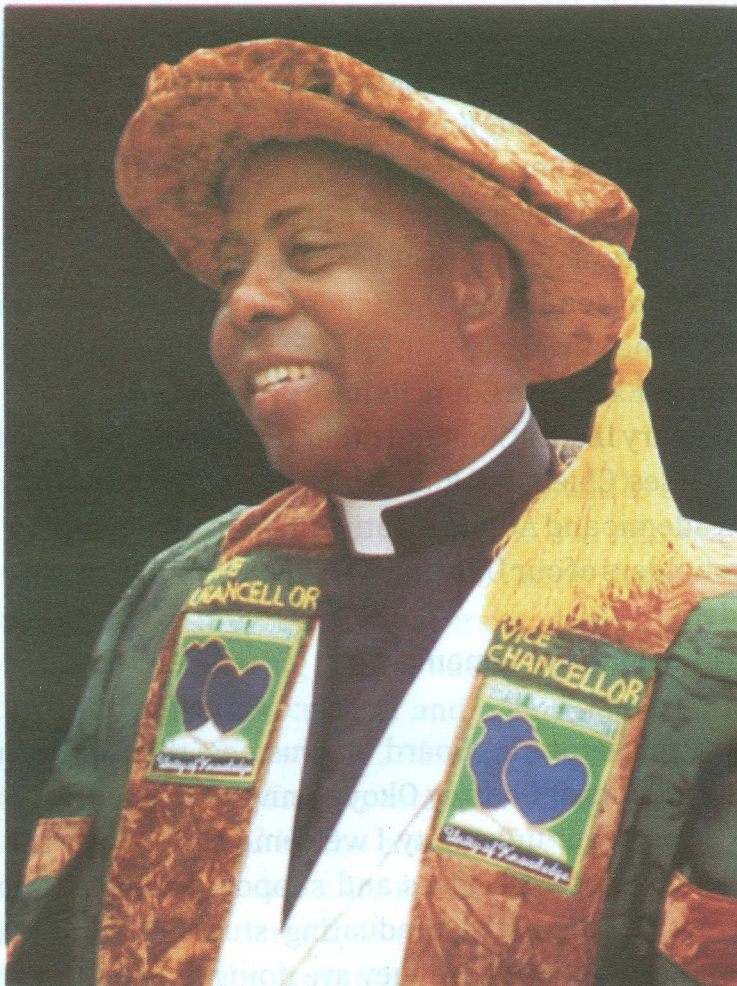
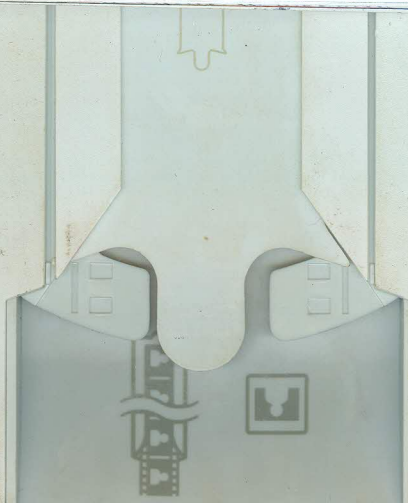


ADDRESS OF THE PIONEER VICE CHANCELLOR
*Godfrey Okoye University: Traversing the
Boundaries of Dream and Reality*



REV. FATHER PROF. DR. CHRISTIAN ANIEKE



Your Excellency Dr. Goodluck Jonathan, GCFR, President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed forces, Federal Republic of Nigeria
Your Excellencies, the Executive Governors here present
The Supervising Minister of Education, Chief Nyesom Wike
The Speaker, House of Representatives, Hon. Waziri Aminu Tambuwal
Other Honourable Members of the House of Representatives and the Federal Executive Council here present
The Executive Secretary of the National Universities Commission
The Proprietor of the University, Most Rev. Dr. C. V. C. Onaga
Your Grace, Archbishop Ignatius Kaigama
Your Excellencies, Bishops here present
Other Vice Chancellors of Universities here present
Chairman and Members of the Board of Trustees
The Prochancellor and Members of the Governing Council of our university
Principal Officers of the university
Members of the State Executive Councils here present
Heads of other Tertiary Institutions and other Governmental parastatals
Your Royal Highnesses, Chiefs and Elders,
Distinguished Academic and Administrative Staff of our university
Friend and Stakeholders of our University
Graduating Students
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

On behalf of the Proprietor, the Board of Trustees, the Governing Council, the Senate, staff and students of Godfrey Okoye University, I heartily welcome you to the First Convocation of our university. I welcome particularly the parents of our graduating students whose sacrifices and support have made this celebration possible. I warmly welcome the graduating students who have come from different parts of the country where they are doing their National Youth Service programme in order to attend this ceremony.

Introduction

During the memorable first matriculation of this university, I presented a

matriculation address entitled *"This Is Our Chance: Godfrey Okoye University"*. I can vividly recall that moment when Prof. Julius Okojie called out the name "Godfrey Okoye University" to present the operating licence that brought the university into life. I shivered, tears filling my eyes. I quickly closed my tear-filled eyes and muttered these unforgettable words: this is our chance! Today as I see the first fruit of four years of uninterrupted academic sowing and toiling, I cannot but recall those words of the first matriculation. At the first matriculation, the words "this is our chance" were mere dreams and wishes of an indescribably excited soul. Today, having tested these dreams in the furnace of academic rigor and systematic administrative chiselling, I have seen the dreams metamorphose into a robust, palpable reality.

Without boring you down with a litany of our achievements, I would like to present only a panoramic view of some of our innovations and successes strongly motivated by our mission, philosophy and vision within the last four years.

The mission of our university

It is important to present the mission of this university and to explain how it has guided our steps on an irreversible journey that is shaping our world in an irrevocable pattern. The mission of Godfrey Okoye University, which is rooted in its philosophy, is simple: Godfrey Okoye University dedicates itself to impart quality education aimed at inculcating in the students strong personality that will ensure the promotion of religious, cultural and epistemological dialogue. The licensing of our university on 3 November 2009 was our chance to translate this mission statement of the Founding Fathers into reality. Frankly speaking, our life in this university is strictly guided by the consciousness of our mission. For us religious dialogue means that students are encouraged to worship God in their own way and language, but at the same time understand that we are worshipping the same God. Everyday life in the university begins and ends with prayer. The result of our seriousness with prayer and religious dialogue is that this university is one of the safest universities in Nigeria. It is one of the few universities in Nigeria where cultism does not exist in the university vocabulary.

The second theme "cultural dialogue" is very important because of the multi-cultural and multi-ethnic nature of our nation. Students must be helped to understand and appreciate other cultures in Nigeria. The General Studies Programme "***Nigerian Peoples and Cultures***" is taken very seriously in this university. In addition, our unity week, a yearly programme of the university, emphasizes cultural diversity and helps students to learn the cultural elements of other ethnic groups in Nigeria. Consequently, we are training a generation of Nigerians who are proud of the cultural diversity of their nation and who are proud to be called Nigerians.

Furthermore, the last theme in our mission is epistemological dialogue. This is precisely the dialogue of different fields of human knowledge. This particular dialogue has motivated us to design a curriculum that has assisted our students in overcoming an odiously narcissistic approach to education. Students are gradually becoming aware of the unity of human knowledge. This is part of what it means to have integral education. The senate of the university has also ensured that getting a first class of our university means having sufficient evidence of all-roundedness and integrality in academic activities and character.

Innovations at Godfrey Okoye University

After four years, gliding on the wings of our dreams and philosophy, Godfrey Okoye University has a lot of innovations adorning its academic space:

Teaching of the Use of English from 100 level to 300 level

To ensure that we do not compound the problems of society by graduating students whose language is a mockery of university education and academia, we have stretched out our Use of English programme to cover the first three years of study in this university. Those who fail to convince us after three years of a serious academic encounter with the English language are placed on what we call "intensive care". In order to ensure the success of our Use of English programme, we introduced small classes of not more than fifty students and employed experienced teachers to handle these classes. We also have a very

good language laboratory to train the students in their spoken English. Consequently, there has been tremendous improvement in the quality of the language of our students. In addition, in major competitions taken in the last two years our students have been named the best speakers.

Laptops and International Computer Driving Licence (ICDL)

In a world under ICT siege, being ICT illiterate is not only an academic oddity but also an academic annihilation. Before we got the licence to operate as a private university, I dreamt of graduates who were so well educated in the use of computer and modern ICT facilities that they could provide the much needed quality manpower in Nigeria. The first step we took towards the realisation of the dream was to make the possession of laptops obligatory in the university. To show how serious we were with this policy, we procured two hundred laptops at inception, which were handed out to the pioneer students. Besides, we introduced ICDL (International Computer Driving Licence) to ensure that the laptops do not become decorative objects. Today the dream of making all our students computer literate has become a reality. The result is that our students do not have much difficulty getting jobs as soon as they graduate from this university. A good number of our students have already got job offers even as they are doing the National Youth Service programme.

Parents Forum

Education is a kind of social contract between an institution and the parents or guardians. The parents or guardians pay the fees and the institution must ensure that they get value for their money. It is ridiculous for an institution to think that the contract is with the government alone and to ignore the feelings of parents and guardians. This explains why Godfrey Okoye University takes the feelings of the parents very seriously. This also explains why we decided to have what we call "GO University Parents Forum". This Forum brings parents and the university administration together to discuss the affairs of the university, especially as they affect the students and their wellbeing. The Forum has helped the parents or guardians of our students to understand the university better and to be part of the effort being made to educate their children or wards.

Monday Lecture Series and Tutors

In pursuit of our philosophy and mission of dialogue, we introduced the idea of bringing people from different fields of human experience to give lectures. Every Monday, we invite an industrialist, a politician, an inventor, a creative writer, a theologian or a successful business man or woman, to give a lecture and offer our students the opportunity to ask questions. Similarly, our philosophy of dialogue impels us to recognize that there are many Nigerians who have a lot of practical experience but do not have the required degree to teach at university. Such people who have become successful in their fields need to be attracted to the university. To accommodate them, the senate of the university approved a category of university teachers called "*tutors*". These tutors bring in their wealth of experience into the classroom and inspire students in their various fields.

The University Farms

To make the university self-reliant we have acquired and developed about hundred hectares of land for agriculture at the main campus of the university. It is our hope that the agricultural sector of our university will provide the funds needed for the development of the main campus of the university. I would like to express my gratitude to our Austrian friends who have been behind the development of the university farms. The former Austrian Deputy Chancellor, Mr. Wilhelm Molterer, who is here today, has been very helpful in securing the facilities and funds needed in developing the university farms.

Biological Garden at the Main Campus

A university that places a lot of emphasis on the Biological Sciences needs a very good Biological garden. Already on this campus we have succeeded in developing a very good biological garden that has become a cynosure in the state. At Ugwuomu Nike, the main campus of the university, we are developing five hectares of Biological garden that will be second to none in Nigeria. When completed in April next year, it will not only provide learning material for the Biological Sciences but also will welcome visitors who want to see some fascinating tropical animals and plants.

Peace Conference

As our own contribution to the promotion of peace in our country and to ensure that our young people understand the full meaning of peaceful co-existence, we initiated a peace conference at GO University. This conference, which is the initiative of Rev. Sr. Dr. Gloria Njoku, the Director of Academic Planning of our University, has attracted a lot of young men and women to this university. It has become a good platform for discussing peace and strategies for promoting peace in the world.

Foreign Liaison Office

To coordinate our collaboration with our European and American partners, the university established a foreign liaison office in Germany under the headship of a German, Ms. Meggy Kantert, Mag. This office coordinates our relationships with our foreign partner universities. This arrangement has helped us to get a strong footing in Europe and America.

GO University Student Week

The dream of a three-pronged dialogue has metamorphosed into a fascinating reality with the Senate approval of GO University Unity Week. GO University Unity Week is cornucopia of celebrations of all shapes and colours. It is a three-day event to celebrate our three dialogues: religious, epistemological and cultural dialogue. It always begins with praise worship and a homily. This is followed by lectures on different cultural issues. The second day, the most important day in the three-day event, is the cultural day. Each ethnic group in the university has the opportunity of presenting itself, its language, its music, its food and all its cultural elements. Members of staff and students are then invited to watch the groups perform and at the end the food cooked by the ethnic groups is shared out to all. It is one of the most interesting cultural events in Nigeria with a strong promise of fostering cultural understanding and integration.

Bridging the gap between Administrative Staff and Academic Staff

We have succeeded in bridging the gap between administrative and academic staff by encouraging all principal officers and senior administrative staff to teach.

Here the Vice Chancellor teaches! The Registrar who is a professor of management teaches. The University Librarian teaches. The Bursar who is a chartered accountant teaches. Even the Chairman of Board of Trustees, an erudite professor of hydrobiology and Vice Chancellor Emeritus, teaches. The Pro Chancellor, an erudite professor of law, teaches. Here we do not have a Council whose primary duty is to discuss who gets what contract. We have a Governing Council that understands that it all about one project: teaching and research. This is our story! This is our success! With this kind of mindset, academic work goes on harmoniously.

Digitalizing our Security Unit

We live in a time when security must go beyond guns and tall, dark-faced, red-eyed security officers. The use of CCTV and digital security tools have become very effective in keeping criminals on their toes and eliminating evil men and women. Godfrey Okoye University has succeeded in installing CCTV in every nook and cranny of the university. We have also digital tools to monitor events around the university environment. This has strengthened our security immeasurably.

Our Successes

Infrastructural Development

Since the inception of our university, we have embarked on a heavy infrastructural development of both the present campus and the main campus at Ugwuomu Nike. It has been our desire to use the present campus to give a foretaste of our main campus at Ugwuomu Nike. This explains why we embarked on massive infrastructural development of this campus. All our students are accommodated in our comfortable hostels. Besides, our students live in our hostels as part of their training and in line with our policy of making the university hundred percent residential. We also built a befitting faculty of education, equipped with modern teaching facilities. Our major lecture halls are equipped with smart boards to enhance the use of modern methods of teaching. Also, our laboratories are fully equipped to make practicals attractive to students. Our Biotechnology laboratory, for instance, has been praised by

National Biotechnology Development Agency (NABDA) as one of the best Biotechnology laboratories in Nigeria.

Our university secondary school is equipped with modern classrooms and fully air-conditioned hostels. Also, our ultra modern Church with its beautiful Chaplaincy provides a conducive prayer setting for the university community. On top of this, we have continued to acquire lands in Thinker's Corner so that this campus of the university will not lack space needed for its future development as a campus of the university. This **Jonathan Goodluck Convocation Ground** is also a new arrival in our massive infrastructural development and transformation of this university campus. The naming of this convocation ground after the President is an expression of the national character of our university.

Furthermore, the main campus at Ugwuomu Nike is a demonstration of our ecological consciousness and an architectural display of our philosophy of dialogue. Our infrastructural development records at the main campus include:

- ❖ A multimillion naira campus electrification project
- ❖ Development of the hundred hectares of the university farms
- ❖ Building two main gates to the campus
- ❖ Building junior staff quarters
- ❖ Installation of two 100 KVA generators
- ❖ Securing the Campus boundaries with walls
- ❖ Completion of one faculty building
- ❖ Completion of one departmental building with offices and lecture halls
- ❖ Completion of garri and palm oil processing plants
- ❖ Planting of 5 hectares of palm trees and other economic trees
- ❖ Building a bridge across the university river

Ongoing Projects:

- 🌳 A multimillion University Guest House in Collaboration with foreign friends and partners

- ❁ 300-room student hostel
- ❁ Central Administrative Building
- ❁ Alhaji Aminu Waziri Tambuwal Auditorium
- ❁ Students' Cafeteria
- ❁ 50-room female hostel (by Catholic Women's Organisation)
- ❁ 60-room hostel (by Catholic Men's Organisation)
- ❁ 18-room hostel (by Enugu Catholic Deanery)
- ❁ A giant Water Treatment Plant
- ❁ Uwaebuka Biological Garden
- ❁ Campus Roads

Where is the Evidence?

On entering this university, one question that stares you in the face is: where is the evidence? As a university we have chosen this question to give us a direction in the wide desert of academic business. For us, it is like the Biblical pillar of cloud providing direction in the wilderness. *Where is the evidence* is about research, verification, verifiability and facticity. We confront our students with this question as they enter the university. It is like a shock therapy, helping them to realise that they have entered a world where mythic explanations must give way for scientific explanations with hard empirical tools. We put a lot of emphasis on research because that is the only way our question can be answered. We have invested heavily in our laboratories to show that our question is not a mere window dressing. All programmes in this university are designed to ask and answer this question.

Students and the Duration of their Programme

One great success we have achieved is to make it possible for students to know when they will finish their studies. From the first day of your entry into Godfrey Okoye University, you know when you can finish. We made this point very clear to our pioneer students. We made sure they finished their projects before their final examinations. After the examinations we worked day and night to do the marking of the scripts. We encouraged our external examiners to understand our pace and follow it. Today apart from graduating 100 students, we have also

ensured that our pioneer students are doing their National Youth Service programme. Godfrey Okoye University ensures a smooth flow of academic activities. Strike is not in the vocabulary of this university and will never be! Interruption of academic activities must remain unthinkable in a setting that knows the full meaning of education! Our young people must be encouraged to work with speed and razor-sharp precision in an atmosphere bereft of any form of disruptiveness. This is good for their psycho-somatic well being. For they live in an age of stupendous speed, where Usain Bolt defied human speed limit to finish 100 metres in 9.58 seconds, a time when there are projects aimed at producing very speedy supersonic aeroplanes that can fly from Lagos to Frankfurt in 30 seconds (supersonic aeroplanes that can fly up to 9800 kilometres per hour), a time when flying cars which in the past existed only in science fiction have become a reality. In such a time, therefore, any academic system or arrangement that makes it difficult for young people to move fast and plan their future needs a purgatorial touch. Godfrey Okoye University understands that young people need speed. Therefore, this university will never sacrifice the desires and aspirations of our young people on the altar of academic cum administrative sluggishness. It must remain a university on the go!

Our Biotechnology Programme

We take seriously the admonition "*man know thyself*" and see it as the bedrock of human wisdom. This translates into knowing both ourselves and our environment. The words of Prof. Hermann Real still echo in my mind: ***Christian, nobody can do research on the African environment better than Africans.*** In the light of Prof. Real's view, I believe that we must contribute to the growth in wisdom by making Africa and Africans the central point of our research. Against the backdrop of our unique environment, our Biotechnology Programme has taken a big project of the DNA barcoding of all plants available in our own part of the world. This project, which is being carried out in collaboration with Bowie State University and Cold Spring Harbour Laboratories in New York, has made our Biotechnology Programme outstanding. Two students who, through this collaboration, travelled to the United States this year (Michael Okoro and Okolo Bethel) did so well that they attracted a lot of attention to Godfrey Okoye

University. Also to ensure its strength, our Biotechnology Programme has successfully organised two international conferences on Biotechnology within four years of its existence. These conferences attracted scholars from all over the world. The presence of a formidable team from the U.S. today is a clear testimony to the success of both our Biotechnology programme and our foreign collaborations.

NUC Approval of New Programmes and Accreditation

We took off with two faculties (National and Applied Sciences and Management and Social Sciences) in 2009. In 2011 we sought for and got the approval of the NUC for the Faculty of Education. Besides we have also had the first accreditation of our entire take off programmes with tremendous success.

ICAN Accreditation

Professionalism is very important to GO University. Our students are encouraged to take professional examinations so that they can identify with their professional colleagues and know what the profession demands. In line with this we sought for ICAN accreditation. After the verification visit, ICAN gave us full accreditation for our accounting programme, thus confirming the full accreditation which this programme got from the NUC. Already many of our students are writing different ICAN examinations. We expect that our students will be able to write their final accounting examination as they graduate from the university, and become chartered accountants on graduation.

International Computer Driving Licence (ICDL) Centre

Our university has been approved as a centre for International Computer Driving Licence. This approval is in recognition of the tremendous efforts we have made in our ICT programme. The approval has helped to achieve our goal of ensuring the computer literacy of our students.

GO University Radio

In pursuit of excellence in our mass communication programme, we applied for a community radio licence. We have received provisional licence and can now

provide our students with an opportunity to do their practicals in radio broadcasting.

Increase in Number of Students and Staff

The number of students has risen from 214 at the take off the university in 2009 to 1400 students. In addition, our students come from all the states in Nigeria. Lastly the staff strength has grown from 69 to 338.

Staff Training

GO University has taken the training of staff members very seriously. Members of staff are exposed to all manners of seminars, workshops and conferences within and outside the country. All graduate assistants are doing their Master's degree programmes and all assistant lecturers are pursuing their Doctorate degree programmes within and outside Nigeria. All our partner universities have opened their academic doors for the staff to do various programmes. It is very important for us as a young university to enhance the development of our own staff.

Collaborations

A university is by its nature a teaching and research community. Since a good and effective research necessarily requires the collaboration of scholars, it is very important that a university collaborates with other universities within and outside Nigeria. Our university from its inception has placed a lot of emphasis on collaboration. As far as we are concerned collaboration is a two-way business which involves exchange of ideas, staff and students as well as collaboration in research and joint seminars and workshops. Our collaboration with foreign universities has brought a lot of scholars to our university. It has resulted in researches with far-reaching results and implication. Our students go to our partner universities and their students are sent to us. In this academic year we have two students from the University of Vienna and University of Muenster who are studying here. Two of our students went to the United States of America this year to study before completing their programme here. At least ten students will go to our

partner universities in this academic session. In addition, our foreign partner universities and institutes include:

- * Birmingham City University (UK)
- * Bowie State University (USA)
- * University of Muenster (Germany)
- * University of Innsbruck (Austria)
- * Medical University of Innsbruck (Austria)
- * Private University College of Education, Linz (Austria)
- * Kepler University, Linz (Austria)
- * University of Vienna (Austria)
- * Cologne University of Applied Science (Germany)
- * All Hallows College, Dublin (Ireland)
- * Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, New York, (USA)

Apart from foreign universities, we have an intensive collaboration with some Nigerian universities. One of them of course is our mentor university, the University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN). Babcock University and Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT) remain our special friends.

Scholarship schemes and fees

Last year, the university awarded scholarships to 19 students from each of the 19 Northern States of Nigeria as a way of promoting national unity and cultural dialogue. Also scholarships are awarded to bright students who otherwise could not have gone to university. These scholarships have given our university a real national character and shown that the Catholic interest in university education has nothing to do with profit-making but is part of its call to save mankind from ignorance and intellectual poverty. You can also see this national character of our university in the number of Nigerians here present. You can see it in our choice of the honorary doctorate awardees. You can also see it in our choice of the Chancellor of this university.

Furthermore, we have succeeded in keeping our fees as low as possible in spite of enormous work and sacrifices involved in the business of university education. We are conscious of our environment and the financial challenges of our people. We have succeeded in making this university one of the cheapest universities to study in the whole world. This is so because the Church has always seen education as its primary duty and mission. This explains why it has always made incalculable, stupendous sacrifices to make education available and affordable to all children of God. The Church's effort must be complemented. A church-owned university cannot be seen as a private university since the Church itself is not a private entity.

World Movie and Computer Summit

The university organised a very successful world movie and computer summit (14 - 18 September 2013). This great summit organised in collaboration with Encyclotainment Nig. Ltd. brought well known actors and actresses and computer experts to Godfrey Okoye University. The speakers at the summit included the famous computer expert, Prof. Philip Emeagwali. The summit was very informative and our students and staff benefitted immensely from it.

Competitions and Successes

In a widely publicized essay competition organised for first year students of Nigerian universities to mark the one-year memorial of late Justice Anigolu, our students took the first and third positions. Also during the recently concluded NABDA Biotechnology conference our student, Michael Okoro, was named the best speaker in the student debate organised by NABDA. Also in a competition organized in Benin Republic for university students from African universities, our student, Greg Enemona Ademu, was named the best speaker. Furthermore, in two ICT competitions organised for Nigerian students, our students came first in the tertiary institutions category at Benin and second in the Computer Graphics Competition organised by Encyclotainment Nigeria Ltd for all Nigerian computer science students.

Furthermore, our students are very innovative. Pio Okongwu designed the electronic bell we use in both the university and in the chapel. Nnaemeka Udeani designed a practicable remote-controlled inverter. Also Kinsley Abba designed a portable, wristwatch-like hand-massager. Ike Osondu, a microbiology graduate, has written over 7 novels in the Igbo language and successfully translated key microbiology terms into the Igbo language. Finally, our Biotechnology students have succeeded in bringing over twenty plants hitherto unknown in the world DNA databank into focus by a careful DNA profiling of the plants and causing them to be entered into world DNA database in the USA.

Challenges

The road to the main campus of the University at Ugwuomu Nike remains a big challenge. We have invested heavily in developing our beautiful main campus. But we are yet to get the good, motorable road which Enugu State Government promised us four years ago. The road has indeed delayed our movement to the main campus of our university. We therefore call on the State Government to assist us in providing the much needed road so that our movement to the main campus will be possible next year.

Many of our students come from poor backgrounds and have enormous difficulty paying their fees. The inability to pay fees affects students psychologically, socially and academically. In spite of the relatively low fees paid in this university, many students still have tremendous difficulty paying their fees. We therefore call on all Nigerians and our overseas friends to consider giving scholarships to our young people who may not finish their studies without some financial assistance.

My words to Our Pioneer Graduates

You, the pioneer graduates of this university, have worked assiduously in the last four years. Today we see the fruit of your work. We have given Nigerians 100 intelligent, beautiful, handsome, hard working, innovative, God-fearing, prayerful, marriageable young men and women. This is our first gift to Nigeria. I have no doubt that you will add value to socio-political, cultural and epistemic life our country. The summary of the reports we are getting from the various

places where you are doing your National Youth Service programme is this: you are exceptional. Keep the ball rolling and never forget your Alma Mater. God bless you all!

Appreciation and Conclusion

I remain grateful to the National Universities Commission (NUC) and the Federal Republic of Nigeria for entrusting the education of our young men and women into our hands. As I said after we got the operating licence, this university will not disappoint the NUC and the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Our vision is clear! Our philosophy is unambiguous. Our mission is unmistakable. And our desire to succeed and excel is unfathomable! This is a university to watch! The eagle has just taken off, traversing the boundaries of dream and reality, and carrying a green leaf with an inscription "*where is the evidence?*"

Your Excellencies, Your Royal Highnesses, distinguished scholars, ladies and gentlemen, thank you for attending this convocation. May God bless you!

Rev. Father Prof. Dr. Christian C. Anieke
Vice Chancellor