

## **Go University Will Get it Right!**

(An Address of the Vice Chancellor on the Occasion of 2nd Matriculation of Godfrey Okoye University, February 19, 2011)

**Very Rev. Fr. Prof. Christian Anieke**

I welcome you all in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to whom we dedicate all our academic and administrative activities. I welcome you also on behalf of the Senate, the staff and students of our university. I welcome you in the socio-physical setting of a university that is palpably and unfalteringly moving to achieve one thing: to get it right in the university education. I welcome you to the first university owned by a Catholic Diocese in Africa. I welcome you to Godfrey Okoye University (GO University).

Your Excellencies, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, Godfrey Okoye University is our chance to get university education right in our own part of the world. When this university got its operating licence on November 3, 2009, I knew then that the university was our chance to get it right. I emphasized this point in my first matriculation address: “This Is Our Chance: Godfrey Okoye University”. The question is: How do we get it right? I believe that the answer is not very complicated. We get it right in the university education when we get focused on the one primary role of a university, which is to generate and disseminate knowledge. Unless this primary role permeates and shapes all facets of university life and activities, a university will never get it right.

This university will get it right because we have continued to emphasize from scratch that education is not an “armchair business”: it is the activity of human beings who know that knowledge acquisition is one big dividing line between human beings and animals. (One beautiful definition of education says it is a process that makes human beings out of animals) This explains our emphasis on facts, on evidence, on reason, verification and verifiability, on experimentation and on serious academic research. We have structured our curriculum to underscore this point. We have equipped our libraries with the most current books and journals in different fields to stress this point. We have subscribed to many online journals. Finally, we have filled our laboratories with the most modern equipment to make this point very clear, and we are building new ones!

This university will get it right because we are generating knowledge in our departments, with many projects and experiments going on: finding efficient ways of raising giant snails on locally made feeds, generation of biogas from waste materials, finding efficient ways of installing solar panels, manufacturing of locally-made panels, production of commercial soaps and usable detergents, the use of Oracle in computer science, finding ways of using modern systems of accounting, etc.

This university will get it right because already in their second year our students are showing signs of great achievements, *evidence* that they are actually acquiring knowledge from the university.

This university is getting it right because we are comparing notes with many good universities in Europe and America. We have selected two universities from our partner universities for a serious joint academic collaboration. These two universities are Birmingham City University (UK) and Benedictine University (USA). Our students can choose to go to any of these universities after three years in our university. This will enable them to compare the quality of education in our university with that of our partner universities. At the end of their final year in these selected universities, they will take a joint degree examination set by our university and the partner university. The implication is that the degree will be a joint degree of our university and the partner university. This joint project is in line with our philosophy of epistemic dialogue.

Godfrey Okoye University will get it right because we emphasize computer literacy, which is very important in modern education. In fact, it is impossible to finish in our university without being computer literate. The university has made it obligatory for our students to pass the European/International Computer Driving licence (E/ICDL) examination, which is set by our partner university in Austria and supervised by one of our adjunct professors from Austria, Professor Alois Bachinger. This examination will help us to ensure that our students are computer literate indeed. To ensure that students pass this examination, the university has made it mandatory for all students to have their lap tops as a prerequisite for securing admission.

Our university will get it right because we emphasize not only academic fitness but also moral and spiritual health. This is very important since the human person is not only material but also spiritual. A sound university education will take care of these two sides of the human person. Our university will get it right because we place prayer at the centre of our activities. We are aware of the fact that “if the Lord does not build the house, in vain do its builders labour” (Psalm 126).

It is, therefore, to this university which is poised to get it right that I welcome you my dear matriculating students. You will certainly have challenges here just because we have vowed to get it right. Do not be afraid of the challenges ahead. I believe that you have the strength to overcome these challenges and difficulties. The true test of our effort is your success in our partner universities and your performance in the world outside the university. We will ensure that we give you all that you need to succeed.

It is very important to underscore the place of prayer in our university. This is a university that prays. It is not a university where those who are allergic to prayer feel very comfortable.

As a catholic university we have no apologies for our prayer life. We are convinced that there is a relationship between a good prayer life and success. This explains why this university has three common prayer time a day: morning, afternoon and night. Our prayer has protected us up until now from cultic activities and evil attacks. Our prayer life has guaranteed peace and tranquility in our university.

In addition, our university wants to make you self-reliant and multi-talented, The university will require you to do many things yourself as a way of preparing you for the life you will live after your university education. It is not humiliating if we ask you to clean your surroundings yourself since this is what life will demand from you.

Furthermore, it is important to know that this university is hundred per cent residential. The only students exempt from obligatory campus residence are those who are validly married. In addition, we require our students on campus to take permission before leaving the campus so that the authorities can account for them anytime, any day. This is also a sign of responsibility

I, therefore, welcome you to this university. I congratulate your parents and all those who have supported you since you entered the university. May God bless them for their work. May God bless all of you.

And to our guests from every nook and cranny of Nigeria: I wish you God's blessings and thank you immensely for attending this matriculation. I count on your support and prayers for our university. It is very important to remind you that the greatest investment you can make is an investment in human beings. There are some students here who cannot pay their fees and who may be forced to leave the university unless a good Samaritan comes to their rescue. You may consider being a father or a mother or a brother or a sister to such students. You can be sure that your assistance to any student of the university will be rewarded by God and by human beings. Those who give scholarships will be recognised as special friends of the university. So if think you can give some students of the university scholarships, please contact either the Vice Chancellor or the Registrar or the Director of Academic planning.

Finally, it is important to inform you friends of our university that work is going on uninterruptedly at the permanent site of the university. I invite you dear friends to be part of the history we are making in our world by founding a university. You may consider taking a building project for the university. You can be sure that no contribution towards this project of building a university will be forgotten. I, therefore, invite you to make yourself a special friend of the university. Connected to one another in a bond of friendship, we will get it right.

I thank you all and wish you God's blessings!