

GODFREY OKOYE UNIVERSITY:

The Eagle Soars

Speech of the Founding Vice Chancellor
on the Occasion of the

11th Convocation of the University

Rev. Father. Prof. Christian Anieke

Protocol

I would like to welcome each of you, on behalf of the senate, staff and students of our university to this 11th Convocation. In a country with pulsating insecurity and a monstrous debt burden with the consequent economic pauperization of the masses, resulting in an unprecedented Japa Syndrome, I cannot take your presence on this occasion for granted. In spite of the socio-economic hiccups in our country a good number of us still believe that God is completely in control of our life and so believe in the future "even though we cannot discern its shape".

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, in the first convocation speech in 2013, I concluded my speech with the imagery of an eagle. I love the flying capabilities of the eagle, its height and the gracefulness of its mind-blowing flight inspiring a new audacity of imagination. This explains why in my ceaseless reflection and philosophizing on our university, this imagery never disappears from the landscape of my mind. The eagle (our beloved university) has indeed taken off, soaring gracefully higher in a most fascinating fashion. I would like to take you on board now to watch the enthralling flight of this eagle since our last convocation.

1. **Godfrey Okoye University College of Medicine**

Godfrey Okoye has commenced academic activities in its main campus. We are finally here "body and soul". On 4 October 2023 as I received the students here, I felt like singing the Nunc Dimittis. It was a very emotional moment for me, remembering years of toiling, sacrifices and prayers for God to make this main campus a reality in my lifetime. Before the arrival of the students, we had worked hard to ensure that all facilities needed for a smooth take off of activities here were provided. We also ensured availability of adequate telephone and internet network, water and electricity. We have also made adequate arrangements for security by walling our large compound and employing seventy security officers to man our main road and campus. We have built high security towers equipped with 360-degrees-rotating cameras with facial and voice recognition capacity and manned by eagle-eyed security officers. In addition, this campus is like a tale of two cities. It has its entrepreneurial side (the Business Park and Centre of

Practical Skills) and its academic side. The two main gates symbolize these two sides. The campus also has two lakes and two rivers. We are developing an eco-friendly main campus by allowing the trees, shrubs and grass here to celebrate their greenery and colours, undisturbed and unviolated by humans. It is in this incandescently inspiring, serene environment that students of our College of Medicine are now studying. We have pulled out all the stops to make their studies here comfortable. We have also ensured that as future medical doctors they are properly educated to do result-oriented research in the medical field. Our DNA Learning Centre will continue to train them in various areas of research so that they will become not just medical doctors but good researchers. With such trainings they will certainly be counted among those calling the shots in medical research and education. In this incredibly beautiful environment with its two lakes and rare ecosystem, free from madding crowd and choking stench and bustle of city, our students are studying uninterruptedly. One can only imagine the quality of medical doctors that will emerge from Godfrey Okoye University.

2. **Godfrey Okoye University Teaching Hospital (GOUNITH)**

With the approval of the Proprietor and Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Enugu as well as the Diocesan Curia, the diocesan hospital Ntasiobi Ndi No N'Afufu, was handed over to Godfrey Okoye University as its teaching hospital. Godfrey Okoye University has moved into the hospital and embarked on grippingly transmogrifying renovations of the existing structures and the hospital space. Today Godfrey Okoye University Teaching Hospital (GOUNITH) stands, testifying to our sense of aesthetics and structural harmony. We have also embarked on the digitalisation of all hospital activities and the equipment of our hospital with modern diagnostic devices. The Mother and Child building is very attractive to pregnant women and children because of its beauty and comfort. We will continue to invest in our teaching hospital until it becomes one of the best teaching hospitals in the world. God willing, the eagle will continue to soar higher without ever nosediving.

3. **Godfrey Okoye University Department of Nursing Sciences**

In this academic year we are adding the Department of Nursing Sciences to our College of Medicine. As we know, the Catholic Church has always been a forerunner in healthcare because of its commitment to its healing ministry. As a Catholic university, Godfrey Okoye University is committed to establishing all major health-related programmes in the next five years of its existence. It may sound like a mere wishful thinking but I believe we have shown our speed of action and determination in the course of our journey as a Catholic University. We are convinced that we have a divine mandate to be the light of the Southeast in matters of university education and we take the mandate seriously in all our programmes. I think being the light also means being light-like in speed, accuracy, academic honesty, spirituality and integrity, always soaring higher and higher like an eagle.

4. **Godfrey Okoye University-European Business Park Bakery**

The eagle soars higher as our bakery *Gragger Austrian Bread* rolls out its bread in this main campus. Every morning one is greeted here with the tantalising aroma of fresh bread. Students and staff look forward to it every morning. Our daily culinary life begins with it. It is not just about entrepreneurship but more about an inseparable marriage of European and Nigerian experiences in bakery as well as the product of collaborative research. Also our university poultry and fishpond spice up our daily culinary journey that begins with our bread. We intend to show on campus that a university can grow its food and remain self-sufficient in a country economically impoverished from discordant and directionless importations of every imaginable stuff (including toothpicks and toilet papers).

5. **Godfrey Okoye University Oxygen Plant**

One of the biggest oxygen plants in the Southeast of Nigeria is being built at our main campus (campus west gate). It is a joint project of our university and ACCUNALYSIS DIAGNOSTIC CENTER LTD. This project, which will be completed this year, will make oxygen available in all hospitals and industries in Enugu State. The project is part of our contributions to the growth of the economy of Enugu State and Nigeria.

6. **Godfrey Okoye University in Recent University Rankings**

In the global webometrics and 4icu rankings of universities, our university has moved from its position in January this year as the 5th best private university in Nigeria to the 3rd best private university in July this year. This is the result of the collaborative work between our robust ICT Unit under our UK-trained Director Chinedu Chibuzor and scholars of our university. I have no doubt that our university will in no distant time emerge the best private university in Nigeria. This is our dream as we continue to develop this main campus and our programmes. We remain grateful to the Governing Council, the Board of Trustees and the Proprietor for their strong support, guidance and encouragement.

7. **Our Law Graduates in the Nigerian Law School**

Graduates of our Faculty of Law have been offered admission in the Nigerian Law School. We pray that they show the quality of studies in our university through their performance in the Law School. We will continue to ensure that those who complete their programme without any hitch will go to Law School the same year they graduate. We thank the parents and guardians of our Law students for providing the financial resources needed for this rigorous five-year programme. We are also profoundly grateful to parents and guardians for supporting the attachment of our Law undergraduates to different law firms from the time they finish one hundred level till they graduate. This has helped our students of Law to understand the importance of a good apprenticeship experience in a professional programme.

8. **Godfrey Okoye University Scientists from our DNA Learning Centre Nigeria and Ghanaian Scientists**

Scientists from the DNA Learning Center Nigeria of Godfrey Okoye University have trained emerging Ghanaian scientists. (Accra, Ghana - September 1, 2023). According to our Prof. George Ude, "In an effort to enhance biodiversity research and conservation efforts in Ghana, the DNA Learning Center Nigeria of Godfrey Okoye University recently organized a three-day workshop on "DNA Barcoding of Local Biodiversity." The event, which took place from Thursday, August 31st to Saturday, September 2nd, 2023, brought together Ghanaian scientists eager to expand their knowledge in this field. The workshop featured trainers, Prof. George Ude, Prof. Tom Broker, Dr. Kwasi

Agbleke and Mr. Michael Okoro, experts in the field of DNA barcoding and biodiversity research. Their participation underscored the commitment of DNA Learning Center Nigeria of Godfrey Okoye University to fostering scientific cooperation across African nations. The primary aim of the workshop was to build local capacity among Ghanaian scientists, equipping them with the necessary skills and knowledge to conduct DNA barcoding of local biodiversity." We thank Prof. George Ude and other scientists of our university for going beyond our university to train young scientists in Nigeria and other countries of the world in the spirit of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

9. **Hybrid Teaching with Smart Boards**

With the deployment of the latest model of smart boards in our classrooms, it is pretty easy to do hybrid teaching, comprising virtual and in-person contact and experience. Students can join our lectures from anywhere in the world. We can also bring lecturers or resource persons from all over the world to deliver lectures to our students. We are profoundly grateful to our ICT Unit under our Director, Mr. Chinedu Chibuzor, for doing a great job.

10. **Student Performance**

Our students have been doing exceedingly well in national and intentional competitions. In the month of September, for instance, our students won the Best Oral Presentation after making it to the semifinal of Miami Cyber 9/12 Challenge, competing with Florida International University, USA, US Military Academy and 17 other semifinalists from different universities in the world. We congratulate Dr. Ifeoma Nwafor of our Law Faculty for leading our team to this great achievement and success. In addition, our Law Faculty has been rated the best Law Faculty in the Southeast. Also many of our Law students have passed their arbitration examinations and are now registered arbitrators. Our accounting students are also passing their ICAN examinations with ease and in large numbers. We will continue to emphasize professional and academic performance of our students. Furthermore, in the National Entrepreneurship competition organized in Abuja, our student Kevin Okpe emerged first among all private universities in Nigeria and 7th among all universities (public and private). Our Entrepreneurship

Directorate under Christopher Uwakwe is ensuring that our students are equipped with skills and competencies needed for a good performance in professional fields after graduation.

11. **Godfrey Okoye University IDEA**

IDEA is the acronym for Innovation Development and Entrepreneurship Africa.

Our university professor, Solomon Nwaka, articulated the background of IDEA thus:

Several landscape analysis and studies that led to development of IDEA show that:

- Africa needs institutions that prepare and empower its citizens, especially youths, to participate in solving societal problems and creating jobs.
- African universities, research institutions, researchers and innovators need support and training to translate their discoveries from the laboratory to market.
- There are limited African institutions that address the training and vocational needs of the massive African informal sector businesses and entrepreneurs.
- Africa is challenged by lack of sustained data and evidence generation, and their analysis to inform policy and decision making at governmental, institutional, and private sector levels. Achieving the SDGs and AU's Agenda 2063 will require filling these gaps.
- IDEA's objective is to help in addressing these gaps.

This Centre with our erudite professor, Solomon Nwaka, has started admitting students into its online programmes. It is the first of its kind in any Nigeria university.

12. **Teaching at Godfrey Okoye University: Entrepreneurial Curriculum and Hybrid Method of Teaching**

In line with the philosophy of the NUC CCMAS, Godfrey Okoye University reviewed its programmes and teaching methods last year with a focus on innovativeness, digitalization, entrepreneurship and hybrid methods of teaching. The entrepreneurship method applies the

ideas of our STEP programme to inspire students to think outside the box in order to be innovative in developing Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound (SMART) projects. Lecture topics, assignments and examinations must reflect the entrepreneurship method in Godfrey Okoye University. We will always ask the Godfrey Okoye University Question: Where is the evidence? Also the hybrid method of teaching that involves both online and in-person teaching has received a fresh boost with the deployment of smart boards and adequate online-teaching-enhancement devices in all faculties of our university. Finally, a policy of rewarding our innovative staff and students has been properly articulated by the management and the senate. The reward includes cash prizes and scholarships.

13. **Our Collaborations**

We have continued to spread our tentacles for collaboration with academic and professional institutions. Through the membership of the vice chancellor to the Board of Africa-UniNet, the university now has collaboration with 70 universities which are members of the AfricaUniNet. This has increased the number of academic institutions we are actively collaborating with to 90. Also in this academic year our College of Medicine will begin the gradual implementation of the MoU with the College of Medicine of Johann Kepler University (Austria) on joint teaching, exchange of students and collaboration in research. We have also an MoU with many professional institutions. As you can see, we are a university on the go.

14. **General Ability Test**

The senate of our university approved the GO General Ability Test (GO-GAT) for all our undergraduates to enhance the employability of our graduates. It is a test of quantitative and verbal reasoning designed to meet the requirements for successful scholarship and employment interviews. I have no doubt that our GO-GAT will contribute immensely to the employability of our graduates as well as their success in various competitions and interviews.

15. **Our graduate performance**

Our graduates are doing exceedingly well all over the world. GO graduates are also in all professions: academic professions, entertainment, business, manufacturing, clerical and religious life, civil service, military (including the US Military), police, etc., where they usually distinguish themselves through their hard work and good manners. Besides, many of our graduates are studying in universities outside Nigeria on various scholarships.

16. **GO Alumni**

Our Alumni Association is spreading its branches to different countries of the world where our graduates are. Last year I inaugurated the UK chapter of the Association. This year in September I also inaugurated the US chapter of Godfrey Okoye University Alumni Association. The German and Austrian chapters will also be officially inaugurated next year. Furthermore, our Alumni Association has built a very beautiful and comfortable restaurant for students and staff at the Thinker's Corner Campus of our university. The restaurant was opened in July this year. In addition, the president of the Alumni Association, Mr. Alphonsus Nwafor, donated a beautiful car to the first male student to emerge the Vice-Chancellor-for-One-Day. (Our University has an award called Vice-Chancellor-for-One-Day which is won by the student with the highest CGPA [Cumulative Grade Point Average] in an academic year). The first male to win it (Mr. Vitalis Iloanwusi) received the car. Mr. Alphonsus Nwafor used the award to encourage our male undergraduates to work as hard as the females.

As you can see, ladies and gentlemen, this is indeed God's own university, soaring unstoppably through the thick clouds of social, economic and political trepidations of our country, awash with the blessings of Jesus Christ.

To you my fresh graduates, I send you out into the world with incredible hope undimmed by dark clouds of doubts about the existence our country. I send you out into the world with strong confidence in your ability to reveal your GO spirit of resilience in a world of competing gladiators, brilliant criminals and war mongers. I send you out into the

world with deep faith in your ability to discover and conquer the unfrequented terrains of this world. I send you out into the world with an unwavering belief that you will hold firmly to the missiles of spirituality and prayers for successful battles against the Grendels of this world. I send you out into the world with overflowing love and benediction from a heart in ceaseless prayers for you. I send you out into the world with the power of the Holy Spirit to bring light of knowledge and faith to every nook and cranny of the world. I send you out into the world with much joy to sing the song of success as the Lord blesses you in all your sowing and reaping. I send you out into the world as your Spiritual Father with tremendous blessings. Please always be a GO: hardworking, disciplined, resilient, balanced in character and learning and revealing a deep understanding of epistemic, religious and cultural dialogues. God bless you as I entrust you to the love and intercessions of the Blessed Virgin Mary!

To you dear parents and guardians, I express my profound gratitude for your presence here today. You have made incalculable sacrifices to support the education of your children or wards. I hope we have met your expectations when you chose our university for your child or ward. I promise you that we will continue to improve in the areas where we might have fallen short of your expectations (as we receive your feedback through our Parents Forum Platform). I thank the president and the executive of the Parents Forum of our university for working hard to ensure that parents and guardians continue to support us in the education of their children or wards. We thank the Parents Forum particularly for its contributions in various projects of our university. We are profoundly grateful to you. God bless you all!

To the proprietor (Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Enugu), members of the Diocesan Curia, my brother-priests, the religious and the lay faithful of our diocese, thanks for your prayers, good wishes and sacrifices for the success of our reputable diocesan university. May the Lord continue to bless our diocese and all its parishes and institutions!

To our Chancellor, the Chairman and members of the Board of Trustees, the Chairman and members of the Governing Council, the senate and members of staff, thanks for working harmoniously,

diligently and constructively towards our common goal and success.
God bless you!

To our all honorary doctorate awardees, I say a big congratulation on your award from a Catholic university. Please be good ambassadors of this university. Remember the words: To whom much is given, much is expected. I also congratulate Prof. Hubert Hasenauer on his induction into our hall of fame. Professor Hasenauer is the President of AfricaUniNet. I congratulate you and hope you will continue to be a good friend of our university. We look forward to hosting the next AfricaUniNet conference here in our peaceful and beautiful Enugu State. I also thank our visiting Austrian Professor, Prof. Dr. Nandu Goswami, for delivering an unforgettable convocation lecture yesterday. Congratulations!

To all friends of GO University, especially our beloved Governor Peter Mbah and government officials here today as well as many benefactors and benefactresses, I thank you for being a huge part of our success narrative and the motivation for our soaring higher and higher. You have supported this university with words spiced with wisdom and experience. You have stood behind us with strong financial muscles. You have risen in defence of us when naysayers and distractors ignorantly attack us. You have held us firmly before God with your countless prayers and sacrifices. As I draw the curtain for this speech, I humbly ask our Lord Jesus Christ who is the real owner of this university to fill your hands and souls with blessings beyond human imagination.

To all of us gathered here, thanks for your presence here today. May you be blessed by our Lord Jesus Christ and be filled with the blessings and graces of this God's Own University as you travel back to your various destinations. Peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you!

**Rev. Father. Prof. Dr. Christian Anieke,
Vice Chancellor**