

Speech of the
Vice Chancellor of

Godfrey Okoye University
Rev. Fr. Prof. Christian Anieke

on the Occasion of

The Visit of the Rector of the
Pontifical Lateran University
Rome

His Grace
Archbishop Professor Enrico dal Covolo

On Friday 1 July 2016

*Your Grace, the Rector of Pontifical Lateran University
Your Excellency the Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Enugu and Promoter
of Godfrey Okoye University
The Principal Officers of GO University
Heads of Tertiary Institutions
Rectors of seminaries
Deans and Directors of Academic Programmes
The Registrar and the Principal Officers of the Institute of
Ecumenical Education
Heads of Departments and Coordinators of Programmes
Monsignors and Reverend Fathers
The Management of Godfrey Okoye University Secondary School, Primary
and Nursery Schools
Respected Academic and Administrative Staff of our
University and Its Group of Institutions
Distinguished Friends of GO University
My Dear Students
Ladies and Gentlemen*

It is with a profound sense of gratitude that I welcome you, the Rector (Vice Chancellor) of the Pontifical Lateran University, Archbishop Professor Enrico dal Covolo. We have received so many vice chancellors and distinguished personalities since our inception in 2009. But this is the first time we have received an Archbishop who is also a vice chancellor. On behalf of the staff and students of our beloved Catholic University, I heartily welcome you to one of the fastest growing universities in Nigeria, Godfrey Okoye University, and fondly and rightly called 'God's own university'.

As our famous novelist Chinua Achebe writes in his novel Things Fall

Apart, "Looking at a King's mouth, one would think he never sucked at his mother's breast." Anyone looking at this university today will find it difficult to believe that it started only seven years ago with a handful of students and staff. But here we are today with about 2300 students and 500 hundred members of staff. This university started with only two faculties: Management and Social Sciences, and Natural and Applied Sciences. Today we have four strong faculties:

Faculty of Management and Social Sciences

Faculty of Natural and Applied Sciences

Faculty of Education

Faculty of Arts

In the next academic year three new faculties and a postgraduate school will come on board:

Faculty of Law

Faculty of Basic Medical Sciences

Faculty of Engineering

Our graduates are all over the world, working or doing postgraduate programmes. Our university radio (GO Uni Radio 106.9fm) is the best campus radio in Nigeria in 2016. Godfrey Okoye University is also brimming over with different types of research. We are leading in researches on tropical fish and plants including their DNA

barcoding. We have also championed the research ethics programme in Nigeria. Also our university, in collaboration with DNA Learning Centre in New York, is building the biggest DNA learning centre in Africa. Also we are the first university in Nigeria to introduce **Town and Gown Assembly**, a meeting point of the university and those in industry. Our university has been chosen for national biosafety courses for all Nigerians. We are known for innovations and dynamism. It is a university associated with speed and progress, which is captured in its name **GO. We are indeed a Catholic university on the go!**

Apart from the university itself, its group of institutions are doing exceedingly well. Our secondary school has never missed first, second or third positions in any academic, social or cultural competition the school has participated in. Our primary school and nursery school pupils count among the smartest children you can find anywhere in Nigeria. Our college of education, the Institute of Ecumenical Education, has become the best college of education in Nigeria with hundred percent digitalization of academic and administrative processes.

Your grace, I would like to inform you that we have covered all sectors of human educational system in our academic conglomerate (Godfrey Okoye University Group of Institutions). One can begin

from our nursery school and finish at our university without venturing into untested academic settings littering the education landscape of our country. Enugu Diocese has taken the lead in Nigeria by guaranteeing sound education at all levels of educational institutions. This explains why I am convinced that Enugu Diocese should be raised to an Archdiocese. Its elevation will be recognition of what the Diocese has done for the Catholic Church in Nigeria. It is also the Diocese of the headquarters of the Old Eastern Region, and it is indeed a real metropolitan Diocese. With your prayers and some whispers into the ears of the pope, I am convinced that this will happen.

Apart from the present campus, we also have our main campus at Ugwuomu Nike, which is an indescribable cynosure, with two fantastic lakes and a rare variety of plants and animals. This is where many of the faculties will be located in future. It is our prayer and dream that our university becomes the biggest Catholic university in the world.

In all our progress and work, we have relied on God. We know that *unless the Lord builds, they labour in vain who try to build*. Prayer is part and parcel of our life here. Life at GO University begins and ends with prayer. Daily mass and Sunday reflections involving all students belong to our way of life. Because we have put our trust in

God, God has showered us with incalculable favours. I do not know any university that is so blessed as our university is.

Your grace, it may interest you to know that we have a wide network of universities in Europe, America and Asia, which we are collaborating with. Among them are Birmingham City University (UK), Bowie State University (USA), University of Muenster (Germany), University of Innsbruck (Austria), Private University College of Education, Linz (Austria), Kepler University in Linz (Austria), University of Vienna (Austria), Cologne University of Applied Science (Germany), All Hallows College, Dublin (Ireland), Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, New York (USA) and Dublin City University (Ireland). In all these collaborations we have always stressed exchange of staff, students and collaborative research. In line with our philosophy of dialogue, we wish to extend our long arms of academic collaboration to your university. We would like to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with your university, which will guide our collaborative work. Collaborating with your university is particularly important to us because we are a Catholic university with strong Catholic values and identity.

Finally, in the words of the famous English poet William Shakespeare, "I can no other answer make, but, thanks, and thanks." I thank you profusely for this memorable visit and wish you

all the blessings of *God* as you travel back to your university.