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LOYOLA SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY AND THE SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL*

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With these few words, I hope you will let me share a conviction about LST which has been growing in my mind for some years now. I am now the only Jesuit priest who has been in this house and school since its first day of occupied existence fifty years ago, with no change of basic assignment. That same year that we came to this house, the Second Vatican Council ended on December 8, 1965. As the Jubilee Year 2000 was about to begin, Pope John Paul II said what innumerable other qualified observers (both Catholic and from many other Christian denominations) had said before him, and are still saying now, now that we mark the 50th anniversary of that 8th of December in 1965. For Christian communities, including Protestants and others, Vatican II was the single most significant and history-changing event for the Christian church and Christian world at least in the twentieth century—or, some say, even since the Reformation.

Our former Father General, Peter Hans Kolvenbach, wrote that one of St. Ignatius' most remarkably original theological insistences was the insight that *God is truly at work in history*, truly moving it forward,

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with His wisdom and goodness truly giving it direction and shaping it—with His own ways of wisdom and goodness—with our genuine free collaboration (Fr. Kolvenbach has said that this was a genuinely new "Ignatian perspective" in theology and spirituality). In that context, I believe LST was "created" by God, with His own timing, to be one effective instrument to bring about what He had brought about in Vatican II—to be, at least beginning-wise, realized in the Church in the Philippines, and in the Church in Asia.

Let me admit that while this conviction needs fuller development if it will be accepted by many others, it is my conviction. If we were to create a line-up of some of the factors and events, some of the key people and movements, and some of the realities that strongly brought Vatican II's "results" into the life of the Church in the Philippines and in Asia, I believe LST was in some genuine and significant ways in active participation and interaction with practically every single one of them.

Pope Paul VI's 1970 Visit

We might choose Pope Paul VI's visit in 1970 as "event number one." The Asian Bishops' Meeting was the first big Vatican II "invasion" into the Catholic life of our country. Fr. Horacio de la Costa, our LHS/LST founder, was one of those chosen by the Holy See to contribute to the "input" of that visit, to its theological content and directions, with *Populorum progressio* as its basic theme—"development is the new name for peace." The really remarkable "vision/mission input" Paul VI brought with him, as we now realize (we did not, in 1970), contained *in semine* what in the following decades the Asian Bishops would develop in their "first-time-in-history" assemblies and statements. In a way, the seeds are in Paul VI's "For All the Peoples of Asia" (FAPA).

The concluding statement of the 1970 Asian Bishops' Meeting, its inspiration really basically drawn from Paul VI, already foreshadowed future FABC themes, and LST "was there."

FABC

For the very first meeting, where the foundation of the *Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences* (FABC) was taken up and its beginnings really given initial form and substance, Stephen Cardinal Kim (FABC "Father," if there was one) and Bishop Mariano Gaviola, Secretary General of what was in the future to become the CBCP, asked Fr. de la Costa to convene and organize that meeting at the Jesuit Provincialate in Xavier House. LST was there.

From the first genuinely history-making FABC General Assembly in Taipei in 1974, to the actual nitty-gritty FABC part "in the workings" of the Synod of Bishops in Rome in 1974, LST was really there.[1]

For at least the first twelve years—in the first four FABC General Assemblies; in FABC General Colloquia and International Congresses on Mission/Evangelization and on Ministries; in the smaller Bishops' Institutes for Missionary Apostolate, Social Action, Inter-religious Affairs, Theology of Dialogue, etc.—from 1974 to 1986, LST was really there.

For the FABC Theological Advisory Commission founded in 1986, LST was its convenor-source; from its beginning, LST was there. All of this "active presence and power" would go on and, as the years went by, of course with decreasing force because, *as was desired and actively sought after*, there was greater and more active participation from others! By 1970 to 1990, for about 20 years, "in the beginnings" —somewhat prominently, rather "frontline-wise"—LST was there.

In the Philippines

In the Philippines, for the foundation of what is now the Association of Major Religious Superiors for Men and Women Religious (AMRSMP and AMRSWP), the Sisters' Formation Institute linked with AMRSWP, LST was there (Frs. Horacio de la Costa and

[1]See books by Fr. Gerald O'Collins.

William Galdon, M.M., were the main "architects/constructors" of AMRSM at its beginning).

For the regular CBCP bi-annual assemblies; for episcopal commissions especially for doctrinal and theological concerns; for ecumenism and lay apostolate; for special action—for the National Secretariat for Social Action (NASSA), especially with its "praxis beginnings and projects" with Bishop Gaviola—LST was there.

For the writing of pastoral letters and other major episcopal conference statements, for organizing seminars (in theology and pastoral practice [e.g., on Christology and Mariology, on mission in our time, on development, on marriage and sexuality, on holy orders], on ideologies, on non-violence and Church-praxis [during martial law years especially], etc., for many many years), LST was notably there.[2]

On this "primary service" to FABC and its Asian bishops, to the CBCP and even to its individual bishops who ask for it, sometime in the 1980's Fr. Pedro Arrupe personally sought me out to say: "If St. Ignatius were alive today, this service would be the one he would really *give a top-priority to; really nothing would he consider to be more important*." To me he said, "*You can tell your Superiors that Fr. General is giving you his personal assignment to this work as your truly Jesuit mission*."

Gaudencio Cardinal Rosales, repeatedly over the years, has said that "the Church in the Philippines and her Bishops, and clergy, religious and lay institutes and groups …" on the whole—what it has asked of the Society of Jesus was *"intellectual and spiritual formation*." Spelling this out somewhat more fully: solid formation in a spirituality based on the Ignatian Exercises, along with a solid intellectual formation which is, again, rather middle-of-the-road in orientation and choices—well rooted in Tradition and Magisterium, but genuinely and "discerningly" in touch with "what was new, genuine and strong in Vatican II" … plus the cultural realities and movements of our people and our world and time. So, LST in real a way has had its "service road" set out from the beginning.

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[2]Some names: Frs. de Achutegui, Sevilla, Lambino, Blanco [especially on non-violence], San Juan, Arevalo, among others.