

The Second
Convocation of
Godfrey Okoye
University:

**A NEW
STORY**



**Convocation Address of the
Vice Chancellor,
REV. FR. PROF. CHRISTIAN ANIEKE
*Saturday, 21 March 2015***

Your Excellency, Barr. Sullivan, Iheanacho Chime, the Executive Governor, Enugu State,
 Hon. Members of the National Assembly and the Federal Executive Council,
 Your Lordship, Most Rev. Dr. Callistus Valentine Chukwuma Onaga, the Catholic Bishop of
 Enugu Diocese and Proprietor of the University,
 Your Lordship, Most Rev. Dr. Anthony Okonkwo Gbuji, the Emeritus Catholic Bishop of
 Enugu Diocese,
 Your Lordships, Visiting Catholic Bishops of Other Dioceses,
 Members of the State Executive Councils and State Houses of Assembly,
 The Executive Secretary, National Universities Commission, Professor Julius Okojie,
 The Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Prof. Bartho Okolo,
 Members of the Board of Trustees, Godfrey Okoye University,
 The Chancellor, Most Rev. Dr. Ignatius Ayau Kaigama,
 The Pro-Chancellor and Chairman of the Governing Council, Prof. Dr. Christian
 Nwachukwu Okeke,
 Visiting Pro-Chancellors and Vice Chancellors of Other Universities,
 Members of the Godfrey Okoye University Governing Council,
 Heads of Other Tertiary Institutions and Parastatals,
 Principal Officers of Godfrey Okoye University,
 My Lords, Spiritual and Temporal,
 Chairmen and Members of Local Government Councils,
 Your Royal Highnesses,
 Learned Professors and Members of the Godfrey Okoye University Senate,
 Deans and Directors of Godfrey Okoye University,
 Heads of Departments of Godfrey Okoye University,
 Academic and Administrative Staff of Godfrey Okoye University,
 Academic and Administrative Staff of the Institute of Ecumenical Education,
 Administrator, Principal, Staff and Students of Godfrey Okoye University Secondary School
 and Primary School,
 Members of the CMO, CWO and CYON,
 Parents and Guardians of Students of Godfrey Okoye University,
 My dear Convoking Students,
 Great Students of Godfrey Okoye University and Its Group of Institutions

On behalf of the staff and students of Godfrey Okoye University, I welcome you all to this second convocation of our university, Godfrey Okoye University, God's Own University. You have come from far and near, spent time and resources, and made stupendous sacrifices to be here. First of all, I welcome our beloved Bishop, the proprietor of our university, Most Rev. Dr. C.V.C. Onaga with the Curia and priests of our diocese to this ceremony. The Chairman and members of the Board of Trustees, I welcome you. I say a

big welcome to the Executive Secretary of National Universities Commission to this great event. I welcome particularly the Chancellor of the university who is appearing today for the first time at our Convocation in his capacity as the Chancellor of this great university. To express visibly how important this ceremony is to him, the Chancellor has come with bishops, priests and the lay faithful from his province and the Archdiocese of Jos. We congratulate him on his elevation to the position of the university chancellor and warmly welcome him and his team. The Pro Chancellor and Chairman of the Governing Council and all Council members, I welcome you. Also I welcome a good number of government officials, business men and women, parents of our students and our friends to this ceremony. In a special way I welcome our fresh graduates who have come from different places where they are doing their National Youth Service to attend this convocation. I thank you all for being here today. May God bless you!

1. Prologue

Every year a university tells its story in its greatest assembly called convocation. Each university must decide how it presents its story. It can decide that the story becomes a fairy tale like *Alice in Wonderland*. It can turn its story into a tale told by an idiot (using Shakespearean expression) full of sound and fury, signifying nothing. It can make its story long like *Zettels Traum* by Arno Schmidt or short like Ernest Hemingway's six-word short story. But it must tell its story in its chosen genre, length, theme, language, plot and characterization. The relevance of any university depends on the freshness of its story and universality of its appeal. So repeating old stories may not add to the beauty of a university or add a kobo to its bridal price. So in this year's story, I restrict myself to new elements that were not written in the first story presented during the first convocation assembly in 2013. I solemnly pledge to abide by the principle of newness in selecting my material. (So help me God!)

2. The E-library

The e-library of Godfrey Okoye University built by our distinguished Senator Gil Nnaji at the cost of 380 million naira is the most fascinating subplot in our story. Early last year the material for the subplot started trickling in. Our distinguished senator who attended the first convocation and listened attentively to our first story got infected with what I call "GO Uni irresistible appeal". He made a promise of doing something for the university without painting any picture of the size and shape of his project. Little did we know that the "something" he pronounced would turn into an edifice adorning the northern end of our university like a colossus bestriding the beautiful landscape of that part of our university setting. If there is a relationship between physical appearance and the work of a human person, the library is its loudest confirmation. For the e-library is as beautiful and tall as the protagonist in this subplot, Gil Nnaji. With its 250 computers the library has underscored the giant stride of this university in the ICT world. With it we have wings to fly and we have already taken off with an Icarian speed! The decision of the university to honour our distinguished senator with an honorary doctorate in Public Administration is a clear message to our people: write your name on the sand of time by doing a project in this great university. The university as the greatest and most powerful story teller will carry your story to the farthest ends of the world, and generations after generations will read it with fervent interest.

3. Second Set of Graduates

During the last convocation the story was about our first fruit, the pioneer graduates of the university. Today we have a new story. We are presenting our second set of graduates to Nigerians and the whole world. Both the number and quality of this set of graduates reveal that we have a different story to tell. Whereas in the first set we presented 100 students at the convocation, today we are displaying 178 intelligent, diligent, communicative, sociable, prayerful and lovable students. As the saying goes: the taste of the pudding is in the eating. Those who have tasted our first products are already confirming the deliciousness. I have no doubt that with

the second attempt, we have done even a better cooking than we did in the pioneer job. As our tradition is, this second group of graduates is already doing the National Youth Service programmes in every nook and cranny of our nation. Already reports are pouring in, testifying to their seriousness and efficiency at their various duty posts.

4. New Academic Programmes

During the last convocation, the university had only three faculties. Today an additional faculty has been added to our story. The Faculty of Arts, the youngest faculty, has three important programmes approved by the National Universities Commission: English and Literary Studies, History, International Studies and Diplomacy, and Music. This new faculty is headed by an erudite professor of English, Prof. Romanus Egudu, and has such great scholars as Prof. Rina Okonkwo, Prof Richard Okafor and Dr. Innocent Uzoечи (an associate professor) on its staff. Also Prof. Hermann Real of Germany who gave the first convocation lecture will be joining the faculty in October this year. Another side of the story is that the NUC has also approved Architecture and Industrial Design for our university. So you can see, GO University is indeed on the go!

5. GO University Radio

GO University Radio is already on air. Last year's story was about the licensing. The new story is that the university radio is already up and running. Another side of the story is that the radio has lined up its activities behind our philosophy, vision and mission. Dialogue is central to its daily programmes with its daily Alex Ogbodo's roundtable (reminiscent of the medieval Arthurian Roundtable). Apart from the centrality of dialogue in the university programme, other innovations like hourly news and life streaming have added colour to GO Uni Radio (106.9 fm).

6. New Faces in the University Landscape

Since the last convocation new characters have entered our story. The first and the most prominent of these characters is the new Chairman of the

Board of Trustees, Prof. Bartho Okolo. Prof. Bartho Okolo was until recently the Vice Chancellor of the great University of Nigeria Nsukka. His impeccable records of physical cum academic development made the choice of him imperative. Since assuming office as Chairman, he has brought focus and clear definition of boundaries to the Board of Trustees. We congratulate him as the new Chairman and hope that his success story at UNN will be repeated at GO University. Of course he stands on the foundation of the pioneer work done by the first Chairman, Prof. Joseph Ikechukwu Chidobem. We thank the pioneer Chairman immensely for his foundation-laying job as Chairman and wish him God's abundant blessings. Another character (round character I believe) is the new registrar of the university, Dr. Nnamdi Ene. He is strong, docile and focused. I have no doubt that he will take our administrative unit to a new direction that speaks and understands the language of Bill Gates, Steve Jobs and Tom Cook. Besides, the university has joined the Catholic Church in the application of the word "emeritus". We now have Emeritus Registrar, Prof. Festus Eze! We owe Prof. Festus Eze a lot for his achievements in the administration of this university.

7. The First Inaugural Lecture of the University

Another interesting element in our story this year is the first inaugural lecture of this young and dynamic university. Last year we promoted Rev. Sr. Dr. Gloria Njoku to the rank of professor. As the tradition goes, a fresh-baked professor is expected to deliver an inaugural lecture within one year of promotion to the enviable academic papal position. Prof. Njoku indicated interest immediately after her promotion, in her typical Gloria-like gallantry. Last Thursday Prof. Njoku delivered one of the best inaugural lectures we have had in this part of the world, full of intellectual freshness and academic insights. Godfrey Okoye University promises our nation more of such interesting celebration of epistemological beauty and sagacity.

8. Conferences

A university is a setting for new ideas. This explains the importance of conferences, where new ideas are generated, presented, dissected (as in a

biology lab) and disseminated. This year the university will be hosting two international conferences. The first is the Biotechnology conference, which we are organizing with the National Biotechnology Centre in Abuja. This conference is very important because of our leading position in Biotechnology in Nigeria. It is expected that stories of new breakthroughs in the field will be told during this conference. Another international conference is a conference on Achebe, where the focus is on new areas of research in the study of the works of Chinua Achebe. The conference is being organized with our mentor university, the University of Nigeria Nsukka. In addition, at the beginning of this week the university organised an international workshop on innovative grant writing, which attracted a lot of scholars from all over Nigeria and resource persons from Europe and America. This underscores again our deep interest in solid research.

9. Performance in Competitions

Last year the university went to an NUC competition on entrepreneurship with its product, the hand sanitizer produced by a team of researchers from the Biological Sciences. Our university took the overall third position among all Nigerian universities that attended and the first position among the universities from the southeast. Furthermore, as part of the preparation for the second convocation, the university students embarked on a clean-up exercise in some parts of Enugu. This remarkable expression of sense of social responsibility, without any form of coercion or social terrorism, and midwifed by Prof. Gloria Njoku, who also led the group not by mere empty theorizing, with hands akimbo, but by taking the shovel in her own hands, has received a lot of accolades from the Enugu State ESWAMA.

10. Our Ugwuomu Nike Campus

We have continued to develop our main campus at Ugwuomu Nike. Buildings are springing up like popcorns in every nook and cranny of the 217 hectares of land belonging to Godfrey Okoye University. Our farms, under the supervision of the Austrian Manager Martin Deimbacher, are blossoming

with the crop and animal sections competing against each other like Olympic athletes. A fresh element in our story is that the vice chancellor now has an office there. We expect that our students will start moving there gradually in no distant time. We appeal to the federal and state governments and the private sector to assist this young and promising university by constructing the road leading to our Ugwuomu Campus. This will make our movement there fast and easy.

11. Our Fresh Graduates

You have heard the story of your university. The phrase "student of GO Uni" will now become "alumnus of GO Uni". By virtue of this change in your status, you have become ambassadors of our university. In the last four years we did all we could to sow good seeds in you. Do not allow the Grendels of this world to draw you into impish waters of moral putrefaction. We have been getting good reports since your left the comfort of your university. We hope to continue to savor such delicious reports. Remember two key things we drummed into your ears in the last four years: hardwork and prayer. I thank your parents and all those who supported you during your studies. God bless you all!

12. Epilogue

▪ *University Specialist Hospital*

Our university has signed an MoU with an Austrian-based company for the building of the university specialist hospital that will be a prelude to the medical faculty of the university. VAMED, the Austrian company is known for establishing the best hospitals in the world. It is a project that will provide the best medical services available in any part of the world. We humbly request the Enugu State Government and the private sector to help us in this project that will provide the same services that take our sons and daughters to India and other places in search of medical treatment.

▪ *Post Graduate School*

The senate and the Governing Council have also approved the commencement of the law programme in the university. We have sent our application for the faculty and programme to the NUC, and we expect the resource verification visit soon. The Pro Chancellor of the university is one of the best professors of law you have in this world. So expect a law faculty that is second to none in Nigeria. Apart from that, the university is warming up for the faculty of engineering and faculty of agriculture. Already we have developed fifty hectares of land at Ugwuomu Nike to provide the practical needs of the faculty of agriculture.

▪ ***Staff Development***

The university continues to emphasize the academic and administrative development of its staff. The best graduating student in the last convocation, who got a job as a graduate assistant of the university, is now studying in Germany for his Master's programme and PhD. Many other members of staff have the opportunity of going to our partner universities in Europe for their education. We have also continued to stress the importance of exchange of students with our partner universities. Many students of our university have indeed benefitted immensely from it.

I will draw the curtain now. I promise you that the story next year will be richer and even more fascinating. I thank the proprietor and the Catholic Diocese of Enugu for the unflinching support of our difficult but interesting work in this great university. In fact, we have fresh stories to tell every time because of the music of love the proprietor plays at the background. This music spurs us on and turns us into lions poised to do the seemingly impossible. And if music be the food of love, play on, my Lord. For it gives wings to our story!

Thanks very much indeed! Thank you all. May God bless you!

Rev. Fr. Prof. Dr. Christian Anieke
Vice Chancellor