



**VICE CHANCELLOR'S ADDRESS
FOR THE 6TH AND 7TH CONVOCATIONS
NOVEMBER 24, 2019**



Godfrey Okoye University: Between the First Convocation and this Combined Convocation

- Your Excellency Goodluck Ebele Jonathan GCFR, GCON
Former President of Nigeria
- 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
- Your Grace the Most Rev. Dr. Ignatius Ayau Kaigama
Catholic Archbishop of Abuja and Chancellor of Godfrey Okoye University
- Your Excellency the Rt. Hon. Aminu Waziri Tambuwal
Executive Governor of Sokoto State (or his representative)
- The Executive Secretary, National Universities Commission
Professor Adamu Abubakar Rasheed, MFR (or his representative)
- The Board of Trustees Chairman
Professor Dr. Bartho Okolo
- The Pro Chancellor 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

With tremendous joy and inexpressible gratitude to God I welcome you all, on behalf of the staff and students of our great university, to this convocation.

Godfrey Okoye University, between the first convocation in 2013 and this convocation in 2019, is one long narrative of stupendous growth and success. This explains why our theme for the celebration of our 10th Anniversary tomorrow is: Godfrey Okoye University at 10: the Narrative of Our Growth. When an Austrian friend asked me what had changed between the first convocation, which he attended, and this one to which I invited him, I said to him: “Hans, you may not recognize Godfrey Okoye University if you visit it again.” Godfrey Okoye University is one university where the philosophical words of the Greek philosopher Heraclitus can be verified with scientific precision: “No man ever steps in the same river twice, for it’s not the same river and he’s not the same man.” Of course, GO University must be true to its name “GO”, and remain the Catholic university on the go!

Your Lordships, Your Excellencies, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, I would like to give you a brief summary of our achievements and innovations in the last ten years.

1. Number of Faculties

Having clenched its licence on 3 November 2009, Godfrey Okoye University hit the ground running with two faculties: Faculty of Natural and Applied Sciences and Faculty of Management and Social Sciences. Within ten years after its take off our university has added three new faculties, including our famous Faculty of Law. In addition, it now has its Postgraduate School. Today **we have a total of 42 undergraduate programmes:**

- **5 programmes in the Faculty of Arts:** English & Literary Studies; History & International Studies; Music; Philosophy; Religious Studies
- **11 programmes in the Faculty of Education:** Education & Biology; Education & Chemistry; Education & Physics; Education & Mathematics; Education & Computer Science; Education & Economics; Education & Political Science; Education & Social Studies; Education & English; Education & History; Business Education

- **11 Programmes in the Faculty of Management & Social Sciences:** Accounting; Banking & Finance; Management; Marketing; Public Administration; Economics; International Relations; Political Science; Mass Communications; Psychology; Sociology
- **14 Programmes in the Faculty of Natural & Applied Sciences:** Architecture; Biology; Biotechnology; Microbiology; Biochemistry; Chemistry; Industrial Chemistry; Computer Science; Mathematics; Statistics & Demography; Industrial Design; Geography & Environmental Management; Geology; Physics (with options in Industrial Physics, Geophysics)
- **2 programmes in the Faculty of Law: ...**

Our Postgraduate programmes are the following:

- **Faculty of Education:** M. Ed Curriculum Development; M. Ed. Language Education; M. Ed. Measurement Evaluation
- **Faculty of Management and Social Sciences:** PGD & M. Sc. Accounting; PGD & M. Sc. Banking and Finance; PGD & M. Sc. Economics; PGD & M. Sc. International Relations; PGD & M. Sc. Management; PGD & M. Sc. Political Science; PGD & M. Sc. Psychology; PGD & M. Sc. Public Administration
- **Faculty of Natural and Applied Sciences:** M. Sc. Biotechnology; M.Sc. Computer Science; M.Sc. Microbiology; M.Sc. Physics.

Many of the first set of our PG School, after taking the required lectures and seminars and completing successfully their research, are celebrating their convocation today. Congratulations to the first graduates of PG School!

2. Number of Students

We started this university with 215 students. Within ten years of our existence, our number has risen to 3000 students. In addition, we have students from other African countries and Europe. This has made it possible for us to celebrate with inexpressible joy our mission of promoting cultural dialogue.

We also have two hundred students doing their PG programmes and over one thousand persons doing various certificate programmes of the university.

3. *Our graduates*

This university has graduated 2000 students from its first convocation in 2013 till date. In my first convocation speech in 2013 I said: “We have given Nigerians 100 intelligent, beautiful, handsome, hardworking, innovative, God-fearing, prayerful, marriageable young men and women. This is our first gift to Nigeria.” One can imagine what it means to have such quality graduates in Nigeria with an increase from one hundred in 2013 to 2000 graduates of Godfrey Okoye University today. Besides, our strength is not so much in our numerical strength as in the quality of our graduates. More than 50 graduates of Godfrey Okoye University are doing master’s and PhD programmes in reputable universities in Europe and United States of America, the majority of them on scholarship. Three graduates of our university emerged the overall best in their universities (one in the UK and two in the USA) and have got full scholarships to do their PhD programmes. Many of those who are not continuing their programmes are doing exceedingly well in the world of industry. Here is a letter I got last month from a graduate of our university:

Sir,

I'm Etimbuk Udoekong, a graduate of Godfrey Okoye University from the Department of Computer Science. I graduated in 2017. Dr GAM was my mentor and project supervisor.

I'm the Co-founder of Mogedy Technologies, a software company based in Lagos. I co-founded Mogedy with a secondary school friend a month to my graduation, so it happened on Campus. Today Mogedy is a leading software and digital marketing company in Nigeria with several employees. We have engineers from Nigeria, India and Nepal. I have mentored some of my mates and juniors who I felt would do better if they had the right kind of motivation to learn some IT skills about a year ago, including my junior brother who is currently studying computer science in Godfrey Okoye University.

I co-founded Phantfashion, a freelance fashion company in 2018. A platform that helps Africans, especially Nigerians access tailors in Lagos,

Aba, Abuja and other states of Nigeria from the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom. To help users take measurements on the app using some 3D and Computer Vision algorithms, customize the designs as one would at a tailors shop with a few clicks.

This testimony is to assure my VC and the management of Godfrey Okoye University that we're on the right track; we were raised well, and we are doing great. It may not be huge now, but I believe Godfrey Okoye will be such a great community.

Finally, it is on record that 70 percent of graduates of GO University get jobs or become employers of labour within two years after graduation. This is so because we have not only given them a sound academic foundation but also skills that can make them employable when they graduate. Also we have continued to ensure that graduates of GO University go for their NYSC programme the same year they graduate. There is no delay caused by strikes or missing of lectures at Godfrey Okoye University. This is part of the reason why students are properly educated and move fast into the world of industry.

4. Members of Staff

We had just 80 members of staff when we started. Today our staff strength is 660. When you add all members of staff in our group of institutions (our schools), it comes to a total of one thousand members of staff. Besides, among our professors are those you can describe as “academic popes” of various disciplines. Some of them are former chancellors, well known within and outside Nigeria and with intimidating academic records and publications.

5. Ranking

It is not always easy for a young university to compete in ranking with universities with more than 30 years of academic experience and a large number of students and staff whose online activities create stupendous traffic on their university website. We were aware of this at inception but were not intimidated because we believed that with God’s grace David can defeat Goliath. The last ten years have seen our university climbing steadily in rank, now placed number 59 out of 170 universities and 9 out of 70 private

universities in Nigeria in the international 4icu ranking. It has also been ranked the best private university in the Southeast in the 2019 webometrics ranking.

6. *Parents Forum*

The role of parents in education has never been in doubt. Research in this field has shown that there is a relationship between parental involvement in education and success of the children. Godfrey Okoye University is also conscious of the fact that many students are gaining admission at a very young age. This means that parental attention and involvement will not only be needed but also will be very important in their success. This is the background of the Parents Forum of Godfrey Okoye University. This forum has not only provided a platform for the involvement of parents and guardians in education at Godfrey Okoye University but also has become a major source of support to our university. Since the beginning of the Forum, the Parents Forum has bought three vehicles for the university (two buses and a car) and has provided a lot of financial support. I would like to congratulate the President of our Parents Forum, Chief Sir B.E. Okafor (KSJ), and his team for what they have done for this university.

7. *Alumni Association*

Godfrey Okoye University graduated its first set of students in its maiden convocation in 2013. Full of pride about their Alma mater, the fresh-baked graduates quickly formed the Alumni Association of the University. Today the Alumni Association of Godfrey has registered 2000 members scattered all over the world and in every imaginable human economic activity. The Association also has a befitting National Secretariat in Enugu and has continued to support the university. The support includes the donation of a brand new Siena car to the university, embarking on a huge Student Cafeteria project and funding the annual Alumni Dinner.

8. *Foreign Liaison Office*

At the beginning our Foreign Liaison Office in Germany, under the headship of Ms. Meggy Kantert, coordinated our collaborations with universities in

Austria and Germany. In the last ten years the activities of the office have gone beyond the German-speaking world to embrace all our collaborations with European, Latin American and Asian universities. Also our Foreign Liaison Office is responsible for translating our famous quarterly GO Uni Update into the German language. As you can see, at GO Uni we show a deep understanding of the words of the Honourable Minister of Education, Mallam Adamu in his speech at the maiden UNILAG International week. According to the minister, no country in the world can do it all alone. “Our institutions of higher learning must, out of necessity, demonstrate those attributes that make them truly international entities. The poor global ranking of Nigerian universities, the absence of directorates of internationalization in most universities, the untapped roles of the alumni, including those in the Diaspora and the poor synergy among our universities came under scrutiny at a recent retreat.”

9. Collaborations and Erasmus Programme

From the standpoint of its philosophy, mission and vision, our university stands on a tripod of three dialogues: religious, cultural and epistemological dialogues. The pursuit of these dialogues has led us into different levels of collaborations with universities and institutions within and outside Nigeria. At the beginning we had just our mentor University, the University of Nigeria Nsukka, Babcock University and three universities in Austria. Today, we are collaborating intensively with 20 universities in Europe and America as well many universities in Africa and Nigeria. What is important to us in our collaboration with our partner universities is to ensure that our collaborations are not just on paper but are continuously assessed and reviewed from time to time to ensure that we not only keep the terms of our MoU but also that we are succeeding. Kepler University, for instance as part of our MoU, has been admitting 6 of our students every year as exchange programme students. We also have an exchange student from the University of Munster who is studying in our university in this academic year. Also we have continuously pursued research collaborations with Kepler University and other partner universities. This year we secured European Union grant for a collaboration with our partner institution in Austria, the University College of Education, Linz, for a joint research on learner motivation. We have also received six scholarships for the fresh graduates of our university to do their master’s degree at the Technical University of Cologne. In addition, last week I signed an MoU with the University of Bayreuth, which has given scholarships to two of students

and a member of staff for an exchange programme in Germany. I am inspired by what the vice chancellor of Oxford University, Louise Richardson, said recently: "Oxford's success is in large part due to our research collaborations with other excellent universities around the world and we remain determined both to deepen and to expand these partnerships, whatever Brexit brings." This view is shared by Godfrey Okoye. This explains why we are pursuing aggressively our programme of collaboration in research with our partner universities.

10. Strategic Plan

The university has appointed a committee on strategic planning with Prof. Festus Eze as Chairman. The document will soon be completed and will articulate all the plans of the university in the coming years, especially at the main campus of the university at Ugwuomu Nike.

11. Innovations at GO

Godfrey Okoye University has in the last ten years embarked on some innovative programmes:

a. Town and Gown Assembly

This programme, which brings the world of industry and commerce and the university community together for interacting and awakening interest in important areas of research as well as a platform for the sale of products of research, has helped us to do our research along the areas of need in our society as well as market the products of our research easily.

b. GO Uni STEP

STEP is the acronym for Student Training for Entrepreneurial Promotion. Godfrey Okoye University is running this programme in collaboration with Leuphana University in Germany. STEP empowers students to begin, develop and operate business models while studying at GO University. Part of the training is to give students start-up funds to develop and operate their business models. This project has a hundred percent success in our university.

c. Directorate of Ethics

This is the first of its kind in any Nigerian University. The focus of the training is the ethical training and assessment of staff and students. The Directorate supports the academic course called Moral Reasoning and Ethics, organizes trainings on matters of ethics, including research ethics, as well as the annual ethical assessment of members of staff and our departments.

d. *Mentorship programme*

This GO University innovation involves the assignment of students to mentors as they enter the university and guarantees that the young students do not get lost in the seemingly thick forest of academia. This has helped us in the close monitoring of students' academic and ethical performance.

e. *Three-year programme of the Use of English*

A university exists to solve the problems of society. When we saw that many students are entering the university with a very poor knowledge of English, the senate of the university, after a deep study and analysis of the situation, decided to make the Use of English a three-year programme (from one hundred to three hundred levels). This decision of the senate has paid off and helped the university to exorcise the demon of bad and tasteless English.

f. *Project Month for Entrepreneurial Development,*

This is a GO University innovative project of sending its undergraduates in the month of April to interact with the world of industry and commerce and with their professional colleagues as well as to explore their entrepreneurial interests. This project has also equipped many of graduates to become employers of labour after their graduation.

g. *Certificate Programmes*

A university must be interested in the problems of society. Godfrey Okoye has in the last focused its research on specific unsolved problems of society. We at GO have also identified areas of need that will require a serious academic plan. One of the areas of need is childcare for working parents. Those who take care of the children of working parents are popularly known as nannies. When we

realized that the nannies have little or no training for the kind of job they do, we decided to find a solution. This explains why we mounted a one-year certificate programme in nanny education. The senate has approved a Centre for Nanny and Continuing Education for the adequate training and registration of nannies who will be working in different homes. The Centre, which is headed by Dr. Mrs. Vero Mogboh, has the responsibility to identify other areas of need in society where training or retraining and certification will be necessary for the development of the Nigerian society. We have also mounted a certificate programme in the social media studies to train people in the use of the social media.

h. Vice Chancellor for one Day

This senate-approved innovation of the university has created a healthy atmosphere of academic competition. The student with the highest CGPA in an academic year wins the title “Vice Chancellor for One Day”. The winner will have the opportunity to act as the VC, use the VC’s official car, address the Senate and the students (but just for one day). The VC for One Day also wins a scholarship to study for one academic year.

i. Unity Week

This is our annual festival for the celebration of our three dialogues as expressed in our philosophy, mission and vision: religious, cultural and epistemological. During this week, students get the opportunity to understand the full meaning of religious dialogue, cultural dialogue and epistemological dialogue through lectures, projects, cultural displays and a cooking competition involving different ethnic groups in Nigeria. This is a week that reveals how beautiful Nigeria is.

j. Mass Education

Godfrey Okoye University has a programme of mass education. This programme involves direct intervention in rural schools and schools in urban areas that lack teachers in mathematics, English and natural sciences by providing teachers or sending members of staff of the university to teach in such schools. The programme also involves going to such places as prisons (Nigerian Correctional Service) and centres for the physically challenged.

k. Community services

Godfrey Okoye University is always conscious of the huge burden of social responsibility on its shoulders as a Catholic university. What is very inspiring is how our students have all realized that they must care for the fellow humans and the environment. Every year students of the university embark on a clean-up exercise in many streets of Enugu. I was overjoyed when I saw my students last Saturday clearing the roadsides and sweeping the streets of Thinkers' Corner without anybody ordering them to do so. This is what it means to have an all-round education.

A word for our fresh graduates and their parents

My dear graduates, it is time to say goodbye. It is time to set you free from the VC's Sunday Evening Programme. It is time to say bye to roll calls. It is time to bid farewell to such words as "You must be back to the hostel at 6:30PM." It is time to forget all the stress of running like stampeding cows to different lecture halls. The fear of expulsion or suspension is gone! A new dawn of life has begun. But remember that education is what remains after you have forgotten all you learnt at school. What remains? How much spirituality, morality, discipline, or hard work remains now? Over these years, we have given you the strongest key to success: hard work, discipline and prayer. Are you going to keep this key forever?

Always remember that you are not alone in the world. Your education is the gift God has given you to touch lives and change your society. The famous author of Harry Potter, J. k. Rowling, had the following words for fresh graduates of Harvard University, which I think should be reflected upon by you: "If you choose to use your status and influence to raise your voice on behalf of those who have no voice; if you choose to identify not only with the powerful, but with the powerless; if you retain the ability to imagine yourself into the lives of those who do not have your advantages, then it will not only be your proud families who celebrate your existence, but thousands and millions of people whose reality you have helped change. We do not need magic to change the world, we carry all the power we need inside ourselves already: we have the power to imagine better."

To all Friends of Our University

I thank you for your contributions to the growth of our university. Many of you have supported our scholarship project by giving full or partial scholarships to our students. Some have donated books and equipment. Some have never ceased to pray for our success. May God bless you! Let me reiterate a point I have made in the past. One of the greatest ways you can support this

university is to employ our graduates. I would like to invite those of you who have industries, businesses, companies, schools, NGOs, etc., to make a commitment to employ at least one graduate of Godfrey Okoye University. You will certainly not regret employing a graduate of GO in the light of the all-round education we give our students. The Catholic Diocese of Enugu will be eternally grateful to you for doing so. And of course I will never cease to pray for the success of all companies, institutions or agencies where GO graduates are employed.

And to you parents and guardians, thanks for all your sacrifices and all your support. We have done the best we can to train your children. We have ensured that they see prayer as very important in their success and as the foundation of human achievements and success. We have given them the true meaning of human love and care. We have helped them to understand that cultism has no place in academia by establishing a cult-free Catholic University. We have planted Christian and true human values on the tablets of their souls. We have given them a robust academic foundation. Please help us to keep reminding them of the things they learnt in this university. Pray for them, encourage them and continue to support them until they can stand on their feet and fly with their own wings. God bless you!

Conclusion

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, you may have realized that I have not uttered a word about the main campus of Godfrey Okoye University at Ugwuomu Nike. You of course know what the Lord said: "I have so many things to tell you but you cannot bear them now but when the Holy Spirit comes, he will lead you to the whole truth." So let me keep you in suspense about our main campus till you get there tomorrow. During the celebration of our tenth anniversary tomorrow you will see, touch, smell, taste and feel the miracle of God on earth: this Godfrey Okoye University. I will unveil the present and future faces of this God's own university in my speech to mark the 10th Anniversary.

Do not even dream of missing tomorrow's celebration! God bless you all!