

**SPEECH BY PROF. MARGARET KOBIA, PhD, MGH, CHANCELLOR, ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY AND CABINET SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC SERVICE, YOUTH AND GENDER AFFAIRS, ON THE OCCASION OF THE 27<sup>TH</sup> GRADUATION CEREMONY AT ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY, HELD ON FRIDAY, 5<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2018 AT THE MAIN CAMPUS GRADUATION SQUARE, LIMURU**

***Theme of the Graduation: "Nurturing Leaders with Relevant Competencies for Industrialization and Sustainable Development"***

The Rev. Dr. Samuel Kobia, **Chancellor Emeritus;**

The Most Rev. Dr. Jackson Ole Sapit; **University Council Chairperson and Archbishop of the Anglican Church of Kenya;**

Rt. Rev. Julius Mwamba, **Chairperson of the Board of Trustees;**

Prof. Joseph Galgalo, **the Vice Chancellor, St. Paul's University;**

**Members of the Council present;**

**Members of the University Management and Senate present;**

**Members of Faculty;**

**Distinguished Guests;**

**Parents;**

**Graduands Class of 2018;**

**Ladies and Gentlemen.**

Today is a special day to the St. Paul's University fraternity as we mark **the 27<sup>th</sup> graduation ceremony** and celebrate the successes and the joy of the **graduating class of 2018**. It is also a special moment for me as I accept the mantle, to serve this great University as its second Chancellor. This appointment complements my role in the public service and I thank God for the opportunity to serve in this capacity. I take this great trust with the seriousness it deserves and I look forward to discharging my duties as the Chancellor with fitting dedication.

I note, with great appreciation, the motto and anthem of the University, which says a lot about your identity and aspirations. I am inspired to be part of this great community of: "Servants of God and Humanity."

At this juncture, allow me to most sincerely thank the outgoing Chancellor the Rev. Dr. Samuel Kobia for the service he has rendered to this Institution. Congratulations Sir, for successful completion of your ten-year term as the first Chancellor of St. Paul's University. You became the chancellor at the time of the attainment of charter, and gave oversight to the birth of a University. Under your leadership, the university has exceeded expectations, growing to greater heights. We congratulate you, and 'thank you,' for giving us such a firm foundation on which we shall build.

As I join this great institution, I look forward to seeing St. Paul's become one of the Universities fulfilling its mandate as articulated in the statutes. I also want to see it become one of the universities utilising new thinking to tackle difficulties facing the higher education sector. Having read the St. Paul's 2016-2025 strategic plan, I am aware of the direction the university is taking in the journey of strategic growth. I feel privileged to be receiving the button from the pioneers who have played their role, left their mark and handed the button to us to do our part. It is my prayer that I will execute my role as Chancellor and keep up the pace in achieving the set strategic objectives for the university.

I thank the Board of Trustees, Council Members, Board of Management, Senate, Student fraternity, the Faculty and Administrative Staff on another successful graduation ceremony. We recognize the role each one of you has played in preparing the graduands.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Let me revisit those words of our motto: “servants of God and humanity.” As I muse over these words, I am convinced that they capture the true meaning of service. Servanthood is not a popular word today. There is a natural inclination to seek to be served rather than to serve. I invite you to consider the wisdom of the Gospel in Mark that, **“even the son of Man did not come to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45)**. This principle expounds the profound truth that it is in serving that a person can find true purpose and fulfilment. It also reminds us that, service to humanity is service to God.

My desire to serve in the education sector begun when I was very young. I am a career teacher and I have continued to make my contribution at various levels of educational institutions. To be called to serve at the apex of the University leadership, as a Chancellor, comes to me as a crown to this long career. The call to service resonates well with me not only because of my interest in the educational sector, but more so, because of the values that St. Paul's stands for.

St. Paul's has distinguished itself as an institution that produces leaders who are making high-value impact around the world. We celebrate our eminent alumni serving globally. We commend the genuine culture of academic excellence, nurtured and driven in a context that gives space and takes inspiration from Christian values.

I realize that, each year, the University identifies and works around a particular area of focus. This year's theme is particularly timely and relevant. It augurs well with the national vision of the big four development agenda, as well as Kenya Vision 2030. Thank you for aspiring **“To Nurture Leaders with Relevant Competencies for Industrialization and Sustainable Development”**.

The Government of Kenya has put in place a policy on industrialisation and sustainable development, and we have been at the fore front working hard to achieve the big four Agenda as led by the President. The policy outlines very well the role of private sector-led, industrial development. I thank the University for the role it is playing in nurturing students who will contribute to the growth of our industries for sustainable development. It is time we broke with unconstructive traditions and did things differently. Let us design programs and deliver them with specific end-goals in mind. Let us choose programs for their applicability and their practical contribution to knowledge-based economy, and the progress of our nation.

**Dear graduands**, needless to say, graduation is a very special occasion. This joyous celebration is shadowed, I believe, by the question: 'what next?' Acquiring qualification is one thing. The ability to apply the knowledge and skills attained is another. You have put a lot of time to study, to write term papers, to research and to sit in for your examinations. It was rigorous. The process, however, must have shaped your aptitude, problem solving skills and your whole attitude to life. The tenacity you have built is the tool that you will need to create a meaningful life of service for yourself. I implore you to apply your learning to create opportunities rather than wait for one to be handed out to you. As Nelson Mandela said: "**Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.**" Do not go out and simply live at the mercy of the world, but use your education to change the world. Lead, for you have been trained to change and lead. As one Carl Rogers once said, "**The only person who is educated is the one who has learned how to learn and change.**" Learning that effects change, automatically propels you into the realm of leadership.

**Allow me to share a few tips that I have found useful in the exercise of responsible leadership:**

**One, Leaders are stewards.** Stewardship is a principle that exemplifies the responsible planning and management of resources; and a steward is a person who is trusted with the management of resources. Today, you are given the powers to lead, and do all that appertains to it. Basically, this means, you now have qualified and are charged to manage your affairs. Therefore, apply the learning you have received and be a good steward of yourself and all else that is entrusted to your care.

To quote one Sunday Adelaja, a Russian Theologian **“Stewardship is the hallmark of life on earth.”** Do your best in whatever duty you undertake, and do not despise even the humblest of this, for if you can be trusted with small things, in due course, you can be trusted with bigger things also. By the quality of your stewardship, we can tell the quality of your leadership.

**Two, Leaders nurture others.**

The best leaders are always those who are open to new possibilities and new learning. They seek to sharpen others, so as to be sharpened and challenged in turn. Seek mentors who can nurture, and are open to mutual sharpening of one another. Seek and build a community of heart, so that as you nurture others, you too are nurtured.

One major challenge we have had over time is lack of good mentors. Same old ideas, and tired clichés get bundled around. Do not just mourn deficiency of good leadership and bankruptcy of ideas but do something and distinguish yourself. Make your education count.

This country is looking up to you to make a difference. The way to do it, is to become better and make others better as well. It is about time we stopped asking around for what we can do; and showed the world what we can do. And Kenya is so ready to support young people who are thinkers, doers and strategists; those endowed not only with talents but also integrity.

**Thirdly, Leaders do not give up, and go for untapped potentials.**

You may have heard of, 'the 11 phrases intelligent people say to themselves every day.' One of those phrases is: **"No one else is willing to do that, so that's what I will do."** It takes courage to be different, independent, and to try things that others have not tried and or have tried but failed. Be courageous and explore those untapped potentials and possibilities. Ask questions nobody else is asking, and dare do things no one else is willing to do. The poverty out there, is mainly as a result of our deficient thinking. We accept things as they are and hardly think differently from others.

And finally, brothers and sisters, let me conclude with these words of the Apostle Paul as written in Philippians 4:8 **"whatever is true, whatever is outstanding, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable - if anything is excellent or praiseworthy - think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard ... or seen [and is good] - put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you."**

I thank You All and God Bless.