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WELCOME ADDRESS*

Antonio F. Moreno, S.J.
Jesuit Provincial and LST Vice-Chancellor

His Eminence, Giuseppe Cardinal Versaldi, Prefect of the Congregation for Catholic Education and our keynote speaker; His Eminence, Orlando Cardinal Quevedo, Archbishop of Cotabato; His Excellency, Most Reverend Giuseppe Pinto, Apostolic Nuncio to the Philippines; His Excellency, Most Reverend Roberto Mallari, Bishop of San José Nueva Ecija; Very Reverend Fr. Gerard Timoner III, Prior Provincial of the Dominican Province of the Philippines; Reverend Fr. José Quilongquilong, President of Loyola School of Theology; Reverend Fathers, Brothers and Sisters, friends, a very pleasant good morning to all.

We waited for half a century for this great event to happen. I warmly welcome you all to this International Theological Symposium in celebration of the Golden Jubilee of Loyola School of Theology (LST) in this Holy Year of Mercy. I especially welcome Cardinal Versaldi. I would like to thank most profoundly, His Eminence, for taking time out and gracing this occasion.

*Delivered on the first day of the LST International Theological Symposium (Henry Lee Irwin Theater, Ateneo de Manila University: March 10, 2016).

Thank you LST community, led by Fr. Quilongquilong, for bringing us all together in this happy event.

Today we are deeply grateful to the Lord for Loyola School of Theology's fifty years of leading and serving through theology. We thank the many people who served as trustees, professors, administrators, staff, friends, and benefactors who labored selflessly for this institution. We thank the cardinals, bishops, priests, religious, and lay people who graduated from this institution and have become fitting instruments in the service of God and the Church.

We have come a long way, thanks to the mercies of the Lord. We were initially a small school of fifteen students, but now we have 464 students coming from numerous religious congregations and dioceses. We started as a theologate mainly for Jesuit scholastics, Filipino seminarians, and a few religious formands, but now a third of our students, including lay people, come from 36 countries. We were an affiliate of Fu Jen University in Taipei, but now some theologates are applying to become affiliates of LST. We were initially and predominantly a teaching institution, but now we see a growing interest in research and the generation of new theological reflections that inform our leadership in, and service to, the Church.

In the end, however, it is not all about our achievements and successes that count, but the mercies of the Lord that kept LST going despite the many challenges. We have nothing to boast about. We are just mystified by the graciousness of God. We seek nothing else but the glory of God.

Congratulations, Loyola School of Theology! May God bless us all in these days of the symposium.

Thank you all.