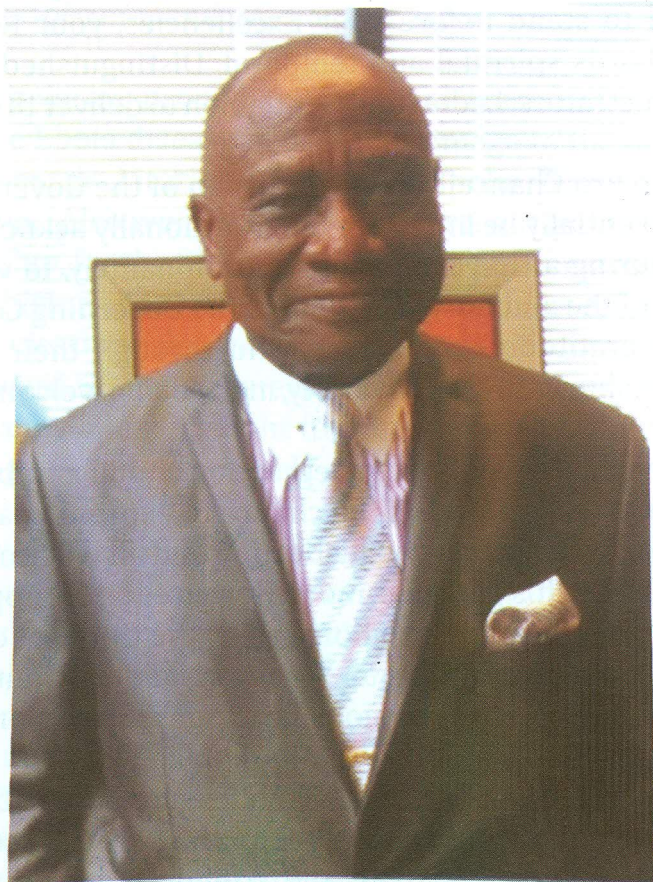


**ADDRESS OF THE PRO-CHANCELLOR AND CHAIRMAN OF THE
GOVERNING COUNCIL, PROF DR CHRISTIAN NWACHUKWU
OKEKE, AT THE THIRD CONVOCATION OF GODFREY OKOYE
UNIVERSITY, HOLDING ON 5 DECEMBER 2015 AT GOODLUCK
EBELE JONATHAN ARENA, THINKERS CORNER, ENUGU**



PROF. DR. CHRISTIAN NWACHUKWU OKEKE
Pro Chancellor and
Chairman of the Governing Council

Saturday, 5 December 2015

PROTOCOL

PROUDLY GO, Moving with Vision and Mission

Words of Welcome

On this historic occasion of the third Convocation of this authentically first Diocesan Catholic University in black Africa, I consider myself very honored and highly privileged to stand before Your Excellencies, your Royal Majesties and Highnesses, My Lords spiritual and temporal, Distinguished Academicians and University Administrators, Ladies and Gentlemen to deliver this address.

My address as the Pro Chancellor and Chairman of the Governing Council of the University will essentially be limited to the traditionally acknowledged role of the Pro Chancellor during a University Convocation namely, to welcome the highly valued members of the audience on behalf of the Governing Council in conveying our institutional gratitude to all those who through their contributions and manner of relationship with the University, merit being welcomed and honored.

This year, the university is conferring degrees on a total number of 199 students. An occasion such as this affords us the chance to express unalloyed gratitude to God for his blessings on our beloved institution and all who come to it, as friends, workers and students. This occasion, moreover, gives us the opportunity to rejoice with our students who are being so honored as the third set of graduates of this university, and to thank them for their time here and for their own contribution towards the communal effort to promote the image and mission of our university.

I welcome all our guests, especially our colleagues from other institutions of higher learning from far and near, as well all the parents and guardians of our graduating students, their relatives and friends. I congratulate you on the completion of the arduous task of supporting your wards all through their academic programme. I appreciate with joy the employees – academic and non-teaching staff – of this noble institution, whom divine providence has brought together here as members of one big family. I thank you for your immense contribution to the life of Godfrey Okoye University, especially for devoting your time and talents to the service of the university. The Go-University strives to educate the whole person, and graduates bright, energetic, well-formed men and

women dedicated to leading our communities, corporations and families based on sound Catholic principles.

GO, The University on the Move!

Godfrey Okoye University is an institution whose vision and mission are carved out to respond to the challenges Nigeria and many countries of the world, developed and developing, face in our time. We live in a time which could be described as the best of times and the worst of times.

As the best of times, we are proud to affirm that Nigeria's successful response to the challenge of the Ebola disease boosted her image to the outside world. Also gratifying is the recent declaration of Nigeria as a polio-free country by the World Health Organization. Also worthy of note is the recent lifting of the FIFA under-17 Football World Cup, for the fifth time which has written Nigeria's name in gold in world football history. Moreover, the conduct and outcome of the recently concluded general elections also inscribed the name of our nation in the sands of positive efforts toward achieving true democracy. With these, Nigeria has shown that she could become a leading light to other countries if only she applies her many resources to good and responsible use.

As the worst of times, it would not be wrong to say that our country is also experiencing challenging moments in every facet of its life. While cultural values are progressively eroding towards extinction, the religious and political climates are being riddled with dishonesty and ineptness. Religion, as it is practiced in the country, is becoming a money-spinning business. The daunting menace by Boko Haram and frequent cases of kidnapping occur in a way never known before in this country that human life, despite its sacred nature, matter very little to many, leaders and citizens alike. Insecurity has become one of our greatest challenges, and one wonders what the future of this country and its citizens would be.

These and many others issues not listed here are the challenges which sound education is designed to correct. These challenges and problems facing us as a nation derive from the disturbing and low quality of our humanness. It is the human being who is dishonest, inefficient and who is not open to dialogue. Godfrey Okoye University is poised to provide some answers to these most pressing needs of our time. Therefore, education in Godfrey Okoye University is

imbued with purpose and mission, because it has the human being at the centre of its research and focus. True to her vision and mission, Godfrey Okoye dedicates so much effort towards equipping students with broad knowledge which is open to God, which instills integral and balanced character and personality, and which enables the forging of alliances and friendships across ethnic and religious lines.

We are proudly GO, the university on the move, leading the way to the formation of human character which is essential for nation building. Since its inception, Godfrey Okoye University has been growing in every aspect of its life, with an added command of international prominence. We would proudly compete with other universities in the dissemination of quality knowledge, but more than that, Godfrey Okoye is outstanding in imparting holistic knowledge, inculcating the virtue of integrity and balance; she excels in career building and in the construction of bridges that facilitate dialogue across religious and ethnic borders. These have been made possible through the provision of infrastructure and facilities that enable a conducive learning environment that support the academic programmes; and especially through the numerous symposia and conferences which the university sponsors and organizes in the areas of religion, literature, science, health, communication, and the annual Peace Conference which brings students of different cultural and social backgrounds together.

We would be in actual competition with any university which would challenge us in drawing more international attention and in exposing students to worlds across and beyond national boundaries. In order to tower even higher above this challenge, we must challenge ourselves to engaging all the more in cutting edge research work and publication of leading journals, which would help to make the university more visible and esteemed. The reputation of a university is not built instantaneously or by an individual or a few; rather, it needs all hands on the deck; it grows gradually and is sustained in various engaging ways. Everyone appointed to this university must see himself or herself as someone with a mission to advance the image, international profile and standard of research in Godfrey Okoye University. Even those appointed to pure administrative work must be intellectually and morally sound, held accountable for the dissemination of epistemic unity and engagement in dialogue which the university is founded to promote.

In a world and in a country where ethnicity, tribalism, regionalism and obsequiousness are the order of the day, Godfrey Okoye University stands as a reminder to all that things can be and must be different in the human society and that we can become better human beings. Though a catholic university of a local Church, Godfrey Okoye University is imbued with strong ecumenical and international spirit. She is a visible sign of unity of all human beings and of all God's children. Her students and employees come from different and various geographical, ethnic, social and religious backgrounds. Neither ethnicity nor religion is a criterion for becoming a part of this enviable University, as Paul the Apostle reminds us that there are no more divisions into Greek and Barbarian, slaves and free born, men and women (cf. Gal 3,28). In this university, we show by our living, studying and working together that peace and unity is possible, and disunity and violence, which have tainted the image of our nation, could become a thing of the past. This is the ideal to which we have committed ourselves.

Graduates with a Mission

My dear graduates, I congratulate you, I appreciate and cherish you as important family members of this growing institution. The degrees which you have earned are proof that you have had a firm intellectual and character foundation. As you leave this university to the outside world, you are moving with a mission, to bear witness to the values which the university has labored to inculcate into you all these years. Godfrey Okoye University has an enviable future. You must know that you are that future! It is a future which was prepared, built up with every conscious focus to equipping you with knowledge and integrity. You have been trained to be globally relevant, with enough competitive aptitude, and openness to entrepreneurship and dialogue. These are values you must guard jealously and develop. Above everything else, my dear graduates, I want you to be aware that our pride and esteem before the outside world depends so much on you. It is said that an institution is as good as the students it produces. If the students are of a high quality, then the institution is considered of high brand. Otherwise, others would have very little regard for the institution in spite of what it says about itself, and in spite of its size and aesthetic presentation. Your life after here is important for the viability, visibility and good image of Godfrey Okoye University. You are witnesses to the world about how university life here has influenced your character, and how well prepared you are to serve God, our dear nation and the world at large.

Words of Appreciation

It is my greatest pleasure to appreciate, on behalf of the Governing Council, the leading light of this noble university, the Vice Chancellor, Rev Fr Prof Dr Christian Anieke, whose love for this university reflects in everything he does; especially in the way he coordinates human and material resources to the achievement of the goals of the university. I thank him for his dedication to duty and for instilling a sense of mission in all who are part of the family of Godfrey Okoye University. I equally commend and appreciate the Proprietor of the University, His Lordship, Most Rev Dr. C.V.C. Onaga, and the Catholic Bishop of Enugu. I thank him for his encouragement and fatherly solicitude. My warm regards go equally to the members of the Governing Council, the Senate, and our seasoned and dedicated academic and administrative staff, whose dedication to duty led to the success we are celebrating today. Sincere appreciation goes also to all our friends, benefactors and institutions who share the mission of Godfrey Okoye University and who contribute in different ways and capacities to the achievement of our goals.

Remembrances:

Before concluding my address, permit me to call to memory all the distinguished men and women, great academicians, students and workers of Godfrey Okoye who were important parts of our efforts in building Godfrey Okoye University but are deceased since our second Convocation.

May their gentle souls and the souls of all the faithful departed rest in peace, Amen.

In conclusion, let me once again welcome all of you on behalf of the Governing Council and congratulate our new honorary graduands. Thank you Ladies and Gentlemen for honoring our invitation. We wish you all happy and safe stay with us and pray God to lead you safely to your destinations as you make your departure. +May God bless all of you.

PROF DR CHRISTIAN NWACHUKWU OKEKE

Pro-Chancellor and Chairman of the Governing Council