

Speech Presented by the Vice Chancellor,  
Godfrey Okoye University, Ugwuomu-Nike,  
Enugu, Enugu State

at

the Launch of Godfrey Okoye University  
Capital Projects Campaign

on

Saturday, 26 January 2013

- Speaker of House of Representatives, Federal Republic of Nigeria,  
Rt. Hon. Dr. Alhaji Aminu Waziri Tambuwal, CFR
- Deputy Senate President, Federal Republic of Nigeria,  
Senator Dr. Ike Ekwerenmadu CFR
- Your Excellency, Executive Governor of Enugu State,  
Barr. Dr. Sullivan Iheanacho Chime
- The Proprietor, the Catholic Bishop of Enugu Diocese,  
Most Rev. Dr. Callistus Chukwuma Onaga
- The Bishop Emeritus of Enugu Catholic Diocese,  
Most Rev. Dr. Anthony Okonkwo Gbuji
- Your Excellencies, the Visiting Catholic Bishops
- Distinguished Members of the National Assembly
- Distinguished Members of the State Assembly
- Speaker, Enugu State House of Assembly, Hon. Barr. Eugene Odo
- Members of State Executive Councils, Local Government Chairmen
- Members of State Traditional Rulers Council and Your Royal Highness
- The Chairman, Board of Trustees, Prof. Joseph Ikechukwu Chidobem
- Members of the Board of Trustees
- The Pro-Chancellor and Chairman of the Governing Council,  
Prof. Dr. Christian Nwachukwu Okeke

- Members of the Governing Council
- Visiting Pro-Chancellors
- The Vice Chancellor and Chairman of Senate
- Members of Senate
- Vice Chancellors of Sister Universities
- Principal Officers of the University
- Chairman, GO University Capital Projects Campaign,  
Msgr. Prof. Dr. Obiora Ike
- Academic and Administrative Staff of GO University
- Academic and Administrative Staff of IEcE
- Monsignors, Rev. Fathers, Rev. Sisters and other Religious Leaders
- Members of the Fourth Estate of the Realm
- Members of GO University Parents Forum
- Cherished friends of GO University
- Students, members of Staff of IEcE
- Great GO University Staff and Students
- Ladies and Gentlemen

On behalf of the staff and students of our university, I welcome you all to this memorable event in the history of our university, the Capital Projects Campaign of Godfrey Okoye University. Godfrey Okoye University (GO University), which got its operational licence from the National Universities Commission on November 3, 2009, belongs to the Catholic Diocese of Enugu. It is in fact the first Catholic University established by one diocese in the whole of Africa.

It is important to recall that modern university education has its foundation in the Church. Historically speaking, “European higher education (including university) took place for hundreds of years in Christian cathedral schools or monastic schools (*scholae monasticae*), in which monks and nuns taught classes; evidence of these immediate forerunners of the later university at many places dates back to 6<sup>th</sup> Century AD. These universities were developed under the aegis of the Latin Church, usually from Cathedral schools or by papal bull as *studia generalia*”. Since the establishment of the first universities (University of Bologna and University of Paris), the Catholic Church has never ceased to see education, especially university education as part of its mission and divine mandate. Pope Benedict XVI in his lecture to university lecturers and educators urges them to see their work as “*intellectual charity*”, an expression of love in which they share their knowledge with the younger generation. The overall interest of the Church in education is what inspired the Catholic Diocese of Enugu to establish what we call today Godfrey Okoye University.

In the context of the present serious challenges in the field of education, the Church, in the spirit of Vatican II document “*Guadium et Spes*”, shares in the sorrows and disappointments of our young people in the face of a horrifying decay of academic activities and a shocking tsunamic erosion of moral values in our schools and higher institutions. The Church cannot stand with hands akimbo and watch the situation cascade into irreversible chaos. The Catholic Church, in the words of George Elliot in the novel *Middle March*, may not make ocean of change but it can put its tributary

into that ocean. This also explains the Church's interest in establishing Godfrey Okoye University.

**The question is, what makes Godfrey Okoye University different? Where is its uniqueness?**

First, the university emphasises three dialogues in its philosophy that sees education as a dialogical process of acquisition and dissemination of knowledge: religious dialogue, epistemological dialogue and cultural dialogue. Religious dialogue is very important to GO University because we are conscious of our background as a deeply religious nation. Our university teaches and stresses the importance of religion and prayer. This is a praying university, where prayer is at the centre of all activities in the university. This is a university where religious tolerance is not an option but an obligation. This is a university where our youths use the power of prayer to banish cultism and myriads of social vices to blackholes of forgotten vices. This is a university where Nigerians can practise their religions without any fear of being harassed, ridiculed, subjugated or oppressed by others who have different faith expressions.

The second part of our three-pronged dialogues is epistemological dialogue. For us here, academic work (teaching and learning) is an expression of faith, an act of intellectual charity. All principal officers of the university teach: the Vice Chancellor, the Registrar, the University Librarian, and the Bursar. This is part of epistemological dialogue, whereby the principal officers build a bridge between administration and academic activities. Also, experts with experience in different fields of human endeavour have been invited (and have continued to be invited) to give lectures in the university. They bring their experience from the world of politics, industry and commerce into the lecture halls of the university. Almost all the commissioners and important industrialists in and around Enugu have at one time or another had an opportunity to give lectures at GO University, bringing their refreshing experience to our young people. This is part of our understanding of epistemological dialogue. Also, the university is in collaboration with many universities outside the country, resulting in

exchange of ideas, experience and information. This is part of our interpretation of epistemological dialogue. Presently, GO University is doing a collaborative research with Bowie State University, U.S.A, in DNA Barcoding of tropical plants. Out of this research, *Akpalata*, discovered and analysed by GO University Biotechnology students, has been accepted as new in the world's DNA database. Two of our final year students will travel to Bowie State University next week to complete their experiments on DNA Barcoding of some tropical medicinal plants. Furthermore, GO University emphasises inter-departmental seminars and teaching, whereby teachers from different fields work on a selected and approved theme. We have also identified our signature courses, where we intend to excel in this country and in the world and we are emphasising epistemological dialogue in these areas very deeply.

Finally, the university stresses cultural dialogue. We are conscious of the fact that Nigeria is a multicultural entity. We have students from all over Nigeria. Once a year we celebrate unity week in which each cultural group in Nigeria gives others the opportunity to learn from their culture. Last year the Vice Chancellor gave 19 scholarships to the best students (in UTME and Post UTME) from different states of Nigeria. This is to encourage cultural diversity and dialogue at GO University. It is to this university with its trilogy of prologues that I welcome you today.

In keeping with our pledge to the National Universities Commission, we have continued to develop our permanent site without neglecting the present Thinkers Corner site. What we have achieved here in terms of cleanliness, orderliness and beauty is being carried over to the permanent site. The permanent site at Ugwuomu-Nike, spanning 165 hectares of land with two beautiful lakes and rivers, heavily wooded virgin forest, reminiscent of the Forest of Arden in Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, is the most serene site for a university. There we intend to create a kind of setting which is so conducive for teaching and learning that our young people will be reluctant to leave it after their graduation. I solicit your support for the full development of this site.

Your excellencies, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, a university that has kept its fees as low as N264,000.00 per annum (including accommodation) in order to make education affordable to the majority of our young people deserves all your support to continue its work. The Catholic Church has never seen education as a profit-making venture. This explains why it is investing heavily in Godfrey Okoye University and has succeeded in making it the cheapest private university in Nigeria. The Church needs your support to continue its work in this university.

A university that organized an international conference in Biotechnology within a very short period of its establishment and is leading today in DNA-Barcoding of tropical plants needs all the support it can get from every Nigerian.

A university, this Godfrey Okoye University, where everybody is committed to the work of teaching and research, where the Chairman of Board of Trustees goes to the classroom, where the Vice Chancellor teaches, where the Registrar teaches, the University Librarian and the Bursar teach, such a university with the deepest sense of duty and commitment deserves the support of Nigerians.

A university in which you have no trace of cultism, sexual harassment, sorting, examination malpractice and many other vices that have bedevilled our institutions should be supported to continue its good work.

A university that has succeeded in attracting the best heads in academia (about 40 professors) and has continued to give young lecturers opportunities to pursue further studies within and outside Nigeria, such a university deserves encouragement. A university in which students can determine when they will finish, where students get their results as soon as they finish their exams, where they go for national youth service (NYSC) as soon as they finish their studies, where they can plan their life because they know when they will finish their studies, such a university deserves all the encouragement it can get from Nigerians.

A university that produced the best essayists in an essay competition organized last year for first year students of Nigeria universities as part of Justice Aniagolu Memorial Lecture (Godfrey Okoye University took first and third positions), such a university deserves your support.

By supporting the development of our permanent site you will be making an enduring, unforgettable contribution to the development of this young and dynamic university. Your names will be written in gold. God will count your support in the building of a Catholic University as one of your best gifts to humanity. The Catholic Church has never failed in education. And it will not fail now! You can support our effort by donating money, endowing a chair or taking one of the building projects, which will be named after you. Also, we have a system of Build, Operate and Transfer (BOT) for our hostel buildings.

Before I take you through the permanent site with the PowerPoint presentation, I would like to express my gratitude first to the Speaker of House of Representatives, Rt. Hon. Dr. Alhaji Aminu Waziri Tambuwal, who accepted to chair this occasion. My dear friend, Your Excellency, the Speaker of House of Representatives, today you have taken your place among the Founding Fathers of this university. The prayers of staff and students of this university will go with you and your friends as you go about the difficult task of building and developing our nation. My gratitude also goes to my own brother Hon. Ogbuefi Ozombachi who worked tirelessly to ensure that all necessary contacts were made for this launching. *Mowu*, God bless you! I will not end without mentioning my friend Chief Nnamudi Abba, who rang me on 24 January to inform me that he would support this university by developing the University Lake Resort and Prof. Julius Okojie Recreation Centre with the sum of 600 Million Naira!

Thank you all and God bless you!

**Prof. Dr. Christian Anieke (Rev. Fr.)  
Vice Chancellor  
Godfrey Okoye University**