

ADDRESS OF THE CATHOLIC BISHOP OF ENUGU DIOCESE AND THE PROPRIETOR OF GO UNIVERSITY



**HIS EXCELLENCY
MOST REV. DR. C. V. C. ONAGA**

The Chancellor, Most Rev. Ignatius Kaigama, President of the Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria,
The Bishop Emeritus of the Catholic Diocese of Enugu, Most Rev. Anthony Okonkwo Gbuji,
The Pro-Chancellor, Prof. Christian Nwachukwu Okeke,
Our Great Vice Chancellor, Very Rev. Prof. Dr. Christian Anieke,
Revered Lecturers and Staff of Godfrey Okoye University,
Beloved Graduands,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

May the peace and love of the Lord be with you all!

I feel highly elated as I stand here today to make a speech on this occasion of the maiden convocation ceremony of our esteemed university, Godfrey Okoye University. Truly, my joy knows no bounds, especially when I think of the beginnings. The French poet and novelist, Anatole France, once wrote, "To accomplish great things, we must not only act but also dream, not only dream, but also believe." Indeed, a mixture of dream, action and belief makes things possible. The belief that 'we can' propels us to action; action itself converts our dreams into reality. How else can we view Godfrey Okoye University than as 'a dream come true'?

Four years ago we gathered here with great joy to celebrate the inception of Godfrey Okoye University. It was a wonderful celebration that filled us with high hopes and great expectations. Our expectations heightened as the university started to make giant strides in various areas of university life. Within few years Godfrey Okoye had etched its name on Gold in such a way that I called it a "miracle institution". We have not been proved wrong yet, and the story of Godfrey Okoye University (GO University) has always been, thanks to God, a success story.

Today, we gather here again, to tell another success story. Today, we have come to celebrate the first convocation ceremony of our university. It is a landmark. Not every private university that was licensed took off and grew to experience its first convocation. It is on record that some tottered and fell, flickered and

went off. Thus, we have a reason to be happy and grateful to God. Convocation is mark of maturity for a university, a sign of hard work, and an evidence of progress.

My special happiness comes from the fact that our noble institution is today offering the world new graduates of sterling quality, who will make a great difference in our society. They are priceless gifts of our institution to Nigeria in particular and to the world in general. These graduates did not suffer the trauma of incessant chains of strike actions that have bedeviled our nation for long, nor did they experience the disorientation that has befallen most of our higher institutions on account of diabolical cultic operations of some miscreants. They are equally free from the battering effect of the moral decadence in our institutions, which has become a scourge to our people and a smudge on our national pride. As a faith-based institution, Godfrey Okoye University has a position that is both enviable and irreplaceable in our society. It has an assemblage of well refined and truth loving intellectuals cum educators, visionary and God-fearing leaders, collaborative and goal-directed staff. Thus, armed with faith, knowledge, discipline, fear of God and love of humanity, it can only offer the best. This we shall witness in the graduating students, whom we congratulate today.

Dearly beloved graduates, today, you are being certified and sent into the wider world of ventures and creativity. You have a responsibility that is awe inspiring, for to whom more is given, more is expected. You were given the best and the best is expected from you. You are not just moving into the labour market, but into a society that is ridden with ills to salvage it. I agree with Nelson Mandela when he said: "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." Consequently, you have at your disposal for the sanitization of our society, the arsenal of qualitative, comprehensive education you received from Godfrey Okoye University, the weapon of discipline inculcated in you, the dart of knowledge you acquired and the conviction of truth that you were exposed to all the time you studied in this university. Enugu State looks up to you as deliverers; Nigeria thirsts for a change of the status quo, so that it will no longer be business as usual; GO University longs to see a difference with your moving into the society so that you can prove and confirm its worth in our milieu.

Certainly, it is not going to be easy for you because Nigeria has fallen into the dark abyss of disorientation, intellectual poverty, lack of patriotism and self-centeredness. Corruption and the dishonest ways of doing things in our beloved nation have riddled our social structures and weakened our moral fibre in such a way that we sound hollow. We encourage you today as you move into the world to take the bull by the horn. You can do it because you have been empowered through knowledge and wisdom. You can do it because you have the goodwill. You can do it because God is with you. Go, therefore, to become ambassadors of Catholic Education and of GO University in the world. Bring light to all and dispel their darkness. Defend the truth before all and in all circumstances, so that they may know that integrity still counts and is cherished. Show diligence in whatever you do, so that they may know that hard work pays. Above all, show love to all so that they may know that God is good and cares. I impart my blessings on you and say, once more, congratulations! Always turn to God in prayers for his fatherly love and intervention.

In a special way, I wish to congratulate you, the entire academic staff of GO University on your achievement today. I praise your dedication and team spirit without which things may have turned awry since 'one tree cannot make a forest'. I praise your spirit of sacrifice because I know that what has sustained you is not the money you receive, but your desire to see sanity return to our institutions, and to see Nigeria stand on a sound footing again. May your sacrifices never go unrewarded both here and hereafter.

Finally, I thank God immensely for the journey so far. To Him be the glory and honour forever and ever. I wish to thank also all the instruments that God used to bring us thus far, starting from Bishop Anthony O. Gbuji, who first dreamed the dream, to the Vice Chancellor and his co-operators, the staff, the NUC officials and many others unknown to us. May God reward you all abundantly. I pray that He will continue to bless us and lead us to ever greater heights.

Long live Godfrey Okoye University!

Long live Catholic Diocese Enugu!

Long live Enugu State!

Long live the Federal Republic of Nigeria!