Naira poverty-alleviation programme that will take off before the end of this year. The Vice President of Nigeria has already expressed his gratitude for the choice of Godfrey Okoye University as a trustworthy partner in the huge poverty-alleviation programme. The internationality of Godfrey Okoye University has also attracted a lot of international scholarships. In this academic year Godfrey Okoye University has given 70 scholarships to its students drawn from all the states in Nigeria and other African countries. Fifty of the scholarships came from the **U.W. Linsi-Stiftung in Switzerland**.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, today on the occasion of this matriculation, we will roll out the drums for the activities marking our 10th anniversary. Some of the activities include lectures to be delivered monthly by prominent scholars and clergymen. This part of the celebration reflects the long tradition of the university to invite gifted Nigerians and citizens of other countries of the world to share their wealth of knowledge with the university community and our students. This is in line with our philosophy of dialogue. This spreading of the epistemic tentacles of the university like an octopus

has helped our university to achieve what Cardinal Newman describes as the ‘philosophical habit of mind’, which he sees as the goal of university education. Our students are encouraged to develop a broad view of things, curiosity and sense of logic in order to achieve a balanced knowledge of life and the world.

One programme of activities for the 10th anniversary is the mass education of our people. It is disheartening that about eleven million children in Nigeria are out of school. It is also shocking that many schools have become playgrounds for children who lack teachers to teach them. In some schools, there is just one or two government-paid teachers for all classes. Godfrey Okoye University, conscious of the divine mandate to change the face of education, has set aside a day to underscore what it has been doing since its inception: **intervention in our schools to improve their standard**. On the Mass Education Day, all our teachers and some students will be teaching in various schools in Enugu State. We are taking sound education to these schools as a sign of solidarity and desire to improve the standard of education in our schools.

This is also the year of rewards and recognitions. Many people have done a lot to make this university what it is today. This year we will honour them with awards and naming of university buildings and roads after them. Our university is known for its generosity and sense of gratitude. Besides, those of you here who want to give scholarships to our students, do a project in the university or endow a chair, I would like to assure you that Godfrey Okoye University will honour you. But the greater honour will come from God for investing in a Catholic university. There cannot be a better way to earn a place in heaven as an investment in a Catholic university. When we unveil our programmes today, please make up your mind to play a role in this year’s celebration by supporting our programmes and investing in this university.

To you my dear matriculating students, I congratulate you for choosing Godfrey Okoye University. You have chosen “God’s Own University”. Therefore, you have become God’s specially favoured students. Ask

yourself today this question: what does God want me to achieve, learn, know and do in this university? You have come to a university where lecturers see their work as part of divine calling and one reason for their existence. You have come to a university, where everybody wants you to learn and become the best. You have come to a university, where your Vice Chancellor is not an *ijele* that appears only on festive occasions. You have come to a university where the Vice Chancellor is not only human but also an accessible human being, who teaches you and insists that others teach you to exorcise irreversibly the demon of ignorance. You have come to a university where prayerful dialogue is an expression of our consciousness that we are God's own university. You have come to a university where cultism, sexual harassment, academic thuggery, euphemistically called "sorting", academic quackery and idiotic epistemic shallowness have been banished to impenetrable dark caves of forgotten unpalatable tales. You have come to a university where cleanliness is a passion and a way of life. You have come to a university where there is no room for ASUU strikes and where those who were involved in such strikes in the past have vowed to spend the rest of their life confessing the sins of the past and praying for all those responsible for the strikes. You have come to a university that ensures that you make seamless academic progress. You have come to a university that is like a colossus bestriding the international space, a university that is not a "local champion". You have come to a university where you have the opportunity to study abroad in one of our many partner universities for a semester or a year if you wish to. You have come to a university with the best Postgraduate School and Law Faculty in Nigeria, with both the NUC and the Council of Legal Education approvals. You have indeed come to God's own university! You can attain any height in this university. All you need is hard work, prayer and discipline. God bless you all!

And to you parents and guardians, I thank you again for entrusting us with the task of educating your children or wards. As the Vice Chancellor of this great university, I want to assure you that this university will give your children or wards the kind of education you will be proud of. We will provide them with the kind of education that will

make them employable graduates and leaders of their nation. Already it is on record that 70 percent of our graduates get jobs within two years after graduation. Apart from the all-round education we provide, our students are also trained in different entrepreneurial skills to enable them to be self-employed. Last year we mounted the Student Training for Entrepreneurial Promotion (STEP) for our students. This annual programme is the training of our students by German and German-trained Nigerian trainers to enable our students to become great entrepreneurs. Already last year this university produced two hundred entrepreneurs who not only made a good use of the money they received during the training but also are ready to take the world of industry and business by storm after their graduation. I have always said: **Godfrey Okoye University is a university to watch!** We count on your prayers to succeed in all our plans for this great university. In addition, remember that you have a role to play in the university education of your children or wards. Please talk to your children and wards as often as possible and always ask about their performance in the university. If your child or ward is not amenable to discipline, it will be difficult to continue to keep him or her here to avoid spoiling the many good students we have in the university. This is a Catholic university. We have no apologies for insisting on discipline and good manners. Thanks for your support and prayers!

Finally, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, this 2019 is our year. Godfrey Okoye University is ten years this year. On the occasion of this matriculation, the programme of activities for the anniversary will be unveiled. We invite you parents of our students and friends of our university to be part of the activities marking our ten years. Please support us with your goodwill messages, prayers, souvenirs and donations to enable us to celebrate our ten years befittingly. I thank you all and wish you a happy celebration of our tenth matriculation. God bless you!

Rev. Fr. Prof. Christian Anieke  
Vice Chancellor