



**COMMENCEMENT REMARKS PRESENTED BY REV. FR GEORGE NKEZE JINGWA,
PRESIDENT OF CUIB ON THE OCCASION OF THE THIRD COMMENCEMENT
CEREMONY OF THE 2016 BATCH OF CUIB, THIS DAY, FRIDAY 23RD OF JUNE 2017.**

SALUTATION

Your Excellency, the Minister of Higher Education, here represented

Your Excellency, the Governor of the South West Region

Your Excellency the Chancellor and Founder of CUIB, here represented,

Your Excellency the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Buea here represented

All other Protocol Respected,

Ladies and Gentlemen

Berakah and Congratulations: Batch of 2016

What an honour and privilege for me, despite the turbulent academic year 2016/2017, to offer to our graduands my words of *Berakah* and Congratulations! And I will equally do the same to our Mentor Universities: University of Buea, University of ST Thomas, Minnesota, and our Foreign Partner Universities, Capitol Technology University, Washington; La Roche College, Pittsburg; St Leo University, Florida; Delaware State University, Dover; University of Dayton, Ohio and North Carolina A & T State University. I also have in mind our always available Sponsor Source du Pays, Cameroon, and our Mothers of the University of Mary, of the CWA, Diocese of Buea. In addition, we *Berakah* and congratulate our two great International Associations in which we are members: The Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities in the United States (ACCU) and the International Federation of Catholic Universities (IFCU) with Headquarters in Paris, France. And of course, our cherished Partner, the United States Embassy in Yaounde. We appreciate their support, Sponsorship and readiness to provide opportunities for our students to develop Leadership

skills under the Study of the US Institute (SUSI) Programme for student leaders in Social Entrepreneurship and facilitate the carrying out of International Internships by our students with US companies such as the St Benedict Press/Tan Books Publishers in Charlotte, North Carolina.

I also have in mind the academic team of our university headed by the Provost, the Chief Academic Officer, Prof. Wilfred Ndongko, the Vice Presidents, Deans, Line managers, Staff, Students, Friends, Guardians, Sponsors, Parents, Families, Mentors, and loved ones here and back home. You have all helped in so many ways to get our graduands to this important stage of their lives.

Story of American born Engineer John Roebling

I would like to begin my Commencement remarks by sharing with you the story of an American born Engineer, John Roebling. In 1867, Engineer John Roebling was inspired by an idea to build a spectacular bridge connecting New York City with Brooklyn. That bridge which still stands today is the Pride of Americans and it is a masterpiece. But this is what happened before that bridge was built. When John Roebling had this idea and communicated it, other bridge-building experts throughout the world thought that this was an impossible venture and told Roebling to forget the idea. It just couldn't be done. It wasn't practical. It had never been done before. Roebling couldn't ignore the vision he had in his mind of this bridge. He thought about it all the time and knew deep in his heart that it could be done. He felt he just had to share the dream with someone else. And the only person he could manage to persuade was his son Washington, an up-and-coming engineer, that the bridge in fact could be built.

So Father and Son developed concepts of how this bridge would be built and how the obstacles could be overcome. With great excitement and inspiration, they hired experts and technicians and began to build *their dream bridge*. The Project started out well, but when it was only a few months under way, a tragic accident on the site took the life of John Roebling. Three years later Washington was injured, and he suffered brain damage that left him unable to walk, talk, or even move. Then the town criers and detractors came on board: "We told them so". "Crazy men and their crazy dreams". "It is foolish to chase wild visions". Everyone had a negative comment to make and felt the project should be scrapped since the Roeblings were the only ones who knew how the bridge could be built.

Unbelievably, in spite of his handicap, Washington was never discouraged and still had a burning desire to complete the bridge. Despite his severe handicaps, his mind was still as sharp as ever. He tried to inspire and pass on this dream to some of his friends, but it never worked. They will instead mock at him for being a day-dreamer. As he lay on his bed, something struck him. He received a message not to give up. Suddenly an idea hit him. All he could do was move one finger and he decided to make the best use of it. By moving that one finger, he slowly developed a communication code with his wife. Wow! He touched his wife's arm with the finger, indicating that he wanted her to call the engineers again. Then he used the same method of tapping her arm to tell the engineers what to do. It seemed foolish, but the project was under way again.

For Eleven years, Washington tapped out instructions with his finger on his wife's arm until the bridge was finally completed. Today the spectacular Brooklyn Bridge stands in all its glory as one of the points of Pride of the great Nation, the United States of America. And tourists all over the world go to New York City to see this masterpiece. But in actual fact this bridge was the triumph of one man's indomitable spirit and his determination not be defeated by circumstances. It is also a tribute to the engineers and their team work, and to their faith in a man who was considered mad by half the world. The bridge stands, too, as a tangible monument to the love and devotion of his wife, who for eleven long years patiently decoded the messages of her husband and told the engineers what to do. What a wife, what a woman. Woman eeh...! Washington Roebling, his wife, and friends had what I call the "conqueror's spirit", a spirit that never gives up, a spirit that does not allow the world and their environment to define who they are, a spirit that is not defeated by circumstances.

The Batch of Endurance

Dear Graduands, I recount this story specifically to you because it is your story. It is the story of your batch from the time you got admission into the city of Saints and Scholars in 2012. You have been rightly nicknamed **The Batch of Endurance**. You are the Batch that has the conqueror's spirit; you are the Batch of the true Eagles of CUIB as you have shown by your way of life that you do not allow others to define who you are and what you want to do. You are also the Batch that does not allow gender to impede your dreams. It is therefore not surprising that the ladies of your batch took the bold step and stood as Party Candidates for Presidential elections in the Student Government Association (STUGA) and won. And for the first time in the history of

CUIB, a Lady, Wache Ngateu Gaelle, was elected STUGA President, another Lady, Yong Nain Tina, President of the Student Senate and the third Lady, Angouing Kamba Precious, Student Council President. What a batch of “crazy ladies” who will never give up on their dreams. Woman ...eeh..!

Your batch came, saw and conquered. I remember you came to CUIB when there were so many changes and the times were tough. You were introduced to mandatory 100 hours of Volunteerism; mandatory Trade Fair, mandatory Entrepreneurship, the daily Eoc Hour, and the concept of the Entrepreneurial University. You had to do Group Work, Portfolio and Class Attendance was compulsory. It was really tough at that time. And like the Roebblings, you heard all kinds of voices: *“This Entrepreneurial University will not work; it is a pipe dream. How can universities be organizing Trade Fair and requiring students to be present. What has that got to do with learning! This is madness on the part of the administration. Then students are assessed for all kinds of things: Class Attendance, Group Work, Class Assignments, and Portfolio. This is infringing on our freedom. The University is making us Prisoners. Universities are environments where students go to school when they like”*. And the negative voices were endless.

While some of your friends left and went to other Universities, you stood firm and decided to overcome all adversities. You did not shrink back in fear or feel overwhelmed by the trials that came your way. You showed that you were bold in the face of adversity and throughout your years in CUIB you were fully able to handle difficulties with courage, confidence, wisdom and faith. For you adversities are not optional and it only takes nerves like you to overcome them. Jesus himself said: *“In the world you have tribulation and trials and distress and frustration; but be of good cheer, take courage, be confident! For I have overcome the world”*. (John 16:33). St Paul understood this too and I know St Paul is your friend. He wrote in the Book of Romans 8:35-37:

*“Who shall ever separate us from Christ’s love? Shall suffering and affliction and tribulation? Or calamity and distress? Or persecution or hunger or destitution or peril or sword? Even as it is written, for thy sake we are put to death all the day long; we are regarded and counted as sheep for the slaughter. Yet amid all these **things we are more than conquerors** and gain a surpassing victory through him who loved us”* (my emphasis)

Why do I call you conquerors? Why are you called the “Batch of Endurance”? It is simple. I have seen and can testify now that throughout your stay in CUIB, before you ever faced adversity,

difficulties, challenges; before the battle against you even begun, you already knew you will win in the end since you will always refuse to give up. This is who you are. The Spartan boys and girls, the more than conquerors, the **Batch of Endurance**. What a blessing for CUIB! We are very proud of you and as you are already in the world, we have no fear. I am not surprised that even though your graduation was postponed last December 2016, you did not give up and you are here today, even at short notice. And I have seen that your conqueror's spirit lives on especially in the hearts and minds of your brothers and sisters you left behind. I now understand why a good number of them have kept on with their learning under difficult circumstances during this period of crisis affecting schools in English Speaking part of our country. The fact that they are willing to learn even when schools are not going on is a true sign that they have picked up your conqueror's spirit. We need to give them a big round of applause. This is what it means to never give up.

Institutional and Academic Observations on the Cameroon Anglophone Educational system.

Your Excellencies, and all our Friends and Stakeholders here present, permit me to share with you three observations, from an institutional and academic perspective, concerning the present crisis affecting education institutions in English Speaking regions of our country.

a) The Nature of a Catholic University

The first is the lack of understanding by a good number of Cameroonians, surprisingly some of whom went through Catholic schools and colleges, about the nature of a Catholic University. My humble appeal will be that each and every one of us, interested in knowing more about Catholic Higher education, could make an effort to read the Apostolic Constitution *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* (*English: From the Heart of the Church*) issued by Pope John Paul II (now St John Paul) in 1990 establishing general norms affecting colleges and universities throughout the world. This document, amongst other things, clarifies the nature, identity and characteristics of Catholic Universities. Let us remember that the name "Catholic University" is a brand name. It stands for standards, character, faith, service to the community, academic autonomy and freedom. A thorough reading of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* will help us understand that a Catholic University by its very nature is *apolitical, non-partisan and neutral*. The Primary goal of every Catholic University is to be true to its mission, identify, character and stewardship. Catholic universities are to foster Catholic social teachings which involves social justice, option for the poor, common good and the dignity of every human being. It does not discriminate between peoples, cultures, tribe, religion or

sex. Accordingly, when parents send their children to a Catholic university, this is what they expect of it and nothing else.

Despite the current political challenges, CUIB has tried to remain true to its Mission. This has not been an easy journey. As an institution, she has not betrayed any cause. It has only remained faithful to who she is and will try to remain so. On behalf of our Chancellor, Board of Trustees, Faculty, Staff and Students of CUIB, I would like to extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to all those who have supported us to remain true to our mission as an academic and faith-centred institution, nothing more, nothing less. I seize this opportunity to thank in a special way our Mentor University, the University of Buea, its Vice-Chancellor, Professor Nalova Lyonga, the Registrar Prof. Roland Ndip, her leadership team, the special UB administrators appointed to work in synergy with the CUIB management, and the Deans of the various faculties who have stood by us during this time of great trial, challenge and adversity. They have given us the greatest support in the whole wide world. They have been instrumental in working out strategies and alternative learning methods with us on how to engage students when schools are shut down. As the saying goes, “A friend in need is a friend in deed”! This is not all. They have also ensured that all our Student Transcripts, Attestation of Results and Certificates for the Past and Current Batches be certified and validated, ending an old, long household rumor propagated by our detractors and prophets of doom that CUIB is not a recognized University.

Accordingly, today, for the first time in our history with UB, we are having the Commencement Ceremony with all graduands receiving their Transcripts, Attestation of Results and other Certificates certified and validated. If we are enjoying these blessings now, it is because we have never given up on our Mentor University and we will never give up on them no matter how tough the road may be. Christ reminds us in the Scriptures, “*your endurance will win you your lives*” (Luke 21:19). And it has done so for CUIB and students of the **Batch of Endurance**. For this reason, I am inviting the whole University Community to give the University of Buea a standing ovation. What a blessing! Berakah! Thank you! May I also use this opportunity to thank one of our United States partner universities, La Roche College of Pittsburg in Pennsylvania, for putting up a transition plan for CUIB if this crisis continues to persist! In the Transition plan our students, those who have the means, can continue their studies uninterrupted. La Roche University has

offered Fifteen thousand dollars (\$15,000.00) as fee subsidy for each CUIB student for this purpose for the undergraduate programmes since we run mainly undergraduate programmes.

CUIB is also working out other plans with its International member organization, the International Federation of Catholic Universities, (IFCU) to put in place alternative strategies to get our students continue their education in the future if this crisis continues. Your Excellencies, Dear Parents, we call our Students VIPs because we consider them our major stakeholders. And these measures are being taken to guarantee the educational future of our VIPs. We thank all our Parents, Guardians and Sponsors who continue to support us in this vision. Let us also give our Parents, Guardians and Sponsors of all our students a big round of applause.

b) Multiple Intelligences

Our second institutional and academic observation, about the current crisis affecting English speaking Regions of Cameroon, is that it has also exposed the weaknesses of our educational system which is too limited in its understanding of what intelligence is all about and also too examination focused. What happens when Schools don't function or when Pupils and Students are not allowed to go to school? Sit at home and eat and get fat! Go around idling away, stealing, taking drugs, and living immoral lives? Does School shut down mean the end of learning which is a Universal Right of every human being? For quite some months, we have witnessed Pupils and Students abandon their learning completely, and unfortunately some Parents supporting them, on grounds that schools are closed. The bitter truth which this crisis has exposed is the perception of some Cameroonians that learning takes place only in school and classrooms and not at home and that there is only one way of acquiring knowledge – enter the four walls of a classroom.

Until Howard Gardner of Harvard University published *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences* in 1983 the prevailing concept of intelligence was that it was a single general capacity for logical thinking, reasoning, and use of language that predicted school success. In this system, it is thought that a person is educated or intelligent only when he or she has a “fine mind” which really means that he or she has a fine mouth or a fine pen. Gardner challenged this view of intelligence which focused mainly on the ability to use language and to reason logically or

mathematically and proposed other areas of Human performance and brilliance. He proposed five more intelligences to the two traditional existing ones targeted in I.Q. tests: Linguistic Intelligence (language) and Logical-mathematical. The other five include Visual-Spatial Intelligence (Artistic-Spatial), Musical Intelligence (Music), Bodily-Kinesthetic Intelligence (Physical), Interpersonal Intelligence (Social) and Intrapersonal Intelligence (Self).

Looking at our current so-called Anglophone crisis, I will like to echo with Howard Gardner that *“The time has come to broaden our perception of spectrum of talents in Cameroon. We should spend less time ranking children and more time helping them to identify their natural competencies and skills and cultivate those. There are hundreds and hundreds of ways to succeed in life even when there is a crisis of shut down of schools and many, many different abilities that will help our children get there”*. CUIB, The Entrepreneurial University was named for this purpose and it is our long-term goal to be the leading University in Entrepreneurship in West and Central Africa.

In view of this dilemma CUIB has opened an Elementary Entrepreneurial Academy, **the Academy of Talents** to help kids develop their other intelligences and talents even when schools are shut down. We give the kids skills and competences in sports, dancing, art and craft, music etc. We thank the Regional Delegate of Basic Education for the South West Region, Madam Motazwe Telen Dorothy Atabong for supporting us in this endeavor. At the Level of the University we have carried out re-structuring in our entrepreneurial curriculum by adding what is called the One Eagle, One Talent Programme. This programme is meant to upgrade our Entrepreneurship programme in such a way that our students can continue to learn even when schools are not functioning.

We are currently working with the Sacred Heart Catholic University of Milan (Universita Cattolica del Sacro Cuore) to introduce a Special MBA in Global Entrepreneurship for Cameroonians known as the E4IMPACT that focuses on fostering sustainable development through Impact entrepreneurship. This is going to be unique! This is one way forward for Cameroon. I can still remember vividly, as a child, seeing my Father, a veteran Catholic Teacher, Pa Nkeze do correspondent courses at home, write foreign Examinations and made it! Today Technology has produced thousands of alternative ways of learning – Online, Distant Learning etc. These things are doable also for our kids today especially when schools are shut down. As far as I know, Schools were shut down, but learning was not.

c) Entrepreneurial Mindset and Spirituality

The third institutional and academic observation springing from the so-called Anglophone crisis is the fact that it has exposed the character and weakness of our pupils and students. They give up too easily. They lack the right entrepreneurial mindset and spirituality. They lack the spirit of conquerors. I can now understand why Nigerians, Ghanaians and South Africans are making it big in the world stage while our children sit with us at home accusing, blaming and condemning everyone except themselves for their lack of success. Former JCI International President and Founder and CEO of Go Ahead Africa, Mr Roland Kwemain calls this syndrome the ABC Syndrome. “A” for Accuse, “B” for Blame and “C” for Condemn. As a CUIB Board member, I want to laud his efforts to see that we train our students with a different kind of mindset; the mindset that does not give up, the mind-set that does not always say “the problem is”, but “the solution is”? Thanks to him, our Commencement Speaker, Mr Francis B. Mbongue B, is a highly motivated Entrepreneur, a man with a unique mindset, a marketing, customer marketing and business development professional with close to two decades of experience in driving sales growth, building brands and corporate reputation in Cameroon and around the world who has made it from Zero to the Top. Mr Francis B. Mbongue B, thank you immensely for accepting to be the first Entrepreneurial Commencement Speaker of our University. We are very proud of your achievements.

If you ever get around people who have accomplished much, they will tell you that those accomplishments didn't come without a price. The real price of success lies within the need to persevere and never give up. The trophy is never given to someone who does not complete the task. Setbacks are just setups for God to show how He is able to do great things in our lives. It is often said that Funerals are for people who have accepted the thought that everything is over. Don't do that; instead tell the enemy, “I am not dead yet”...

The whole theme of Christianity and that of an Entrepreneur is one of rising again. However, you can't rise until you fall. Now that doesn't mean you should fall into sin. It means you should allow the resurrecting power of the Holy Spirit to operate in your life regardless of whether you have fallen into sin, discouragement, apathy, or fear. There are obstacles that can trip you as you escalate toward productivity. But it doesn't matter what tripped you; it matters that you rise up.

People who never experience these things generally are people who don't do anything. There is a certain safety in being dormant.

Conclusion

The current Anglophone crisis has proven this beyond reasonable doubt, namely that a good number of our kids, pupils and students enjoy sitting at home and doing nothing. And, as I earlier said, there is a certain comfort in being dormant. Nothing is won, but nothing is lost. For me, I would rather walk on the water with Jesus. I would rather nearly drown and have to be saved than play it safe and never experience the miraculous. This is what our current graduands are teaching us today – **The Batch of Endurance**. The Batch that never gives up! Winston Churchill, one of the most effective leaders ever to stand on the world stage and also one of the most highly regarded statesmen of all time, who had a conqueror's spirit, told a group of students in 1941 when he visited the school where he had studied as a youngster. I will like to use his very words to conclude my words of welcome and commencement remarks to all of you. This is what Churchill said:

“This is the lesson: never give in, never give in, never, never, never, never – in nothing, great or small, large or petty – never give in except to convictions of honour and good sense. Never yield to force; never yield to the apparently overwhelming might of the enemy” I encourage you today, as Churchill exhorted the school boys in 1941: “Whatever you do, never give in- and never, never, never give up”

Amen! God bless the batch of the Conquerors!

Berakah.

Done on this day, Friday 23rd June 2017, Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.



Fr. George Nkeze Jingwa

President and Pro-Chancellor, CUIB