Vice-Chancellor's Speech

Prof. Esther Mombo

ADDRESS BY THE VICE CHANCELLOR PROF. ESTHER MOMBO, DURING THE 35TH GRADUATION CEREMONY HELD ON FRIDAY, 6TH NOVEMBER 2026 AT THE GRADUATION SQUARE IN LIMURU MAIN CAMPUS AT 9:00 A.M.

Theme: Building Resilience Through Innovation in a Fragile Environment
Friday, 6 November 2026,

The University Chancellor, **Hon. Prof. Margaret Kobia PhD, EGH,**

The Guest Speaker**, Ms. Nancy Njau, Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director of Family Bank;**

The Chairman Board of Trustee, The Rt. Rev. Dr. Thegu Mutahi and Trustee Members present,

The Council Chairman **His Grace the Most Reverend Dr. Jackson Ole Sapit and council Members present,**

Members of the University Board of Trustee and Council;

Members of the University Management Board and Senate;

Representatives of the Government (National and County government) and our Regulatory Bodies;

Members of the clergy Present;

Distinguished guests;

Parents, guardians and sponsors;

Members of staff; our partners and friends of SPU; and, most importantly,

The graduating Class of 2026:

Good morning, and welcome to St. Paul's University.

It is with immense joy, deep gratitude to Almighty God and a profound sense of responsibility that I welcome you to this **35th Graduation Ceremony of St. Paul's University**. Today, we gather to celebrate knowledge, perseverance, faith, achievement and the promise of a future shaped by the Two thousand and forty two (**2,042) graduates** before us.

We are grateful to many well-wishers for your messages of goodwill, your prayers and support on this occasion. Because of time constraint, let me mention by name a few organizations and a few guests present here in person.

(Recognize invited guests who are present – list of confirmed guests to be provided and also published in the Graduation programme page 24 and 25.)

Welcome and thank you all for being part of this graduation

Madam Chancellor,

This occasion is particularly significant to me because it is the first graduation ceremony I have the privilege of presiding over as the fourth Vice-Chancellor of St. Paul's University. I am deeply honoured to lead this institution at such an important moment in its history. I thank you Madam chancellor for your leadership and commitment especially in such a time like this graduation where you will Conver degrees and Diplomas and Certificates to the **graduating class of 2026**.

I also appreciate the Board of Trustee led by the Chairman the Rt. Rev. Dr. Thegu Mutahi, Council Members led by the Chairman His Grace the Most Rev. Dr. Jackson Olesapit, the University Management Board and Senate, our Staff, Students, Alumni and all our stakeholders for the confidence, encouragement and support you have extended to me. Your trust is both an honour and a call to service.

I wish to acknowledge the leadership and service of my predecessors, whose contributions have helped shape the institution we proudly celebrate today. We stand on the foundation of their work as we continue to strengthen St. Paul's University as a centre of academic excellence, Christian spiritual formation, innovation and service to society.

1. **Celebrating the Class of 2026**

Graduands, today is your day. Congratulations!

You have reached this milestone through hard work, sacrifice, determination and, for many of you, the support of family members, friends, lecturers, sponsors and well-wishers. Your journey has not always been easy. Some of you have balanced studies with employment, family responsibilities, financial challenges and other personal circumstances. Others have had to navigate the uncertainties of a rapidly changing world while remaining focused on your academic goals. Yet here you are. You have persevered, completed your studies and earned the opportunity to be celebrated. On behalf of the Management, Senate and the entire St. Paul's University community, I congratulate every graduand. You have made us proud.

To the parents, guardians, sponsors and families, we thank you for your sacrifices, patience, prayers and unwavering support. Your contribution to this achievement cannot be overstated. To our academic and administrative staff, thank you for guiding, teaching, mentoring and supporting our students throughout their academic journeys. Graduands, as you receive your qualifications today, remember that your certificate or degree is not merely evidence of what you have studied. It is a responsibility to use your knowledge, skills and values to make a positive difference in the world.

Our university motto, **"Instilling Values and Competence,"** reminds us that true education must produce individuals who are not only knowledgeable and capable, but also ethical, compassionate, responsible and committed to the common good. As you leave this institution, I encourage you to carry these values into your

workplaces, businesses, communities, families and leadership responsibilities. Let your competence open doors and let your character determine how you walk through them.

2. **Building Resilience Through Innovation in a Fragile Environment**

Madam Chancellor,

Our graduation theme, ***Building Resilience Through Innovation in a Fragile Environment***, speaks directly to the realities of our time. We live in a world marked by economic uncertainty, rapid technological advancement, climate-related challenges, social change, shifting employment patterns and increasing demands on institutions and individuals. Traditional ways of working are being disrupted, professions are evolving, and the knowledge acquired today must continually be renewed to remain relevant tomorrow. In such an environment, resilience is no longer optional. It is essential.

However, resilience does not mean merely enduring difficult circumstances. It means developing the capacity to adapt, learn, innovate, recover and emerge stronger. Innovation, likewise, is not limited to technology or the creation of new products. It includes rethinking established practices, developing better solutions, responding creatively to human needs and finding new ways to create value.

At St. Paul's University, we believe that innovation must be guided by values. Progress without integrity can create new problems even as it solves existing ones. Technology without compassion can widen inequalities. Knowledge without wisdom can be misused. We must therefore pursue innovation that is ethical, inclusive, sustainable and responsive to society's needs.

Our Christian foundation provides an important compass for this journey. The words of Micah 6:8 which is our annual theme this year, remind us to act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with our God. These principles remain relevant in business, public service, scientific research, education and every sphere of human endeavour. Graduands, the world you are entering needs more than job seekers; it needs problem solvers. It needs entrepreneurs who create opportunities, professionals who uphold integrity, leaders who make responsible decisions, researchers who generate knowledge and citizens who use their abilities to improve the lives of others.

Do not allow uncertainty to paralyse you. Let it challenge you to think differently. Do not regard technological change as a threat alone; learn to use it responsibly. Do not wait for perfect circumstances before acting; begin with the knowledge, skills and opportunities available to you.

Your future will not be determined solely by the challenges you encounter, but also by your ability to respond to them with competence, creativity, courage and character.

3. **Our Strategic Direction**

Madam Chancellor,

As I assume leadership of St. Paul's University, I am encouraged by the significant strides we have made in advancing our Strategic Plan 2025–2030 and strengthening our institutional impact. Key achievements include

progress towards establishing the **SPU Innovation Hub** which is at a very enhanced stage. This hub is designed to nurture creativity among our students, encourage research, entrepreneurship and the development of practical solutions to societal challenges. Within the last one year the university has also hosted the East Africa Communication Association International Conference (**EACA International Conference)**, which brought together scholars from different parts of the world to exchange knowledge and advance academic collaboration. Among other major achievement the University has been awarded accreditation for **Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)** by the regulators, positioning St. Paul's University as the only university in Kenya accredited for this initiative. These milestones demonstrate our commitment to innovation, international engagement, inclusive learning and the expansion of opportunities for diverse learners.

We also launched the inaugural **SPU Elimu Bora Walk and Run**, an initiative aimed at raising endowment funds to support financially needy students and promote access to university education. Together with our continued investment in digital transformation, strategic partnerships, academic excellence and student recruitment, these initiatives reflect a university determined to remain relevant and responsive to emerging needs. As we move forward, our focus will be on building on these achievements through purposeful leadership, responsible stewardship, research, innovation and quality service, while strengthening our Christian identity and advancing our mission of transforming lives and communities.

4. **In Conclusion**

Madam Chancellor,

Let us remember that resilience is built through preparation, learning, faith and collective action. Innovation becomes meaningful when it improves lives, solves problems and opens opportunities for others.

To the Class of 2026, congratulations once again. You have reached an important milestone, but your journey of learning, service and discovery continues. Go forth with confidence, remain faithful to your values and use your education to make a meaningful difference.

May St. Paul's University continue to be a place where faith inspires learning, knowledge advances society, innovation creates opportunities and character shapes leadership.

May God bless our graduands, their families, our university community and all our partners. May He grant us wisdom to lead, courage to innovate, strength to persevere and humility to serve.

Congratulations, Class of 2026!

May you build resilience through innovation, lead with integrity and transform the world through knowledge, faith and service.

Thank you, and may God bless you all.

Prof. Esther Mombo

Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive Officer

St. Paul's University