

## PUR 2017 - GRADUATION CEREMONY

For the fifth time, the Protestant University of Rwanda [PUR] organized a graduation ceremony at its Huye campus on October 26<sup>th</sup> 2017. 273 students from the three faculties: the Faculty of theology and Religious studies [FTRS] with 24 graduates, the Faculty of Education [FED] with 171 students and the Faculty of Development studies [FDS] with 78 students, were awarded their degrees by the Chancellor of the University, the Revd Dr Andre KARAMAGA. Present at the graduation ceremony were, Mr. Emmanuel Muvunyi, the Executive Director of the High Education Council [HEC] who represented the Minister of Education; the Chairperson of the Board of Directors, Archbishop Dr Onesphore Rwaje and other members; the Vice Mayor in charge of Economic Affairs for the Mayor of Huye; heads of Churches and Delegations from sister universities, members of the Organization of private universities [ORIPES]; the families of the graduates and many guests.

**Major features of the ceremony-** Key moments comprise: the Devotion led by Rt Revd Bishop Augustin Mvunabandi; Speeches by the PUR chancellor; the Vice chancellor and of the Guest of Honour; the word of the representative of the graduates; rewarding the winners of the PUR Reading and Writing Competition and the best performing student among the graduates. All ceremony was entertained by the PUR *Itorero* troupe.

**The Graduation Devotion-** The Rt Revd Augustin Mvunabandi, the Anglican bishop of the Kigeme Diocese. Augustin Mvunabandi read a passage of Genesis on the creation; the creation of human being in the image of God. Being an image of God he said, is about doing what God wants. He contrasted with people who say they are God's workers and go on to do whatever they want. Illustrating by Mtt 6.33, he said that loving God is to walk in holiness; he then invited PUR to walk in God's vision through teaching, sending to society graduates educated in God's will; destroying the devil's works; being humbly to perpetually confess and repent towards one another.

**The Vice Chancellor message-** Welcoming the guests, the Vice Chancellor of PUR, Rev Prof Elisée Musemakweli said that choosing to study at the PUR is choosing an ecumenical institution; an open minded university where students and staff cooperate in various domains to achieve teaching, research and community services goals. He reminded the major activities that took place during the academic year at the Huye and Karongi campuses. He said that since the last graduation ceremony in 2015, important changes happened including the teaching based on the modular system, many training sessions organized for teaching staff, acquisition of the new library, more books and computers ; access to electronic books and e-journals. With highlighted prominence PUR put onto promoting quality research, critical thinking and publication as well as the organization of annual Scientific Week, public conferences and on the Reading and Writing competition. Prof Musemakweli told the gathering that Community

services are another PUR mission that has been strengthened through many various activities including the translation into Kinyarwanda of PUR researches as didactic material for the training of community leaders and pastors of parishes. Furthermore, PUR set up the Center of Research and Action towards Sustainable Peace and Development [CRASPD] to uphold more services to community. He also told the audience of active cooperation underway with different universities and different organizations in Rwanda and outside including: Tumaini University of Arusha [Tanzania]; the Applied University of Villingen-Schwenningen [Germany]; Tokoyo University for Foreigners; MOU signed with the Basel Institute of Governance; and MOUs under signing process with the University of Rwanda and KwaZulu Natal University [South Africa]. The PUR is also running an International Master Program on Quality Education [IMPEQ] together with the University of Bamberg [Germany] and has initiated Master Programs and postgraduate studies in the faculties of theology and Education.

**Message of the Chancellor-** The Chancellor of PUR, Revd Dr Karamaga reminded three memorable images of the history of the PUR: 1970, year of inauguration of the School of Theology of which he was one of the 10 students of the first promotion took place under modest conditions; the 1995: the churches struggled to restart the Faculty of theology, a year after the genocide against the Tutsi which affected the institution like all Rwanda [the Rector, Rev Dr Faustin Rwagacuzi and his entire family and 4 students were killed, may God rest them in peace!]. Today, he said, it is a different image an exuberant Protestant University which can graduate 277 students at once! He invited the graduates to bury the idea that they completed their studies: no one, until leaving this life under sky, should claim to have finished learning and studying. Therefore, the graduation begins a new lifelong learning process. Chancellor Karamaga, in his gown of General Secretary of the Churches [AACC] told the gathering that his organization is holding its tenth general assembly in Rwanda in 2018. More than a 1000 participants will attend including many young people. He invited the PUR to be a welcoming institution for the youth who would participate.

**The Message of the HEC Executive Director-** Emmanuel Muvunyi, the HEC Executive Director, representative of the Minister of Education said how beautiful it was for the graduation ceremony to start by devotion, then to use the Kinyarwanda language. Muvunyi went on to thank PUR directorate for efforts and energy to organize the processes that led to the event. Muvunyi reminded that Rwanda Vision 2020, planned for Rwanda to be a middle income country and now Vision 2035 under planning may set up a goal of high income country. Graduates would work hard to help Rwanda achieve that goal. He commended the PUR work into: Research and dissemination of knowledge; quality education; adequate infrastructures, all efforts that allowed PUR to come among the best that were praised by the International High Education audit team in September 2016 and being commended for being an inspiring institution. Turning to students, he told them to be glad and celebrate; he thanked them for

working hard to overcome huddles all students face, in particular for those who have families and job. He talked of challenges to address in High Education institutions: contextual studies and research for graduates to be the job creators instead of job seekers; research and publication for staff [having in mind academic motto “publish or die”]; linking with industry whatever area of studies; commending ICT; never stop the learning process: having in mind Socrates philosopher: the wise person is the one who knows they know nothing!

## **AWARDS**

During PUR Graduation ceremony two categories of awards are always expected with delight.

***Critical Thinking-*** The first award given in PUR concerns the annual *Reading and Writing Competition*. The competition open to all students of PUR, consists in reading and writing a critical comment of at least 3 articles published by any academic staff in journals or books. For each article commented, the competitor writes a 3 page essay, that is a minimum of 9 pages per competitor. The winner is awarded a laptop and package of books; the runner and the third receive a discount of 50% of the school fee for a whole academic year. For 2016-2017 competition, the winner is a graduate of the Faculty of Theology and Religious studies, Mr Jean Paul Usabyimana ; the runner is, Mr Tharcisse Tuyishime, a first year student [ at the time of the competition] in the faculty of Education, English and Kinyarwanda program.

***The Best Performing Graduate-*** The second award is given to the best performing graduate. For 2016-2017, the winner is Ms Floriane Niyungeko, who graduated from the Faculty of Development studies, Peace and Development program. She also received a laptop. Ms Niyungeko has also successfully been recruited a staff of the new Center for Research and Action towards Sustainable Peace and Development [CRASPD].

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***/// NEVER GIVE UP EVEN WHEN STILL SEARCH FOR A JOB LONG AFTER YOUR GRADUATION.  
KEEP YOURSELF BUSY ON ANYTHING ///*** *Concluded Emmanuel Muvunyi!*

**Happy career, our Graduates!**