

**SPEECH DELIVERED AT THE 26th GRADUATION CEREMONY, FRIDAY 6th OCTOBER
2017 BY PROF. JOSEPH GALGALO, THE VICE CHANCELLOR**

114 years old and growing stronger by the day! This is the story of St. Paul's University. We have remained a beacon of hope and an institution of choice for those seeking to satisfy their intellectual thirst with truly holistic education. We started as a small theological college way back in 1903. We transited into a fully-fledged university following the award of charter in 2007. Our star is shining ever brighter, thanks to our practical commitment to value based education. Our joy is in the knowledge that the men and women who are graduating today are well prepared and able to create a niche for themselves and to offer significant contributions to the world. We are confident that they are able to identify, take existing opportunities, and create new ones, as they apply their training and pursue their calling in the world. Congratulations to the class of 2017!

This year was marked with radical changes within the national education sector. Cognizant of these changes, we are encouraged, not only to conduct our work the right way but also to diligently discharge our mandate with distinction. As we pursue excellence in all our work, we conscientiously put God at the centre of all our undertakings. This year, as is the case every year, we are guided by the word of God. Our theme for 2017 is taken from Psalm 18:32, which says, "it is God who arms us with strength and makes us succeed." This verse greatly encourages us. It inspires us to faithfully and conscientiously move towards our goal of delivering the best value-based education. We instill in our students creative thinking that can stimulate and support innovative ideas. We challenge them to orient their lives and learning to maximum application of both their intellectual and spiritual gifts in order to achieve their life goals and realize their highest possible potential. SPU chooses to believe in the existence of endless possibilities in our world. We mentor our students to learn the art of maximizing their God given potential, appreciate endless opportunities and creatively tap into possibilities of great things that can be achieved in this world.

In the month of August this year, we admitted our second cohort of government sponsored students. This new partnership has proved both a blessing and a challenge. Whereas the government's effort in providing an all-inclusive higher education for all qualified Kenyan student is most welcome; much more needs to be done to make this public-private partnership work. The government scholarship per student is far less than what it costs us to sustain our high standards of the SPU education experience. As we wait for the government to increase funding levels, we shall do our best not to compromise our standards. We shall do everything possible to honour the trust placed upon us by the government and complement this effort by creating opportunities to support gifted students. It is our hope that the government too will honor the trust we have placed in the system and in due course, increase funding for this partnership to be sustained. We trust that the differentiated unit cost framework that already has been put in place is implemented fairly and quickly.

St. Paul's University has been on a growth trajectory for many years now. We are determined to maintain this momentum as we continually improve our facilities, strengthen our programs, modernize our business systems and promote a customer centric culture to always enhance our service satisfaction levels and enrich the SPU education experience. While we are working on finalizing ISO certification processes, we are also upgrading our current ERP systems to improve our business efficiency. This year, we have also embarked on expanding our hostel capacity, we have just completed the construction of a bigger dining hall facility, began construction of additional labs, modernized our library services, and have expanded our sports fields, equipped lecture-rooms, supported more research projects, and have continued to attract and employ the best cadre of staff in order to sustain the high academic standards that we have achieved. We also are working closely with relevant regulatory and professional bodies in preparation to begin our first set of courses in health disciplines. We are grateful to our partners for the support we have received in building up a huge collection of equipment.

This year, we have actively engaged our international partners, revamped Alumni relations, and strengthened research development and industrial linkages. We are

realizing benefits in shared synergies through collaborations. Also, as we expand our range of programs on offer and increase our research endeavors, we are attracting more online applications for admissions into our on-line programs. The E-learning option is opening up avenues for students who otherwise would not be able to access our facilities and resources any other way. A mobile online application, an innovation of our own dedicated team, has truly revolutionized the learner's experience. We are grateful for the encouraging feedback from individuals and groups who have been impacted by our services.

Finally, allow me to appreciate all our staff and students, and all our stakeholders who truly work hard, and all who truly recognize and uphold the principles that make life and learning a rewarding experience here at St. Paul's. I sincerely thank all who have consistently and ably driven our vision, who have partnered with us in the achievement of a dream – now a reality – of building a truly creative and innovative university. Onward SPU, ever boldly marching to greater heights!

Thank you and God bless you all

Prof. Joseph Galgalo
Vice Chancellor