

The Fifth
Convocation of
Godfrey Okoye
University

GODFREY OKOYE UNIVERSITY:
the Catholic University on the Go



**Convocation Address of the
Vice Chancellor,
REV. FR. PROF. CHRISTIAN ANIEKE
*Saturday, 10 February 2018***

- Your Excellency the Rt. Hon. Chief Ifeanyichukwu Ugwuanyi
Executive Governor of Enugu State
- Your Excellency the Hon. Barrister (Mrs.) Cecilia Ezeilo
Deputy Governor of Enugu State
- Your Excellency the Most Rev. Dr. C.V.C. Onaga
Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Enugu and Promoter of Godfrey Okoye University
- Your Excellency the Most Rev. Dr. Anthony O. Gbuji
Bishop Emeritus of the Catholic Diocese of Enugu
- The Executive Secretary, National Universities Commission
Professor Adamu Abubakar Rasheed, mni, MFR (or his representative)
- Your Grace the Most Rev. Dr. Ignatius Ayau Kaigama
Catholic Archbishop of Jos and Chancellor of Godfrey Okoye University
- The Board of Trustees Chairman
Professor Dr. Bartho Okolo
- The ProChancellor and Chairman of the Governing Council of Godfrey Okoye University
Professor Dr. Christian Nwachukwu Okeke
- Principal Officers of Godfrey Okoye University
- The Hon. Commissioner for Education for Enugu State
Professor Dr. Uche Eze
- Professors of Godfrey Okoye University and other Universities here present
- Members of the Academic and Administrative Staff of Godfrey Okoye University
- AIG Abubakar Adamu and other top police officers here present
- The Commissioner of Police, Enugu State Command (or his representative)
- Representatives of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria
- Your Royal Highness, Igwe Lawrence Agubuzo
Chairman of Enugu State Traditional Rulers Council
- Your Royal Majesty, Igwe Alfred Achebe (Agbogidi) *Obi of Onitsha*
- Other Royal Highnesses here present
- Members of the Press
- Special Guests and friends of Godfrey Okoye University
- My dear graduating students and other students of Godfrey Okoye University

On behalf of the senate, staff and students of Godfrey Okoye University, I warmly welcome you to this 5th Convocation of our beloved university. I welcome the Proprietor and Promoter of Godfrey Okoye University and Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Enugu, Most Rev. Dr. Callistus Chukwuma Valentine

Onaga, members of the Diocesan Curia, priests of our Diocese and priests from other dioceses, members of religious congratulations working in our Diocese, Chancellor and his entourage, Chairman and members of Board of Trustees, members of the Governing Council and all friends of our university. I welcome particularly the fresh graduates of our university who have come from different states of Nigeria to celebrate the conclusion of their academic journey in our university. I also welcome the parents, siblings and friends of our new graduates.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, in 2016 we decided to change the face of our security. We brought in young and experienced people with leonine agility, razor-sharp mental alertness and intimidating physical robustness. One day I realized that each time I passed by I heard their deafeningly loud greetings: '*mon sir*'. Being unschooled in such a language, I wondered how smart adults could be saying '*mon sir*' (meaning 'Good Morning Sir') in the afternoon and in the evening. I bore the seeming linguistic barbarity for some time with my Christian equanimity until it got to such a point where I exhausted all the grace I had for patience. I summoned the CSO and asked him to explain why his men did not know the distinction between morning and afternoon or evening, greeting me with '*mon sir*' in the morning. He smiled and explained to me that for those of them in the security business there was no afternoon, evening and night. It was always morning, he added. According to him, one was expected to be alert every time, doing one's work. So for them every time was morning. I smiled sheepishly at my naivety and ignorance. But then some flints of associations started flying across the landscape of my poetic mind. A type of poetic revelation was unfolding itself before me, and I got hold of the picture. Now I feel that the '*mon sir*' is an echo of what Godfrey Okoye University really is. For us here it is always morning. It is unceasing action. It is being on the go. We are indeed the Catholic university on the go.

From the day of our birth as a university we have never hidden our precocity and tremendous speed. We took off like Usain Bolt in his 9.58 seconds race that defied medical and scientific predications on the boundaries of human speed. And our speed is not reducing in any foreseeable future. There is no dull moment here and no day passes by without something new revealing its fresh face.

Ladies and gentlemen, I will concentrate today on areas where our university has revealed its breathtaking speech and proved that it is indeed a university on the go.

1. Graduates of Godfrey Okoye University

What makes my heart brim over with joy as the pioneer vice chancellor of this university is that my students, especially the graduates, have realized that their university is a university on the go. They have embraced its speed and unceasing drive to break new grounds in different areas. Statistics available to us show that over seventy percent of our graduates get jobs within two years after their graduation. This is certainly a big achievement when one considers the monstrous volume of graduate unemployment in Nigeria. This ease in getting jobs is the result of the quality of education they received and their sense of speed, innovation and creativity. It is of course difficult to exhaust the achievements of graduates in this address because of temporal and spatial limitations. However, we are planning to write a book on 'Godfrey Okoye University and Its Graduates' before our 10th anniversary next year. I can only mention some of the most outstanding ones:

- i. *Onwubu Nancy*. This particular graduate of our university finished with a first class in Economics and within one year after her graduation she rounded off all her ICAN examinations and has become a chartered accountant.
- ii. *Chioma Nnebedum*. She was the best graduating student last year. She is now a chartered accountant, one year after graduation.
- iii. *Kennedy Iyeh*. This great graduate of our university has never ceased to do us proud with series of awards. Last year he won a Jeep worth over 25 million Naira, a cash prize of 5 million and an automatic employment at the Heritage Bank that organized the nation-wide competition on entrepreneurship models for Nigeria. The model developed by Kennedy was chosen as the best.
- iv. *Chiamaka Ojukwu* who finished in the Mass Communication Department is one of the most celebrated young journalists in Nigeria today with a lot of awards. One can hear her scintillating voice on the Urban Radio where she works as a top presenter.
- v. *Doris Aja* who finished here with a first class got a full scholarships last year

to study either in China or the UK. She is doing her Master's degree now in the UK on full scholarship.

- vi. *Doofan Abba* won a Chevening scholarship to study on full scholarship in any UK University. This is the mail she sent to me on the New Year Day: *'Sometime this year I became a UK Chevening scholar. This scholarship award allowed me to study fully funded at any university of my choice in the UK and to network with global emerging leaders from about 110 countries. I chose to study Public Health at the University of Edinburgh. It is about the most prestigious scholarship worldwide and I am also speculated to be the youngest Nigerian Chevening scholar this year.'*
- vii. *Chinonye Iwumadu* got a scholarship to do Medicine in the USA after passing a highly competitive examination
- viii. *Juliet Onyiba* who got a scholarship to study at Bowie State University was named the most outstanding student of Bowie State University in 2017.
- ix. *Michael Okoro* also won a full scholarship to study at the New York University.
- x. *Rev. Fr. Benjamin Achi* who made a first class in the Mass Communication Department has been appointed the Enugu Diocesan Director of Communications.
- xi. *Casmir Eze* who got admission in the UK immediately after graduation will be rounding off his PhD programme next year. In his mail to me recently, he wrote: *"Am so delighted and excited for this wonderful acknowledgement and I sincerely express my unreserved gratitude to you Prof. It has been a wonderful experience here in London. I think my journey at Godfrey Okoye University played an important role for adapting faster both in academic and circular life."*

The list is inexhaustible. From our records over 30 graduates of the Godfrey Okoye University are pursuing various Postgraduate degrees in different countries of the world and are doing exceedingly well. They all have one thing in common: They are proud of their alma mater and they have got an unquenchable, burning desire to imitate its excellence and speed in all their undertakings! One of them once said to me: *"I am Godfrey Okoye University. Everything about me is Godfrey Okoye University."* One thing is clear to me: With these graduates the future of Godfrey Okoye University is guaranteed!

Godfrey Okoye University, apart from creating a befitting environment for learning and academic pursuit, is also very creative in the way it encourages its

students to excel. This year the senate approved a title for an outstanding performance called '**Vice Chancellor for One Day**'. The winner of this prestigious title is the overall best student in an academic year. The person will occupy the office of the VC for a whole day, and will act as the VC. In addition to this, the winner of the **Vice Chancellor for One Day** will study on full scholarship for one academic year.

2. Faculty of Law

During the last convocation, I mentioned our readiness to give birth to the Faculty of Law of our university. Today Godfrey Okoye University, true to its breathtaking velocity and precocity, now has its Faculty of Law, which is second to none in Nigeria. Also this great Law Faculty has been approved by the National Universities Commission after its rigorous resource verification exercise. Our Law Faculty, named after Professor Christian Nwachukwu Okeke, is not only one of the most beautiful faculties of law in Nigeria but also is poised to become one of the best law faculties in the world. With big heads like Professor Christian Nwachukwu Okeke, Prof. Boniface Okere, Prof. E.I. Nwogugu, Associate Professor Ogbodo, and a good number of international visiting professors of law, and under the strict mentorship of Golden Gate University in the USA, nothing will stop this Faculty from being the best! My charge to the Law Faculty is this: best or nothing!

3. School of Postgraduate Studies

Within eight years of its colorful life, Godfrey Okoye University is full of smiles again as the National Universities Commission gives its nod to the commencement of the School of Postgraduate Studies. Today we have 100 students pursuing their Postgraduate Programmes at GO Uni. Our PG programme has been designed to mirror GO Uni agility and academic rigor and vigor. We have kept lecturers who love sedentary life and snail-speed-approach to academic matters away from our PG School. Only academics who work with speed and accuracy are welcome. With this kind of defined boundaries of operation., we have ensured that students can finish their studies on record time. Students who prefer the sluggishness of a tortoise will be advised to look for institutions where they can afford to sleep on their work and research. We have also ensured that teaching and research in the PG School will be abreast with the best in any university in the world.

4. Justice Cordelia Chukwurah Convocation Arena

Last year we started a second convocation arena close to our PG School and the Faculty of Law. This Arena, with its incandescent beauty, located at the Eastern End of our campus, has not only been completed but also named after a Judge with an undisputed record of incorruptibility, moral soundness and judicial sagacity, Justice Cordelia Chukwurah. Its speed of completion with its dazzling beauty gives a sense of an excellent university environment.

5. Collaborations

Our University has a philosophy of dialogue which has been at the background of our continuously and irreversibly stretching out of our hands to embrace other academic, social and cultural institutions. Since the last convocation we have added new institutions to our long list of collaborating institutions. We have signed an MoU with UNESCO for an intensive collaboration and exchange of scientific information. Recently we signed an MoU with Shenyang University in China for an exchange of students and staff. In fact, two of our graduate assistants will be sent to China this year for their Postgraduate studies. Finally, in the context of this convocation, we held our second town-and-gown assembly. Through the town-and-gown assembly we are extending our collaborations beyond academia to embrace industries and companies. Our university has indeed broken down the wall that encloses students and lecturers in an Utopian world isolated from the daily needs and challenges of the productive world. We will be looking at the needs of companies and the civil society as we prepare our students for the life after university.

6. Ugwuomu Campus

Our main campus at Ugwuomu Nike with its 217 hectares is a spectacle of beauty and indescribable naturalness. Our Godfrey Okoye University Lake, with its crystal clear water and a ring of palms and virgin forests sheltering a choir of birds and athletic animals, remains the best tourist centre in our beloved state Enugu. The greatest challenge we have had up until now is the access road to that cynosure. But on 23 January 2018, our God-fearing, pragmatic, intelligent, amiable, compassionate, intuitive, resourceful, unassuming, reliable and generous Governor flagged off the road that led to our main campus at Ugwuomu. Apart from making five hundred million Naira available for the road project, he also directed the Ministry of Works to give us all necessary assistance to enable us to finish the project. Our Governor has also donated a 500 KVA

transformer to the university to ensure stability of electricity supply on our campuses. We thank His Excellency the Governor of Enugu State for fulfilling his promise to our university. I would like to reassure him and the state government that we are going to complete the road with our speed and accuracy. There will be no rest until the road project is finished.

Furthermore, our special friend Alhaji Aminu Waziri Tambuwal has also commenced the 2,000-capacity auditorium which he and his friends promised to build at our main campus at Ugwuomu Nike. This project, according to the contractor, will be completed before the end of July. We thank His Excellency Alhaji Aminu Tambuwal for his generosity and deep love of our university. Finally, we have signed an agreement with a Chinese company for a new design of the entire Ugwuomu campus, which will make it one of the most beautiful university campuses in Nigeria. It is our hope that academic activities will begin at our Ugwuomu Campus next year. Work will henceforth continue unstoppably at our Ugwuomu Nike Campus until academic activities begin there. After all, we are indeed a Catholic university on the go!

7. Scholarship Trust Funds

Godfrey Okoye University is always dynamic and innovative. Two days ago GO University Scholarship Trust Fund was launched. This innovative idea is to support indigent but brilliant students financially so that poverty will not rob them of the opportunity to develop their God-given talents. It is so planned that with scholarships also extended to international students, the university can attract some of them to study here. A cross-fertilization of Nigerian and international students in the Godfrey Okoye University academic setting will be a good way of enriching our students. Our experience with our international students from Austria and Germany has revealed the huge benefits of having international students on campus.

8. Mentorship Programme

We have continued our mentorship programme in the university. It is a programme designed to ensure that no student is anonymous on campus. Every student here is assigned to a mentor who is a member of staff. The mentor stands in place of the parents and ensures that the student finishes his or her studies without any cock and bull stories. To ensure the success of the programme, we have added Mentorship Day to our academic calendar of events. Such a

programme keeps our students on their toes, tugging restlessly at the fringes of their consciousness and reminding them that they are studying in Godfrey Okoye University, the Catholic University on the go!

9. Mass Education Day

We have expressed our sense of community service in different ways. But this year we have designed a programme called Mass Education Day. This is a day in which we plan to go outside the four walls of the university to teach in different places: rural schools, prisons, adult education centres, nomadic schools, etc. This will be our contribution to the global war against illiteracy and academic quackery.

10. Campus Television

The success of our GO University Radio which was named the best campus radio in Nigeria in 2016 has motivated us to venture into other media. We have applied for Godfrey Okoye University Campus Television. As soon as we get the licence from the National Broadcasting Corporation, we will hit the ground running. I am convinced that by the end of this year, we will see GO Uni television on air.

11. Hospitality Management

In the face of dwindling income from the oil sector, our country cannot afford to stand hands akimbo and watch the economy get washed off and emptied into an ocean of forgotten economies. A good university must direct its research and programmes to areas that will provide alternative sources of cash for the country. One area where the country can make a strong economic statement is in the hospitality industry and tourism. We at GO University have been studying this area critically. This explains why we have invited a team of experts from Austria (also here) to advise us on the best ways of mounting programmes in hospitality management and tourism, using the Austrian model.

12. Reverse Migration

The storming of Europe by migrants in the last two years has left deep scars on the European psyche. Many theories have been flying across the academic and political landscape of Europe on how to understand the shocking situation and prevent a future occurrence. One of the solutions being proposed by Austria is termed 'Reverse Migration'. This policy, which has received the blessing of the

Austrian Government and the European Union, will involve companies which will be ready to help in the training and employment of migrants who choose to go back to their country. Our university has been chosen to provide additional training to Nigerians who will be returning home from Europe. This university is the only university in Nigeria accepted by Austria for the implementation of this efficacious policy.

13. Directorate of Ethics

Our university has joined the Globethics Consortium on Higher Education. We have gone a step further by appointing a director of ethics and establishing a Directorate of Ethics. This directorate will have the biggest centre for research on ethical issues in higher institutions in Nigeria in collaboration with Globethics in Geneva, headed by own brother and erudite Prof. Monsignor Obiora Ike. I thank Mr. Walter Linsi with his team for being here and for all his support to promote ethics in higher education.

14. Words of Advice to Convoking Graduates

To you my dear fresh graduates, I say a big congratulation! With Joanna Fuchs I express our good wishes you:

We wish for you a joy-filled transition
from the shelter of school
to the wide world
of your accomplishment and success.

We wish for you new, stimulating friendships,
while you cherish old friends,
who provide continuity and comfort.

We wish for you a smooth path
on your journey to your chosen destination,

and as much delight in your off-road adventures
as there is in reaching your goal.

Congratulations, graduate!

May the world embrace you, excite you,
and strengthen you in everything you do.

My dear graduates, always remember that you are special:

If every single graduate
Were as special as you are,
The world would be a better place
And everyone a star.

In the real world, though,
You sure stand out
For your extraordinary traits,
Those uncommon things about you
Everyone appreciates.

So congratulations, graduate!
We wish you all the best.
We know as you meet life's challenges,
You'll ace each and every test!
(By Joanna Fuchs)

Finally, remember to maintain the friendships you have built here over the years
and thus continue our GO Uni family life and spirit. As Joanna Fuchs also writes:

We're graduating, and we know
Our lives will be different and new;
We're going out into the world,
Our goals and dreams to pursue.

But one thing will never, ever change,
As we go our separate ways;
The friends we've made in school will be
Our friends for all our days.

The special ties and attachments we've made,
These bonds will never be broken;
We'll continue to feel that special bond,
Though words may not be spoken.

So it's not "goodbye," but rather "farewell;"
I'll see you again, my friend.
Your friendship means a lot to me,
And it will never end.

15. Our Honorary Doctorate Awardees

Furthermore, I congratulate all our honorary doctorate awardees. Godfrey Okoye University honours you today because it has followed your life and contributions to society carefully. We use this honorary degree and recognition to thank you for your numerous contributions to the progress of humanity. Remember that by receiving our honorary doctorate degree you have become a flag bearer of our university and all that it represents. We hope you will continue to live your life in such a way that our university and humanity will continue to be proud of you. I salute and congratulate you!

16. Gratitude to All

Finally, let me thank all our Austrian, German and other European friends for their support of our university project. I also thank all our friends in all continents of the world. I express my immense gratitude to friends of our university, especially those present on this occasion. My gratitude also goes to the Proprietor, Chancellor, Chairman and members of the Board of Trustees, Pro Chancellor and members of the Governing Council, the Senate and all the organs of our university. It is your support that has kept us gliding on the wings of countless, boundless successes. You are part and parcel of our success story as the Catholic university on the go! God bless you all!

Rev. Fr. Prof. Christian Anieke
Vice Chancellor